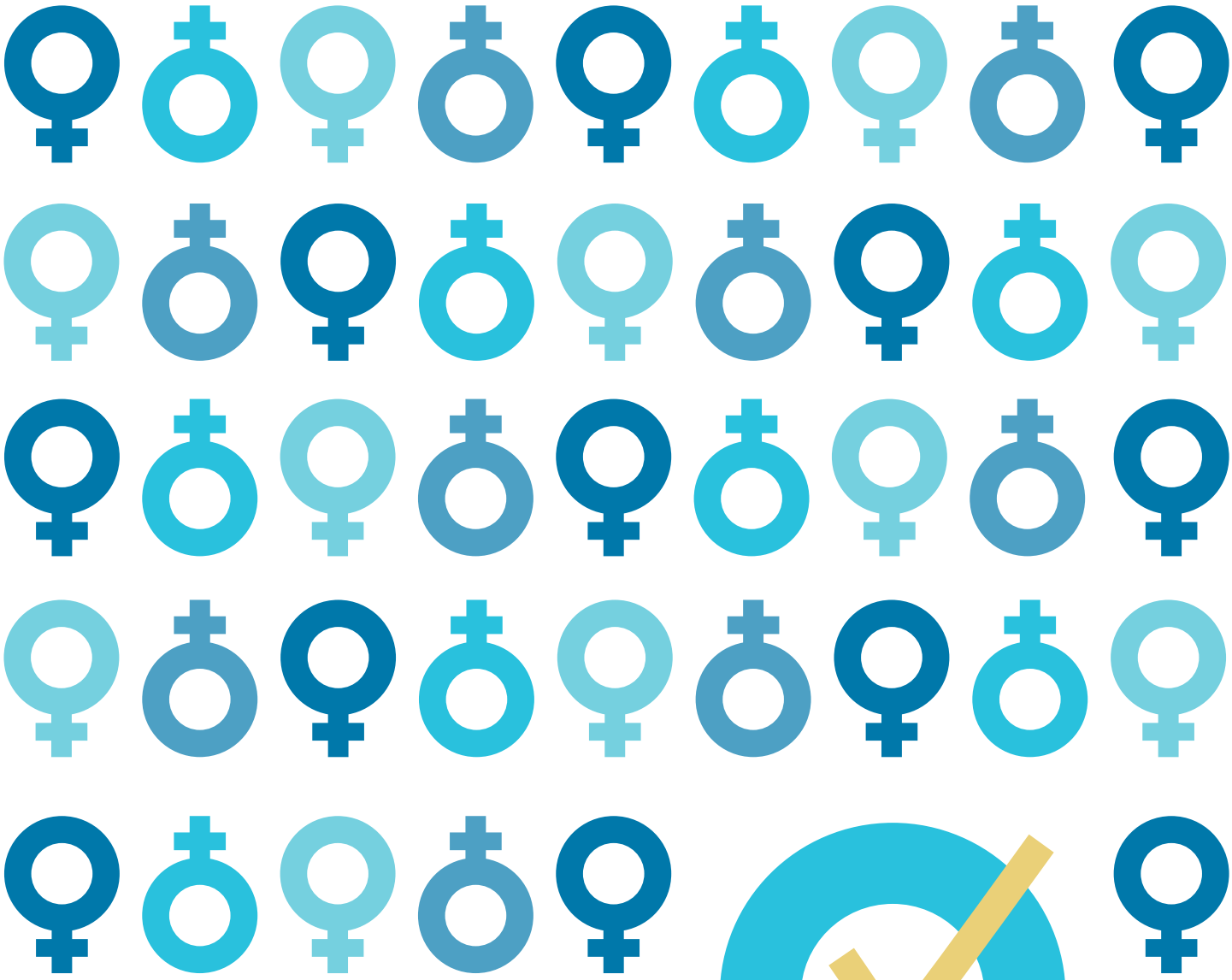

Regional Gender Programme
in South-East Asia – Stage II:

Gender analysis of women's political participation in 7 South-East Asian countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, East Timor and Vietnam

2008-2009

ENJAMBRA CONTRA LA EXPLOTACIÓN SEXUAL AND PAZ Y DESARROLLO:

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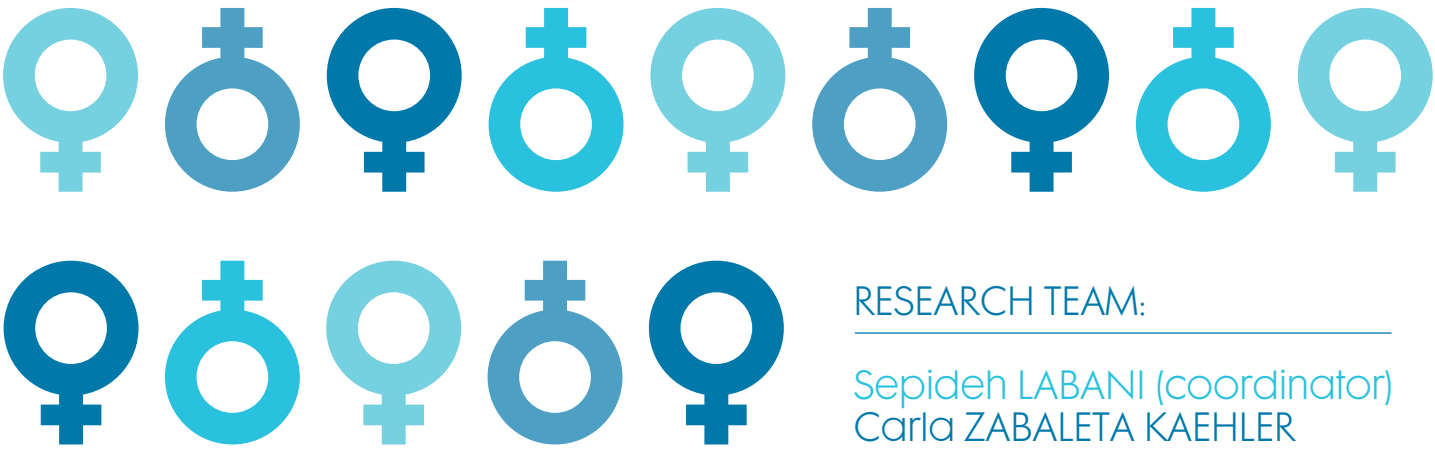

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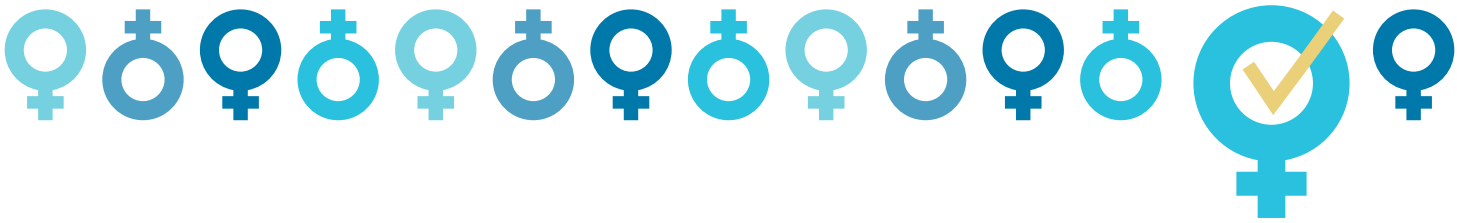

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introduction

Tackling governance, leadership and political participation from a gender transforming perspective involves considering women as responsible individuals, capable of taking decisions and indispensable for their societies democratisation processes. This approach aims at pointing out the causes of inequality within their contexts, and at finding more sustainable ways to eliminate the barriers preventing women's participation and their representation in decision-making areas. The relation between political participation, gender equality and democratic process is interdependent, since the implementation of each of these concepts depends on the implementation of the others and vice versa. In fact, full equality between men and women in all aspects of life cannot be achieved if equality between men and women is not achieved in the area of governance and political representation. Women's political participation is yet another must for democratic governance. Women's voices are indispensable for democracy to embrace the plurality of needs and interests of the whole society.

However, and as announced by the UNDP Human Development Report (1995) "in no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men; and removing gender inequalities is not dependent on having a high income or being a rich country."

The case of the South-East Asian region is quite surprising, especially with regard to women's political participation and representation. Despite the strong local patriarchies reflected in various gender coercions varying from one country to the next, with a very clear separation of roles, stereotypes and prejudices regarding women's role in society, this region has an outstanding trajectory in women's political participation and representation: thus, the first women in the world to be elected through democratic processes and to gain the highest positions of political representation have done so in this region. Moreover some countries have equality measures in place in terms of political representation and there is a significant associative and activist feminist fabric. However, this reality has not had an impact in the lives of most women. The region presents

high levels of poverty, illiteracy, social and economic discrimination primarily affecting women. Women's political representation and participation is still very low.

Obstacles at a religious, legal, economic, social and political level limit their contributions to decision-making bodies and planning, and their needs and interests are hardly ever taken into account. Both the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action and the UNDP Human Development Report set the target of 30 per cent for women in national decision-making positions as a milestone on the road towards the objective of ultimate equality. However, the situation in the countries studied is very far from that goal.

Therefore, taking "Gender and Development Strategy and Effectiveness of Spanish Cooperation", prepared in 2007 by SECI-AECI General Directorate of Planning and Evaluation of Public Policies, and the 2005-2008 Master Plan and the new 2009-2012 Master Plan together with its Gender Sector Strategy, Paz y Desarrollo and Enjambra. Contra La Explotación Sexual, in collaboration with AECID, have been working for two years with a view to laying the foundations for the design of a Regional Gender Programme in South-East Asia. In order to do so, 7 of the countries considered by the Spanish Agency for Cooperation as priorities and countries meriting special attention in Asia were selected: Vietnam, Cambodia, Bangladesh, East Timor, Indonesia, the Philippines and Sri Lanka.

In the first stage, from June 2007 to February 2008, the "Elaboration of a Regional Action Gender Plan Proposal in South-East Asia" project helped identify the priority areas for intervention allowing AECID to prepare a regional gender strategy. With the aim of elaborating the implementation proposal for the Regional Gender Programme, a one-week meeting in the Philippines was held with a delegation from each country, made up by representatives of public and private institutions (NGOs and civil society) of the 7 countries. In the second stage of the project, a Study Tour took place in Madrid and Seville where tools used by Spanish cooperation agencies were presented, as well as examples of equality policies and the implementation of a gender strategy throughout the country from local to national level.

This first stage helped make it obvious that women's political participation is a priority area for the design of a regional gender strategy. Women's under-representation in all political areas is both the cause and effect of the multiple inequalities suffered in all other areas of life, and this is a common fact in all countries in the region.

This analysis corresponds to the second stage designated as the "Regional Gender Programme in South-East Asia – Stage II: Elaboration of a gender analysis focused on women's political representation in 7 South-East Asia countries (Cambodia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and East Timor)".

The aim of this analysis is to show a clear picture of the situation regarding this matter in the 7 selected countries, stating on the one hand the limiting factors that are barriers to the access and permanent presence of women in power structures and decision-making positions, and on the other hand the empowerment factors, that is to say the achievements and advances made in these areas. This analysis was combined with the identification of the practical needs of the parties involved in women's political participation. Three action levels were considered: Public institutions in the country, international organisations and civil society bodies, focusing on women's organisations and associations. In order to carry out this analysis, a team of female researchers went to the 7 identified countries in an effort to conduct interviews with key individuals providing the information and to gather relevant secondary data.

Our analysis is not just a compilation of specific and useful data on women's political participation and representation in the countries identified, but it also aims at becoming an analysis, discussion and action tool for all individuals, from public organisations and civil society, who might be interested in political participation with a gender perspective. Having this in mind, we have tried to

offer the reader food for thought, tools for analysing political participation with this perspective and documentary sources and web references so they can further their knowledge of the matter. In order for the report to be used by a high number of people and organisations in various countries, we have tried to use a simple vocabulary and format without giving up the scientific accuracy of such far-reaching research.

Chapter 1 presents the theoretical bases of the analysis, defining the outlines of political participation beyond its classical definition and integrating it with a gender transforming perspective. We have tried to offer some theoretical ideas for discussion on the significance and implications of women's political participation within the democratization processes of their societies.

In Chapter 2 we have tackled the methodological framework of our research, detailing the entire elaboration and selection process of the research areas and indicators, the methodological tools for collecting, processing and summarising data, as well as the selection criteria for the individuals interviewed.

Chapter 3, "Regulatory and institutional framework: description and evaluation", details and reviews from a gender perspective the international, regional and Spanish Cooperation Agency legal and political tools dealing with the topic of women's political participation.

Chapter 4 includes all the files-analysis on the situation of women's political participation and representation in the 7 South-East Asian countries: Bangladesh, Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Timor, and Vietnam. The analysis is presented as a file. First we talk about the specific context in which the female researcher carried out the analysis, the difficulties she encountered and the support she received. The social, political and cultural context of each country can have an impact on the research results, therefore it is important to note this in order to provide a more humane and real outline. Then we present the result of the field work mentioning the limiting and empowering factors for each theme area studied. And finally, we present a qualitative analysis of the situation based on the interviews, including the needs of those parties working on women's political participation issues.

In Chapter 5 the results of the analysis carried out in each country and structured by thematic central areas are compared. This chapter aims at offering a regional picture of the advances achieved by each country in terms of women's political participation and representation and the common problems and needs encountered, with a view to establishing the action priorities for a regional gender strategy and tentative recommendations for Spanish cooperation agencies.

chapter 1

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

Women's political participation cannot be understood in isolation from its context. Cultural, historical and socio-economic factors are some of the variables to take into account when defining the outlines of what is understood by political participation in each country. For example, in a pyramidal political system with a single party, political participation through the right to vote has clearly not got the same significance as a multi-party parliamentary system, with proportional representation.

These factors have given rise to debates and discussions on traditional or formal areas for political participation and their forms; gender perspective has added doubts and has shown their limitations and incoherence, putting into question the alleged neutrality of gender in the systems, power institutions and the nature of power.

In this chapter, the main concepts serving as the basis for this report and its conclusions will be explained. We are aware that the fields for analysis can be much wider and more complex, especially in contexts that are so different from one another as it is the case with those being studied. Thus, and following the desirability and feasibility analysis criteria, we will start by defining the concepts to be used.

A. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Debates on the forms of political participation and those who can exercise power within them have a long historical trajectory. They go back to the citizens' assemblies in ancient Greece, and all the way to the present time with the continuing search for alternative methods of individual or collective participation and new areas where it can be exercised.

From the beginning of the 20th century, in parallel to the debates on WHO can exercise political participation, new FORMS of political participation were suggested.

The contemporary democratic ideal is based on the concept that political power has its roots in a sovereign people. Therefore, there can be no democracy without involvement, without participation of the people in political life. But, how do we define this political participation? Participation can take place in numerous activities, such as being involved in different groups or associations but, what does political participation mean? What are we citizens of? What is political? And, how does someone become a political actor?

Political participation can be any activity which aims at influencing the structure of a government, the appointment of leaders and the policies they execute. These activities can have the goal of supporting the existing structures and politics or changing them. They include active and passive actions, collective or individual, legal or illegal, support or pressure actions, by which one or several persons try to influence the type of government that may lead a society, the way the state of that particular country is led, or specific government decisions affecting a community or their individual members[1].

1 CONWAY, M., "Political Participation in the United States", 3rd Ed., CQ Press, Washington, DC, 2000, pp. 3-6

Based on that definition, we can extract different categories[2] :

Firstly, with relation to the form of participation, we can distinguish:

1) The vote

2) The political campaign

3) The community activity

4) The individual activity

5) The protest activity

These activities differ based on:

1) The level of influence that the person can exercise through it; in other words the pressure exerted on leaders so they act in a certain way, and the capacity of citizens for demanding accountability for their leaders' actions and decisions.

2) The result obtained or to be obtained and whether there is a collective or individual benefit.

3) The level of conflict experienced by those involved.

4) The level of personal initiative required to carry out the activity.

5) And finally, the degree of cooperation with other people required to carry out the activity.

Secondly, based on the level of integration in the decision-making state process, political participation can be classified in two ways:

1) Institutional political participation: this refers to the activities involved in the government mechanisms for decision-making such as referenda, elections, advisory bodies, etc.

2) Non-institutional political participation: this includes actions that are not part of the official channels for the establishment of policies and that are aimed at exerting pressure on them from without, such as demonstrations, electoral campaigns, individual or collective requests to public organisations, promotion of certain groups or social classes interests, membership and activities within political parties.

The possibility of being freely involved in non-institutional activities is linked to the minimum requirements for the existence of a democratic regime, while institutional participation strengthening is part of its development process.

This classical categorisation (institutional and non-institutional participation) like the one differentiating "conventional" and "non-conventional" political participation nonetheless give rise to some criticism. In fact, these denominations leave non-institutional and non-conventional political participation outside the area of citizenship, and they limit themselves to political and regulatory citizenship. However, citizenship has multiple dimensions: civil, political and social.

Furthermore, sometimes political and social commitment can pursue the same goal. And above all, for political participation to be effective and real, a certain feeling of belonging to a group is needed, as well as having the means, both institutional and material, to express oneself or to be listened to. In contexts where there is no representation or where very strong political repression takes place, violations of minority groups' rights, rights of expression and association, and also where situation of extreme exclusion takes place, political participation cannot be exercised through "conventional" means, and it needs compensatory or alternative mechanisms of participation.

In the case of regimes that do not accept plurality of political expressions and severely punish them, the alternative mechanisms can be included in a strategic way within the conventional channels. In other words, the only legitimate expression and power exercise areas recognised and accepted by these regimes are used with a view to exercising politics without suffering government repression.

Therefore, without undermining the importance of "conventional" participation areas, we start from a concept of political participation that goes beyond these traditional classifications and includes spaces and alternative forms of political participation showing the complexity and diversity of the contexts analysed.

2 MOLINA VEGA, José E. and PÉREZ BARALT, Carmen, "Participación Política" in IIDH/CAPEL: Diccionario Electoral. IIDH/ CAPEL, San José de Costa Rica, 2000
3 In other words, that recognised as valid by the mainstream political culture (vote, eligibility, membership in a political party, etc.) and the one that is not (all forms of protest and demonstration).

Our analysis focuses on the institutional factors influencing political participation and related to the characteristics of the political system. These factors have to do with elements such as the compulsory nature of voting, the degree of simplicity / difficulty for voters to register and the type of electoral system (proportional or majority). Another important factor to take into account is the existence of specific representation quotas established for certain groups.

And finally, the level of organisation of the civil society, which is the agent determining the degree of political participation by channelling the demands and supports for the political system. All associations, even those not directly related to politics, are spaces for debating and contrasting ideas, creating solidarities, and reasserting citizens' capacity for action. They provide important tools for participating in political activities encouraging, in an indirect way, political participation[4] .

Finally, our approach is based on a dynamic understanding of political systems. These are historical processes that experience constant changes through different methods of social and political participation, conflicts or political struggles. A political regime cannot be described as democratic or not based on a pre-established type, but it needs to be considered as a project consisting of different social groups trying to create methods of political participation in order to protect or defend their interests[5] .

In short, for each context we need to find the participatory mechanisms that increase the power of direction and control wielded by governed people over those governing, allowing them to participate in the decisions that directly affect their lives and those of their communities.

B. POLITICAL PARTICIPATION WITH A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

I. The gender transforming perspective

Gender studies and gender perspectives have been recently introduced into the development cooperation world. Until the Seventies and Eighties, no text on development made specific references to women's situation or to the differentiated and uneven impact of cooperation. Social phenomena and development processes are assumed to be neutral regarding the condition of men and women and, therefore, their impact considered to be the same for the whole beneficiary group. In the Seventies, Esther Boserup[6] proved that development strategies, focused on Western and male-centred models, had not considered the role and situation of women within their societies. Instead of improving their situation, this planning error had contributed to further deterioration of women's rights and status.

Boserup's theories materialised in "Women in Development" (WID) approaches, later becoming the "Gender and Development" (GAD) approach. The first approach focused on the exclusion of women, with an emphasis on women's activities and roles in order to promote their rights, increase their participation in development and their economic empowerment. This approach evolved towards the second view, GAD, which believes that social reality is more complex, revealing that women's exclusion has its cause and effect on inequalities in gender relations and in the roles these relations assign to women and men. The strategies developed by this approach are focused on two areas[7]:

1) Women's empowerment: the process by which women, both individually and collectively, become aware of the power relations operating in their lives, thus building trust among themselves and acquiring the necessary strength to change gender inequalities in all areas.

4 MOLINA VEGA, José E. and PÉREZ BARALT, Carmen, op.cit.
5 RODAN Garry y JAYASURIA Kanishka, "Conflict and the New Political Participation in Southeast Asia", Working Paper No. 129, February 2006, http://wwwarc.murdoch.edu.au/wp/wp129.pdf
6 BOSERUP, Esther, "Women Role in Economic Development", Earthscan Publications Ltd., London, 2007

2) Integration or mainstreaming: a cross-cutting strategy towards gender equality in all political decisions, in institutional structures and in the allocation of resources.

This approach is based on the idea that equality between men and women is a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. "It is the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and gender equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples"[8] .

Our analysis works with this latter approach. Methodologies WITHOUT a gender perspective are not only based on the mistaken belief of considering social phenomena as being neutral but also their use has an extremely negative impact as a result, since they do not consider the differences in position between women and men, and instead of improving inequalities they may even make them worse.

GENDER PERSPECTIVE, the cross-cutting area of our analysis, involves the consideration of the following:

1) Differences between men and women

2) Power relations established between them

Differences between men and women and the relations between them have been described in gender studies, which have revealed inequalities existing in all human societies between women and men, as well as the causes of these inequalities. Furthermore theories of gender relations try to go beyond simple theories and they suggest social and political projects focused on equity, presenting their vision of an egalitarian society and the means to get there.

n this sense, gender studies are closely linked to feminist theories, thus our concept of a "gender transforming perspective". According to Irene López and Beatriz Sierra[9], "Gender is not just a static concept that serves for describing realities and differences between men and women. It entails a strong political and ideological, transforming, component. It is an emerging view that, taking sociocultural and evolutive construction of gender and their different relative evaluation as a starting point, it searches for a transformation towards more balanced relations and equality between genders".

The gender transforming perspective is deduced from the definition of the concept of gender itself and gender relations.

By GENDER we understand what social and cultural collective representations interpret as being socially a man or a woman. It refers to roles, responsibilities and opportunities assigned for the mere fact of being a woman or a man.

By GENDER RELATIONS we understand the social relations established depending on the gender of the person, which create differences in rights, obligations and reciprocal responsibilities for men and women.

The main idea that has been stressed in these two definitions is that women and men's position depends on social and cultural causes and not in human nature, therefore gender roles can be transformed. Thus equality is a credible goal. Women's inferior situation can change if the adequate sociocultural patterns are put in place.

II. Political participation with a gender perspective

Tackling political participation with a gender transforming perspective involves considering women as responsible individuals, capable of taking decisions and who are indispensable for their societies democratization processes. This approach aims at pointing out the causes of inequalities between women and men within their contexts and at finding more sustainable ways of eliminating the barriers preventing women's participation and their representation in decision-making areas. The relation between political participation, gender equality and the democratic process is interdependent, since the implementation of each of these concepts depends on the implementation of the others and vice versa. It is a necessary and unavoidable relationship.

7 LÓPEZ MÉNDEZ, Irene and SIERRA LEGUINA Beatriz, "Integrando el análisis de género en el desarrollo. Manual para técnicos de cooperación", IUDC, Madrid, 2000 p. 34 and 43.
8 Beijing Platform for Action, The United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995.
9 LÓPEZ MÉNDEZ, Irene and SIERRA LEGUINA Beatriz, "Integrando el análisis de género en el desarrollo. Manual para técnicos de cooperación", IUDC, Madrid, 2000 p.8

Our analysis is based on the following: to achieve gender equality in all spheres of life, it is necessary to achieve gender equality in the areas of representation, decision-making and political participation[10].

More than 100 years have passed by since women were given the right to vote in New Zealand[11], the first country to bestow this inalienable right. Since then the situation of women's participation in the world has improved a great deal with significant differences among countries. It was not until 1975, the date of the Fist World Conference on Women in Mexico D.F., when the international community started to protest regarding the inequalities between men and women and regarding women's status as second class citizens. But it was in 1979 when for the first time women's rights were codified in a human rights international instrument, CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. CEDAW came into force in 1981. And in 1995 the Beijing Platform for Action was held during the Fourth World Conference on Women. In this meeting, a special section on Women in Power and Decision-making Positions was organised in order to establish the strategies to ensure equal access and full participation for women. At the same time, and during the same year, UNDP Human Development Report (1995) stated that "in no society do women enjoy the same opportunities as men; and removing gender inequalities is not dependent on having a high income or being a rich country"[11] .

Both the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action and the UNDP Human Development Report set the goal of 30 per cent for women in national decision-making positions, as a milestone on the road towards the objective of ultimate equality.

In 1995, this rate reached the 10 per cent landmark. Today, more than 10 years after, the latest statistics[13] indicate that in 2009, the average representation of women in parliament is 18.4 per cent. The highest rate is in Nordic countries (41.4 per cent) followed by the American continent (21.5 per cent). In the Europe of the OSCE countries (excluding Nordic countries) the rate is 19.3 per cent, in Asia it is 18.4 per cent, in sub-Saharan Africa it is 18.2 per cent, in the Pacific it is 13 per cent and in Arab countries it is 9.7 per cent.

The average rate of representation of women in ministerial positions by region is the following[14]:

Developed regions: **28%**
Central and Eastern Europe: **12%**
Latin American and the Caribbean: **23%**
South-East Asia and the Pacific: **8%**
Southern Asia: **8%**
Middle East and North Africa: **8%**
Sub-Saharan Africa: **19%**

Except for Latin American and sub-Saharan Africa, in all the other regions there are countries with no representation of women in government positions. Moreover, it is important to note not only women's representation rates in government positions, but also the type of portfolios assigned to them. Between 2000 and 2008, only 8 women have been Head of State [15].

Despite the advancement in women's representation in power structures and decision-making, we are still far from the critical goal of 30 per cent set by the Beijing Platform for Action.

This inequality depends on the following factors limiting women's political participation[16]:

1. Ideological factors

The ideology of gender roles is used by the patriarchal system as an ideological tool to place women in the private sphere as mothers and wives and to place men in the public sphere. Despite the nuances that may exist in the border separating public from private life, the domestic sphere is still considered women's territory, while public sphere is associated with men. In order to enter the public sphere, women have to negotiate depending on their social and cultural context.

10 HAMADEH-BANERJEE Lina, "Women's Agency in Governance" in Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges, The United Nations Development Programme, 2000, p. 2. http://www.iknowpolitics.org/es/node/126
11 New Zealand recognised the right to vote for women in 1893 but they were not able to be elected as members of parliament in that country until 1919.
12 KARAM Azza, "Beijing +5: Women's Political Participation: Review of Strategies and Trends" in Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges, The United Nations Development Programme, 2000, p 16. http://www.iknowpolitics.org/es/node/126
13 Women in Parliaments: World and Regional Averages, situation as of 31 May 2009. http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm
14 Women in ministerial positions: 1in 3 at best, http://www.unifem.org/progress/2008/vs_politics7.html#vstats
15 http://www.capwip.org/participation/womenheadofstate.html
16 BARI Farzana, "Women's Political Participation: Issues and Challenges", United Nations, DAW, Expert Group Meeting, November 2005, p.4-6, www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/egm/enabling-environment2005/docs/EGM-WPD-EE-2005-EP.12%20%20draft%20F.pdf

2. Political factors

The predominance of men in politics, in political parties and in formal political structures, acts as an obstacle for women's political participation. In political parties, national priorities are analysed from a male perspective and women's needs are often ignored and not reflected in the policies of the parties or in the budget designed to implement political projects. Furthermore, women do not generally have access to decision-making positions within the party. The organisation of these structures, the meetings and time management are all focused on male models thus implying an affinity problem for women. Electoral and citizen representational systems can also be a barrier limiting women's political participation.

Electoral systems with closed lists and majority representation or preferential voting can be damaging for female candidates when there are chauvinistic male prejudices concerning women's participation in politics, because to be able to stand out in the lists they need the support and the influential power of their male candidate colleagues. In this regard, proportional representation electoral systems with open electoral lists are more advantageous and give more independence to female candidates. In terms of elections, other factors that can be damaging to female voters are all the bureaucratic processes determining the right to participate in elections. The requirements can be in conflict with the time women can spend performing these types of procedures.

Finally, the manner of organisational power clearly determines women's participation and representation. In several cases, decentralisation has greatly changed the form of political participation and it has generated new opportunities for women to participate directly in decisions that affect their daily lives. However, decentralisation processes do not automatically benefit women[17]. In fact, depending on how they are organised, they may strengthen the power of the elites and they may include discrimination against women by reinforcing their traditional roles and extending to the public sphere their unpaid domestic role. They can also take political affiliation, corruption and violence to a much more profound level and, if accompanied by processes for privatisation of services, as it is generally the case, the damage can be even greater.

3. Socio-cultural Factors

Women's subordination to men remains a universal fact, despite the various contexts. Firstly, the ideology of gender roles limits the time available for women to participate and sometimes it subordinates this exercise to the consent of their family or male group members. Secondly, it creates a gender hierarchy that translates into an undermining of those traditionally female areas, a factor reflected in the indicators showing gender inequalities in education, health, work, access to ownership of production resources and national policies.

Gender roles and stereotypes keep women in those spheres considered feminine, they strengthen the lack of credibility of their actions and their leadership in the political world and they explain the lack of resources and financial support for women's campaigns[18]. Moreover, ethnic and class factors are added to gender factors to limit access to resources and opportunities and are putting women in a dependent relationship hindering their participation in the public and political spheres. Finally, in some regions and contexts, women suffer severe gender coercion even limiting their mobility, preventing them from participating in fields where male and female participation is a must.

4. Economic Factors

To be able to participate in politics it is necessary to have access to important material resources. In many contexts, electoral campaigns are privately financed and material resources are needed to ensure a degree of influential power. Women's lack of access to production resources and to the ownership of goods limits their possibilities for action in the political arena.

5. Lack of social capital and political capabilities

Women's traditional roles have prevented them from reaching a position of leadership. The result is a lack of capabilities and means for political participation, lack of training, lack of economic resources, education, empowerment, and access to information technology.

17 Policy Recommendations of the International Conference on Decentralization, Local Power and Women's Rights: Global Trends in Participation, Representation and Access to Public Services, Mexico City, 18-21 November 2008, http://www.iknowpolitics.org/files/outcomes%20and%20recommendations_IDRC%20conf.pdf
18 Género, Gobernabilidad, y Participación Política de las Mujeres, INSTRAW, 2005, p. 9, http://www.un-instraw.org/jdata/images/files/marco/marcoreferencia_instraw_sp.pdf

In spite of those limitations, women must be considered as political actors and indispensable individuals in the decision-making process, and in accountability. Women's participation and representation in politics is crucial. It is a basic democratic principle, each adult has to be recognised as a citizen of a State and should be able to fully participate in decision-making and have the capacity to represent his or her group so his or her needs and interests are taken into account. Men and women have different interests, priorities and needs in society, therefore one group cannot represent the lawful interests of the other. A woman's voice is indispensable for democracy to embrace the plurality of needs and interests of the whole society[19]. Moreover women's presence in leadership positions represents a model for other women.

As Azza Karam notes, women's presence in the political arena has changed the nature of the political agenda itself. Questions concerning reproductive health and choice, nutrition, equality in education and in employment opportunities and circumstances, care, questions concerning conciliation of professional and personal life, and the environment, are just a few of the areas that women have brought into public debate. Women's participation in spheres of power has generated changes in the perceptions with respect to men's and women's roles in society and sexual division of work, in speech, in how women are regarded and in the way political institutions work[20] .

Women's participation in decision-making and in political life is critical for advancement. Women still suffer inequality because their interests, needs and priorities are not taken into account in the political arena. According to the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, "women's equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved"[21] .

In other words, women's political participation is a condition for their empowerment. When they leave their homes to become active citizens and experience working with men they become more aware of the limitations, discrimination and inequalities they suffer as "women" within society. They become aware of their identity as a group and learn how to organise themselves and become actors for change and pressure groups.

Women's participation in the public sphere can take several forms. They can integrate themselves into pre-existing formal channels of political participation within which they can form a specific group or not. For example, women acting as representatives in parliament can opt for forming a committee or special group to defend women's interests and needs. Or they can come together in civil society organisations and interest groups and, depending on their number, their way of organising themselves and their social and political impact, they may become a social movement. However, it is important to pay attention to their speech and to the values they represent and defend. In patriarchal ideologies, women are the symbol and the custodians of traditional culture and values. The system can even provide them with participation spaces so they can defend those values. These women become "superwomen" defending patriarchal values, therefore they should not be mistaken as "pro women".

However, and despite this confirmation, women's presence in power structures and decision-making should be seen as a very important achievement for equality and special attention must be paid to the forms, sometimes specific forms, of their participation. As Henrietta Moore notes, it is important to pay attention to the "survival strategies" developed by women in order to challenge the patriarchal power without directly being in conflict with it[22] . An example of this includes the Muslim feminist groups. In the context of Muslim societies, characteristic of some of the countries studied, with a more or less important institutionalisation of religion (for instance through legislation) there are women's groups that call themselves "Muslim feminists" [23]. This name varies slightly from one context to another: Islamic feminists, Islamist feminists, secular

19 CORNER Lorraine, "Women's Participation in Decision-Making and Leadership. A Global Perspective", UNIFEM East and Southeast Asia, ACWF, ICAROAP, Philippines, 1997, p. 3, http://www.iknowpolitics.org/en/node/53
20 KARAM Azza, op.cit., p.16
21 Recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action, in Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges, The United Nations Development Programme, 2000, p 89. http://www.iknowpolitics.org/es/node/126
22 MOORE, L. Henrietta, Antropología y Estado, Madrid, Cátedra, 1999
23 LABANI, S., "El movimiento actual de mujeres en Irán. Dinámicas, estrategias y perspectivas de futuro", in Gallego Méndez, M., Maquieira D'Angelo, V., and Bernis Carro, C. (Eds.): Mujeres en un mundo global. Movimientos y Cooperación: 101-114. Publications of Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Madrid, 2007

Muslim feminists, Feminine islamists, etc. Depending on the historical, social and political context, this self-designation can be based on a real social and political project or it can be a strategy to be able to call into question Islamic laws within the Islam framework itself. Thus, they are saved from the accusation of Islamist groups who consider feminist values, as being a "Western product", incompatible with Islam. These women are experts on Islamic doctrine and they use their knowledge to suggest a new interpretation of Islamic laws. For those who consider Islam as a true alternative to western forms of social and political organisation, Islam is an egalitarian religion that has been corrupted by patriarchal interpretations made by men to serve their interests.

In addition to promoting women's participation in politics, it is also important to encourage their representation at all levels of decision-making. In fact, participation is necessary but is not enough to meet the goal of 50 per cent of representation. In many countries in the world, women participated in various social and political movements but once the intended goals were met, their interests were no longer taken into account thus returning them to the private sphere.

Once their representation in power structures and/or decision-making is assured, women need to ensure their permanence in these positions but they also need to deal with other difficulties that determine the effectiveness of their presence. Firstly, they need to impose their political project despite being in a minority situation. Secondly, they need to ensure that their formal representation means real participation and, finally, it is vital that this participation translates into changes in adopted policies and decisions so gender equality becomes institutionalised at all levels[24].

Finally, there is another factor with relation to decentralisation processes and their impact on women. In fact, many of the countries studied are experimenting with decentralisation processes by which some central government competencies and some powers are redistributed to local bodies. For these processes to be beneficial for women and to promote their political participation, they need to be coupled with a gender transforming perspective, giving great importance to women's collective demands, responding to their interests and needs and creating mechanisms for integrating women in the decision-making processes. However, as it has already been noted[25], these mechanisms are not always in place and in some cases decentralisation can even lead to a worsening of women's situation.

24 BADEN Sally, "Gender, Governance and the Feminisation of Poverty " in Women's Political Participation and Good Governance: 21st Century Challenges, The United Nations Development Programme, 2000, p 31.
25 See Point 2 "Political factors"

Therefore, we will try to identify if the decentralisation processes in the countries studied have achieved or are preparing the path for equality in political participation.

Based on all the above, it is necessary to implement **mechanisms and strategies to facilitate women's political participation and representation.** As it has already been said, women's political participation and the wider goal of gender equality are closed interlinked, and therefore many of the actions that will be listed here as strategies to facilitate women's participation are integrated in a general way within the broader goal of gender equality:

1. Gender equality awareness.
2. Transformation of the political agenda so it includes issues concerning gender equality. Health, education, work, housing, etc.
3. Adoption of legislation for gender equality: laws on equality, positive action, etc.
4. Creation of specific institutions for promoting gender equality: ministries, committees, centres, institutes, etc.
5. Creation and strengthening of women's networks and participation in international forums.
6. Changes in power institutions structures and organisation so they respond to women's needs and interests in the daily functions of the institutions.
7. Changes in institutional processes to include an equality perspective: political parties, electoral reforms, campaign financing, women inclusivity decentralisation programmes, etc.
8. Changes in perceptions and in addresses to political participation so they take place from an equality perspective.
9. Promotion of statistics publications and reports on gender equality.
10. Training and empowerment of women in new technologies and in leadership in different areas.
11. Promotion of political participation activities for women belonging to disadvantaged groups or groups meriting special attention.
12. Promotion of political participation activities for young and adolescent women and men.

Obviously, without undermining the vital role of these theoretical and conceptual considerations for gender equality, they need to be evaluated and clarified depending on the context of each of the countries targeted for this analysis. The specific contexts, as well as the processes each of these countries are experimenting with will determine the particular form of political participation, with a gender perspective.

chapter 2

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

A. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Analyses are key instruments for the planning design process of any type of action. A good analysis is needed for identifying the needs and the strengths of the social reality we want to make an impact upon. In this case, our analysis is the second stage of a project called "Elaboration of a Regional Gender Action Plan Proposal in South-East Asia", which identified the intervention priority areas that allow AECID to prepare a regional gender strategy in South-East Asia. During the first stage, a participatory methodology was used to identify and describe priority areas and key actors. A regional seminar with discussion and consultation tables was organised for gathering key actors in each country at three levels –public institutions, international cooperation organisations, and civil society.

The aim of this analysis is to look deeply into one of the areas identified: women's political participation in 7 countries in the region: Cambodia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Vietnam, East Timor and the Philippines. In order to do so, we kept the same structure described in the first stage, collection of data through key reporting agents, extending it with secondary sources concerning the specific areas to be researched and their corresponding indicators. The analysis along with a dynamic methodology combined qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques, and it tried to follow, as far as possible, the participatory approach of the first stage.

Gender conditioning factors were carefully studied when selecting key reporting agents. The gender perspective has been a cross-cutting area of this analysis, from the design of the methodology to the writing, observing the gender roles and stereotypes prevailing in the society of each of the countries studied, making active women visible in the area of political participation.

B. AREAS, INDICATORS AND DATA PROCESSING MATRIX

This main analysis areas and indicators correspond to the elements taken from the theoretical framework explained in the respective chapter.

As a reminder, the two main approaches of the theoretical framework are:

- Deal with political participation and representation in a broader manner, beyond existing conventional forms.

- Consider that gender equality in political participation and representation determines gender equality in other areas.

We have searched for and identified the main research areas and their corresponding indicators based on a gender transforming approach. Therefore, on the one hand we have tried to make women and their situation visible

with regard to political participation and representation, and to understand from there the main barriers for their access and for the consolidation of their presence in these areas. On the other hand, we have looked for the dynamisation mechanisms and the strengths with regard to transforming potential to meet the equality goal in each context.

The specific areas and their indicators form the following data presentation matrix for our analysis:

MAIN AREA	SPECIFIC AREAS	INDICATORS	LIMITING FACTORS	STRENGTHENING FACTORS
Women's political participation/ exclusion	Women's political participation context 1	1.1. Analysis of political system nature and form 1.2. Analysis of electoral system nature and form 1.3. Analysis of power organisation form: centralised or decentralised 1.4. Analysis of civil society outline		
	Women's participation in elections 2	2.1. Gender disaggregated registration rates in electoral lists 2.2. Gender disaggregated participant rates in elections 2.3. Gender disaggregated abstinence rate in elections 2.4. Increasing number of women registered in electoral lists 2.5. Increasing number of women exercising their right to vote 2.6. Existence of opinion polls on gender disaggregated vote orientation		

MAIN AREA	SPECIFIC AREAS	INDICATORS	LIMITING FACTORS	STRENGTHENING FACTORS
	Women's access to institutional power structures and decision-making positions 3	3.1. Existence of analytical studies on gender and political participation 3.2 Existence of awareness programmes on the right to political participation for women in an equal basis with men 3.3. Existence of mechanisms and procedures to facilitate women's political participation and their access to power structures		
	Women's consolidation in institutional power structures and decision-making positions 4	4.1. Women's representation in power structures and decision-making positions: elective positions positions of trust 4.2. Women's period of permanence in power structures and decision-making 4.3. Increasing number of women in power structures and decision-making 4.4. Representation of women with positions of power or decision-making that are traditionally held by men 4.5. Existence of national, regional and international support networks, for experience exchange or mutual strengthening		

MAIN AREA	SPECIFIC AREAS	INDICATORS	LIMITING FACTORS	STRENGTHENING FACTORS
	Women's presence in civil society as an area for political participation 5	5.1. Existence of women's associations, NGOs and groups with a "women agenda" 5.2. Existence of a feminist movement or group 5.3. Existence of women's and feminists' organised networks groups 5.4. Women's presence and participation in other spheres or civil society 5.5. Collaboration or support among public institutions and civil society actors on women's political participation		
	Inclusion of gender perspective in the political agenda of women in power structures or decision-making positions 6	6.1. Priorities in the political agenda of women in power structures and decision-making positions 6.2. Design and implementation of public policies with a gender approach encouraged by women in power structures and decision-making positions 6.3. Existence of training, information, support or consulting resources with experts in gender		

*We are referring to those factors that are a barrier or, at the contrary, favour the implementation of the specific areas. For the description of factors, both limiting and strengthening factors, the following variables will be taken into account: Sex – Age – Geographical context (urban / rural) – Socio-education level, religion, membership to an ethnic group

C. METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR THE ANALYSIS

Next we will detail all the methodological tools used in the field work to compile the necessary and relevant material for the execution of the analysis. The methods employed are not exclusive but complementary, each with a different function and trying to obtain a specific type of information.

Therefore, field work was not exclusively limited to semi-structured interviews, all kinds of secondary information was sought to help establish the most complete analysis possible and to carry out a prior "exploration". With a view to better defining the context and the research issue, it was necessary to visit various centres and organisations (educational centres, research centres, statistics centres, documentation centres, databanks, archives, etc.).

I. Exploratory interviews:

These interviews provided a first exploration and gave some specific indications about women's political participation and representation in each of the countries studied. We looked for female and male experts with specialised knowledge and a deeper perspective of the issue, for theoreticians, professionals, and experts on certain aspects of women's political participation.

The exploratory interviews helped obtain:

- A first guiding evaluation of the context and the situation of experts in the field
- Additional research ideas for the analysis
- Objective data on some aspects of women's political participation and representation in the country
- A map of actors and a list of secondary sources

In order to do so, we searched for, identified and contacted:

- Sociologists and experts in politics (teachers and researchers) belonging to women and feminist social movements, or specialists in electoral behaviour, etc.
- Consultants for private and/or public organisations (national and international) who work in the field of women's political participation, their leadership and other related issues
- Reporters working on topics related to political participation, electoral campaigns, unions, social movements, etc.

The structure of the exploratory interviews included general and specific key questions concerning different aspects of women's political participation and representation in the specific context of the country or region. The questions were translated into English and the interviews were carried out in this language with or without translation, depending on the case. The results were summarised gathering the key and main ideas of the person interviewed. The initial number of planned exploratory interviews by country was 5, since we had to adapt to the realities and availability of field work.

II. Semi-structured interviews:

The semi-structures interviews were carried out with key reporting agents selected in accordance with their involvement in the field concerning the theme under study. Through their perceptions and experiences we carried out an assessment of the actions and projects that have been implemented concerning women's political participation in the specific context of the country or region, explaining the identified strengths and weaknesses.

In order to do so, we have elaborated a script for the interviews, following the same procedure used for the exploratory interviews. It was translated into English and the interviews were also conducted in

this language, with or without the help of a female interpreter.

The interviews helped:

1. Identify the key social and institutional actors in terms of women's political participation. And to find the referenced people and bodies (the pioneers or those with a very established influential work, etc.).
2. Collect information on the way they operate, their experiences, assessing the limitations and possibilities of their work.
3. Detect the specific needs in each of the countries in order to work with gender equality in political participation and representation.

Sample of people interviewed:

The existing diversity and plurality of the contexts studied was taken into account, trying to include different identity-building actions and views.

For the elaboration of this analysis three different areas of study of social and institutional practices were taken into account at the following levels:

1. Institutional and political: All state bodies (legislative, executive and judiciary) at central, regional or local levels. Those entities stemming from the latter (commissions, committees, groups,…), parties and political groups.
2. Technical: Regional and international organisations.
3. Civil society: NGOs, women's associations, feminist organisations, grassroots organisations, mass organisations, foundations, unions, religious groups.

For the establishment of a list of contacts, the criteria for determining the priority order was access to those interviewed, thus significantly reducing the time used to make those contacts.

The initial number of interviewed people in each of the above-mentioned areas was 5, i.e. a total of 15 interviews per country. Like with the exploratory interviews, in each country this number was the target but the reality and the availability of work in the field set the trend. To facilitate and improve the later summarisation of the obtained data, a collection file was created summarising and structuring the answers of those interviewed and their assessment of the contexts and their work.

IMPORTANT NOTE CONCERNING THE INTERVIEWS:

The country-files used for developing chapter 4 were made with a list of those interviewed, including their position in the organisation where they work, and they all agreed to be included in that list. However, the files do not mention directly the name of the specific person with regards to a specific problem, fact or opinion, or the details revealing his or her identity. In addition to the ethics of research requiring the anonymity of opinions and views expressed by those interviewed be kept, as researchers we dealt carefully with the interventions in order not to risk the safety of those interviewed, especially in contexts of political tension, as it is the case in some of the countries under analysis.

III. Secondary and documentary sources:

In the prior stage, the secondary and documentary sources helped to guide the design of this analysis both for the theoretical and the methodological framework. In the following stage they helped obtain the specific details on various points included in the analytical matrix. Furthermore, our intention was to take advantage of the work already carried out in this field, both statistical and analytical work, and not to duplicate efforts. It should also be noted that we have tried to adopt a critical approach concerning the secondary sources used.

For the elaboration of this analysis, the following sources were identified, using them as a basis according to their availability and/or accessibility in each of the countries:

- Official documents (public and private: legislation, official reports, etc.).

- Non-official sources (press, magazines and journals, books, civil society reports, reports of expert organisations, specialised articles, other analyses, etc.).

- Statistical sources (statistics and their analysis).

In the analysis file for each country, we included a list of secondary source and the documentation used.

IV. Field notes

The field notes were a very useful and important tool for the subsequent evaluation of the whole analytical process. It is also a useful tool for the female researcher since it allows for the continuous correction and therefore an increase in the accuracy of the work. The notes helped to evaluate the elements influencing the analysis itself, elements that act independently of the perceptions of the person using them. Therefore it provided a more accurate perspective on the degree of objectivity or the obtained results, explaining the factors influencing them. Sometimes, these factors are themselves indicators of certain aspects of the contexts and the situation.

chapter 3

3. REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK: Description and evaluation

In this chapter, we will be dealing with the United Nations international and regional framework and AECID's policy. These are the entities and/or instruments we based our analysis upon. However, our aim has been to carry out an analysis with a gender perspective and to emphasise its strengths and weaknesses as a regulatory reference framework in terms of gender equality and women's political participation. The regulatory and institutional frameworks of the various countries will be reviewed in the corresponding parts of the analysis.

A. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORK

I. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Protocol (1999)

CEDAW is a legally binding international treaty for all states that have signed up to it and it is a thorough reference framework for all actions in terms of gender equality.

Articles 2 to 4 and article 7 of CEDAW (1979) include all the specific actions concerning the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women's political participation, and they recommend legal and temporary measures, as well as positive actions. Moreover article 8 covers the elimination of discrimination against women's political participation in the international arena.

II. Beijing Platform for Action Declaration

Beijing Platform for Action Declaration (1995) identifies women's full participation in power structures and decision-making as one of its priorities. It considers that all levels of decision-making (governments, national bodies, private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers' organisations, research and academic institutions, sub-regional and regional bodies and non-governmental organisations) must take "measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and "must increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership".

This instrument has been complemented by the document resulting from the forty-ninth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, as a follow-up to the "Beijing Platform for Action +10" of 2005.

III. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325

Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (2000) reaffirms the importance of women's leadership in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, including peace-building.

IV. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Declaration

Objective 3 of the Declaration (2000) establishes gender equality as a goal and as a condition for meeting the other goals.

Indicator 3.3 of objective 3 refers to the proportion of seats held by women in the national parliament.

V. Mandate of UNESCAP

The mandate of UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) is to promote – through regional cooperation - economic and social development in the region, and to serve as a convener for regional follow-up of global mandates such as CEDAW, BPfA and the MDGs. UNESCAP's Social Development Division has a Gender Equality and Empowerment Section, whose role is to coordinate those working towards gender equality and women's empowerment in the region. The sector operates as a facilitator and builds linkages between governments, civil society and other partners in order to strengthen channels for communication and dialogue, interaction and involvement in national, sub-regional, regional and global policy development and implementation. Women's participation in democratic governance is one of its priorities[26].

Within this framework it is important to mention the Bangkok Communiqué, established after the High-level Intergovernmental Meeting to Review Regional Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and its Global Results, held in this city in September 2004. This document is a reference framework in the region setting seven priority areas for meeting the goal of equality: legislation, capacity building, ratification of conventions, mainstreaming of policies, education and research, data gathering and gender equality reforms.

For gender equality to become a tangible reality, international, regional and national policies need to include it and make it a cross-cutting area. In turn, equality is a necessary condition for the development and achievement of the other development goals.

Therefore, it is important to expand the development goals and the indicators by strengthening the relation between MDGs, CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. Women's advancement in a specific area increases their possibility of advancing in other areas but in order to achieve this it is necessary to fight structural gender inequalities in all areas. However, to make these instruments operational, constitutional and legislative changes are needed, as well as the implementation of structures and processes ensuring gender equality in institutions, creation and strengthening of women's organisations, and finally the introduction of adapted budgetary measures[27].

B. REGULATORY AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK – AECID'S INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY

Spanish policy for development cooperation lies within the framework of its national policy for gender equality. The following can be mentioned as reference framework:

1. Organic Law No. 3/2007 of 22 March for effective equality between women and men

2. Strategic Plan on Equality. Spanish Women's Institute. 2008-2011

Next we will analyse the following instruments for Spanish international and regional cooperation[28]:

I. Spanish Cooperation Master Plan, 2005-2008 and 2009-2012[29]

Promotion of gender equality is a main area for Spanish cooperation agencies.

26 "Strengthening Gender-Responsive Governance in the UNESCAP Region: A Building-Block for Post-Conflict Reconstruction policies", Technical Background Paper, July 2006, p.3. www.unescap.org/ESID/GAD/Issues/Governance/Technical%20Background-Gender%20Responsive-withoutAppendix2.pdf
27 "Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in the Asia-Pacific: Linking the Millennium Development Goals with the CEDAW and Beijing Indicators", Gender and Development Discussion Paper Series No. 20, ESCAP, p. 21
28 For a detailed analysis on Spanish cooperation gender equality policies, refer to the report: FERNÁNDEZ-LAYOS FERNÁNDEZ Ana Lydia and CORREA GARCÍA Maria del Mar. Análisis de Género en la Ayuda Oficial al Desarrollo. Ayuda en Acción, Entreculturas and InteRed, October 2008
29 Our analysis is developed within the framework of the 2005-2008 Master Plan, although while working on it, the new 2009-2012 Master Plan was approved.

In the 2005-2008 Master Plan, gender equality and equity are:

a) A strategic objective: to increase women's independence.

b) A horizontal priority: to adjust lines of action to United Nations instruments (see previous section).

c) A development objective: to fight efficiently and in a sustained way against poverty, to achieve democracy, peace and sustainable development in the world.

d) A sector priority: to develop strategic lines and priority measures in the Gender and Development sector in terms of women's empowerment.

In this instrument, Spanish cooperation embraces the fundamental principles of equality and non-discrimination, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach and cross-cutting strategies and specific actions for empowerment.

The Master Plan foresees the following mechanisms for integrating a gender perspective in Spanish policy for international cooperation:

1. Institutionalisation and integration of a gender perspective in Spanish cooperation.
2. Promotion of political dialogue on gender issues.
3. Coordination and cooperation among the various actors of Spanish cooperation in the field of gender equality.

In terms of women's empowerment, one of the strategic lines and priority courses of action for the 2005-2008 Master Plan refers to the promotion of wider representation by women and equal participation in all social and political areas. This strategic line involves:

- Participation in political parties, management and candidacies.
- A presence in the legislative power.
- Presence in public administrations.
- Support for the civil society, especially for social organisations working on the promotion and defence of women's rights.

The other strategic lines of this sector priority are strengthening of national gender equality policies and mechanisms, improvement of women's opportunities in the economic area and training in citizenship values.

However, the main area of this plan is poverty and not inequality, thus determining the strategic objectives and lines, placing women within the group of vulnerable people and as beneficiaries of actions and not agents for development by themselves.

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However, the main area of this plan is poverty and not inequality, thus determining the strategic objectives and lines, placing women within the group of vulnerable people and as beneficiaries of actions and not agents for development by themselves.

The Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008 Master Plan establishes the following priority among the countries of the Asia Pacific region:

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	
PRIORITY COUNTRIES	Vietnam and the Philippines
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION	East Timor, Afghanistan, Cambodia, South-East Asian countries that have suffered the consequences of the 2004 tsunami
PREFERENTIAL COUNTRIES	Bangladesh and China

The new Spanish Cooperation 2009-2012 Master Plan also adds the gender in development approach as a basis for a common and shared policy for human development. A gender approach is still a horizontal and sector priority as it was in the former Master Plan but the intention is to further consolidate the previous goals. The objective of the new Plan is to contribute to reach the full exercise of Human Rights and citizenship for women through empowerment, understood as a mechanism to overcome poverty and the inequality and injustice gap suffered by women in their gender relations.

The new Plan sees it as critical that Spanish Cooperation reinforces the Gender and Development approach together with the operational principles of Effective Aid and that it reaffirms the need to combine the double priority of gender empowerment and mainstreaming with a view to meeting gender equality and equity as goals for development.

The 2009-2012 Master Plan proposes three elements to be considered when addressing the cross-cutting approach:

- In the practical exercise of cross-cutting, gender approach or any other key areas are to be included in the priority lists of the institution and policy to be executed. In other words, the gender issue needs to be mainstreamed once again, in a real way and not just as a declaration of principles.

- For a cross-cutting strategy to be successful, it needs to be combined, as suggested by the Beijing Platform, with an empowerment strategy specific to women. They reinforce and complement each other to obtain better results in the development action at all stages, from their planning, management, and following-up to its evaluation.

- Gender institutionalisation processes need to be implemented at medium and long term range: To do so, operational bodies working on gender equality, as gender units with trained human resources and budgets for development, need to be created, so as to show a real political will toward integration of a gender approach in an organisation or development policy.

The following table describes the steps proposed by the 2009-2012 Master Plan for an effective integration of the GAD approach in cooperation measures in a sector, institution or cooperation actor:

INTEGRATION LEVELS OF GAD APPROACH	INTERVENTION AREAS	STEPS TO FOLLOW: Intervention lines, consecutive or not.	PRIORITY ACTIONS
Formal integration of GAD approach	Spanish Cooperation national level (it refers to its definition by the central administration from SECI and to its implementation by those working in Spanish Cooperation)	1. Integration in the development policy mainstream Gender approach seen as a policy priority for Spanish Cooperation.	1.1 Reflect it expressly, both verbally and in the mission statement defining policies for development: Laws and Master Plan. 1.2 Reaffirm the international commitments, especially international commitments ratified by Spain. 1.3 Concept redefinition of internal political-strategic content comprising its reference framework, and reinforcing the two previous points. These changes are more specifically embodied in the strategic planning process. 1.4 Strategic planning processes with a cross-cutting gender approach, both in tools (gender disaggregated data, gender analysis, etc…) and in strategic-political documents, such as Sector Strategy Papers (SSPs), Country Strategy Papers (CSPs), Special Attention Plans (SAPs) and the Spanish Annual International Cooperation Plan (PACI).

INTEGRATION LEVELS OF GAD APPROACH	INTERVENTION AREAS	STEPS TO FOLLOW: Intervention lines, consecutive or not.	PRIORITY ACTIONS
Real integration of GAD approach	Spanish Cooperation national level Also applicable to the design of instruments for the implementation of GAD approach in national or local structures located in the partner countries	2. Institutionalisation	2.1 Creation of specific GAD units in the structure chart, to the highest decision-making level possible, combining cross-cutting and type of sector. 2.2 HR specialisation in Gender and Development. 2.3 Specific budget for gender equality assigned to cross-cutting. 2.4 Awareness and training for the institution personnel. 2.5 Changes in the organisation culture. From language to gender balance in decision-making positions. 2.6 Progressive founding of GEDEA (Gender and Development & Effective Aid) network for harmonisation, coherence and coordination of gender policies. 2.7 Summarisation and dissemination of good practices: Good practices and resources databanks. 2.8 Research favouring cross-cutting implementation.

INTEGRATION LEVELS OF GAD APPROACH	INTERVENTION AREAS	STEPS TO FOLLOW: Intervention lines, consecutive or not.	PRIORITY ACTIONS
		3. Gender cross-cutting: Capacity building	3.1 Elaboration of a methodological guide for effectively integrating GAD approach as a cross-cutting priority, intended for all actors of Spanish Cooperation. 3.2 Trained human resources. Continuous training and knowledge transfer on GAD and Effective Aid for all actors of Spanish Cooperation. 3.3 Operational schedule with cross-cutting gender approach in scheduling tools, from central headquarters to offices on the field, i.e. Object Oriented Programming (OOP) and Procedure Oriented Programming (POP). 3.4 Gender cross-cutting in all instruments and forms of Spanish Cooperation, both traditional and new. From planning: gender disaggregated data, analysis and change indicators 3.5 Definition of gender-specific actions ensuring effective gender cross-cutting in cooperation interventions. 3.6 Monitoring and evaluation with a gender approach and definition of impact indicators and results measuring the fulfilment of gender cross-cutting.
	Spanish national level and in national or local structures located in partner countries	4. Empowerment	4.1 Design and approval of a Gender and Development and Effective Aid specific programme where the steps for the effective implementation of cross-cutting priority and women's empowerment are put into practice. 4.2 Action Plans and Sector Programmes for women's empowerment.

Spanish Cooperation 2009-2012 Master Plan, page 102

With regard to the new priorities as per country established in the new Master Plan, the Asia Pacific region is divided as follows:

ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	
PRIORITY COUNTRIES	Vietnam and the Philippines
WITH SPECIAL ATTENTION	East Timor, Afghanistan, Cambodia and Bangladesh

II. Spanish Cooperation "Gender and Development" Strategy (2007)

This document aims at becoming the reference instrument in terms of gender equity and equality for Spanish Cooperation. Its goals are to cohere, to complement and to harmonise with the actions of public administrations and Spanish organisations working on gender and development. It is also a mechanism for dissemination and an information source in international bodies where Spain participates with the partner countries and their organisations specialised in gender.

Specific objective 4 of gender and development foresees: "to collaborate with partner countries with a view to reinforcing progressive change processes towards formal and real equality, ensuring women's full exercise of their civil and political rights as an indisputable step towards their full citizenship, by building those public policies and mechanisms for effectively, and as a priority, reducing and controlling the various types of discrimination against women in their diversity of identities and in the areas of international, national and local participation".

Furthermore, the strategic lines differentiate between formal equality, real equality and gender-specific actions for this specific objective 4.

LEVEL FOR FORMAL EQUALITY

- Adjustment to international regulations on women's civil and political rights.

LEVEL FOR REAL EQUALITY

- Strengthening of democratic governance for women's equality and citizenship.
- Strengthening of equality mechanisms and policies.
- Support of regional integration processes on gender equality policies.
- Favour women's integral safety, reduction and regulation of gender violence.

LEVEL OF GENDER-SPECIFIC ACTIONS

- Women's citizen participation from a GAD approach.
- Women's empowerment in political representation.
- Migrations and GAD in women's civil and political rights.
- Strengthening and participation of women's organisations in humanitarian action and peace-building situations.

The difference between the different levels, formal, real and specific action measures, is one of the virtues of this strategy. However, one of the weaknesses comes from the lack of an "instructions manual" for these goals, such as specific actions, monitoring mechanisms, evaluation indicators and means to make them effective.

For the Asia-Pacific region, the priority actions established by the Gender and Development Strategy lie within the strategic lines of the abovementioned specific objective 4.

III. 2005-2008 Asia Plan and Final Results of the Plan

The 2005-2008 Asia Plan is the AECID's instrument for defining the lines of political, economic, cultural and social cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region. It is a catalogue of priority actions and sector-specific plans that aim at correcting the deficit in the presence of Spanish cooperation in previous years (2000-2004 Framework Plan). It is based mainly in the Directorate-General of Cooperation and Foreign Policy for Asia and the Pacific created within AECID in 2004.

In terms of reinforcing political dialogue and international cooperation for development, the preferential areas of the Action Plan are the following:

1. Institutionalised political dialogue and high-level visits.
2. Bilateral political agenda and, through European Union programmes, ASEM. Support for conflict resolution and strengthening on regional integration efforts and human rights protection.
3. Commitments from the Millennium Declaration included in the Spanish Cooperation Master Plan (2005-2008) and in the Plan for reconstruction of those countries affected by the tsunami.
4. Promotion of the Alliance of Civilizations in accordance with the United Nations.

Human Rights and Rule of Law are issues included in the new international agenda in the Spain-Asia relations with a specific view to fighting against women's discrimination and gender violence. Fighting against poverty is still one of the main areas of the plan, together with the commitments of the Millennium Goals incorporated in the Master Plan. The priority action sectors include gender and development but they are considered as a chapter in themselves and not as a perspective that needs to carry across all sector policies.

Political participation is generally absent from the plan and specific actions in terms of governance are not considered.

An analysis of the entire document reveals the lack of a gender perspective as a cross-cutting area of the Action Plan sector policies. It is not integrated in the analysis per country, in the sociodemographic data or in the central cooperation areas. The issue of gender equality is mentioned in specific actions intended for women, as members of disadvantaged groups or those meriting special attention.

IV. AECID specific instruments depending on the country: SAP - CSP

Specific plans and papers are particularly relevant for our analysis since they convey in a more specific way Spanish cooperation policy in the countries in this study.

AECID has Special Attention Plans (SAPs) for the following special attention countries according to our analysis:

1. Bangladesh SAP 2006-2008
2. Cambodia SAP 2006-2008
3. Indonesia SAP 2006-2008
4. Sri Lanka SAP 2006-2008
5. East Timor SAP 2006-2008

And the following Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) for the following priority countries:

6. Philippines CSP 2005-2008
7. Vietnam CSP 2005-2008

Gender approach applied to SAP analysis:

As for the SAPs, they all recognise the persistence of gender inequalities and identify gender equality as a central cross-cutting area. However this is not included as a horizontal objective for all defined strategic lines. In most cases, gender equality is considered as a horizontal objective in those lines of action referring to the increase in human capacities (mainly health and education) and on some occasions in strategic lines related to the increase in economic capacities: provision of infrastructures in Cambodia, micro and small enterprises in Cambodia and Indonesia. The other SGs (Specific Goals) – increase of institutional and social capacities, increase of capacities for improvement of environmental sustainability, conflict prevention and peace building – do not include gender equality as a horizontal goal.

As for East Timor, with the exception of the strategic line concerning improvement of sexual and reproductive health and reduction of maternal mortality, none of the other lines consider gender equality as a horizontal goal. Only in two countries, Bangladesh and Cambodia, do increases in capacities and independence of women represent a specific sector or goal. In these two countries the promotion of wider women's representation and equal participation at all social and political levels are considered as strategic lines of action for this SG.

As for women's political participation, priority actions described by SAP in Bangladesh and Cambodia anticipate support to civil society and to organisations for the promotion and defence of women's rights as the only specific action.

Gender approach applied to CSP analysis:

In the case of Vietnam, the analysis and study of the context are carried out without a gender perspective. Women's needs are not emphasised in any of the points studied and data is not gender disaggregated. However, the point concerning women's capacity and independence analyses their situation, from a political and cultural point of view. The Vietnam CSP does not include any gender equality strategy nor does it consider it an important factor in poverty reduction, despite the clear will for cross-cutting gender equality, including specific objective 6, i.e. "increase in women's capacities and independence".

Moreover, the detailed analysis of the goals and strategic lines reveals that gender equality is not a horizontal goal in all actions. There is just one action, in strategic objective 1: Action III: "Strengthen government and local institutions for embracing a strategy to reduce poverty, favour harmonisation, alignment and coordination of donors", whose horizontal goal is gender equality and which could somehow involve strengthening women's political participation in order to achieve specific objective 1.

The Philippines CSP lacks a gender approach and perspective completely. These are not applied to the analysis or the study neither of the context, nor to the definition of vulnerabilities and interests shared between the Philippines and Spain. No quantitative data is gender disaggregated. Gender equality is not suggested as a cross-cutting area or as a specific goal.

However, there are some specific actions addressed to women with the goal of their empowerment, targeting them as a group meriting special attention within other vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. The most relevant action for this analysis is strategic line 1.a 3): "Strengthening of self-organisational processes and empowerment of civil society". The horizontal goal for this action is to increase the capacities of the poorest populations and women's independence, and it matches the strategies and mechanisms intended to favour women's political organisation.

The findings of the analysis of Spanish cooperation regulatory and institutional framework in the South-East Asian region from a gender perspective:

We have noted that some CSPs and SAPs integrate a gender approach and an "increase in capacities and independence of women" from Spanish Cooperation 2005-2008 Master Plan as a horizontal and sector priority. However, none of them presents a systematic analysis of the situations concerning inequalities between men and women. The differentiated needs of men and women in the

various sectors are not identified or pointed out. This absence in the analyses translates into a lack of prioritisation of a gender perspective in the targeted development goals, and therefore in the various sectors and actions to be developed. This hinders the integration of this goal in the priorities later defined in the various sectors, since it is not seen as necessary for meeting the set strategic objective. As an example, the horizontal goal of gender equality is not perceived as necessary for meeting the strategic objective of increase in economic capacities or the goal of conflict prevention and peace building, therefore it is not included in the defined strategic lines (SLs).

In other words, the impact of gender equality for meeting the goals is not perceived since in all CSPs and SAPs this horizontal goal is restricted to SLs referring directly to women and not to those referring to the population as a whole. Finally, they present women as a vulnerable group together with other groups such as young people or ethnic minorities, undermining women's role as promoters of social change through their empowerment and leading participation[30].

Despite CEDAW's mandates, the Beijing Platform for Action recommendations and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 emphasising the impact of political participation in the political and social development of a country, it is not considered a specific and priority goal of the Spanish policy for development cooperation in the region. The analysis of AECID's strategy in these countries reveals that women's political participation is seen as a separate chapter and with a relative importance that is not integrated with the other strategic objectives and that do not contribute to their achievement. On the one hand, it is included in SG 6 and, on the other hand, in most of the analysed instruments specific objective 1 concerning Democratic Governance does not include gender equality as a horizontal goal. This implies that these strategies do not see women's political participation as a direct contribution to democratic governance in a country, nor to the achievement of the other goals (such as, for instance, peace building). Thus it is recorded as a different and separate goal, and it is not considered a priority.

Moreover there is a lack of homogeneity at regional level with regard to the need of cross-cut gender equality in development strategies. It is also true that women's advancement has not followed the same patterns in the 7 countries. This could somewhat justify the priority differences established in each country; however, the lack of summarisation of gender equality cross-cutting in all defined goals brings about incoherence in terms of gender equality in cooperation policies. Spanish cooperation in the region is still very much influenced by the WID approach, with specific actions for women, including them as a disadvantaged or special attention group.

In all the documents analysed, it has been repeatedly stated that one of the main goals of their actions will be the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals Declaration. We need to remember that this declaration makes the achievement of all defined goals to fight against poverty conditional on meeting Objective 3 related to gender equality. Moreover, CEDAW, Beijing Platform for Action, and UN Security Council Resolution 1325 promote women's political participation as a condition for achieving gender equality.

Therefore, it is necessary to provide adequate coordination and harmonisation mechanisms along with a gender strategy in the region so all instruments and actors for development cooperation adjust to, on the one hand, international instruments and mandates with regard to gender and, on the other, to AECID's Gender Strategy and Master Plan. The previously defined international instruments must serve as a reference framework for the establishment and definition of cooperative strategic goals. Therefore, it is critical to define clear methodological tools, setting the lines of action and the action plans with a view to providing the instruments needed to explain why and how a gender perspective has to be integrated in a cross-cutting manner into all established actions (and adapted to specific contexts), in the regional CSPs and SAPs.

30 ANGULO Gloria, "Hacia la igualdad de género en Camboya: Diagnóstico y propuestas para la cooperación española". Madrid-Phnom Penh, March 2008, p. 44

chapter 4

4. RESULTS OF COUNTRY-SPECIFIC ANALYSIS

A. BANGLADESH

1- ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN BANGLADESH

Despite the barriers represented by the patriarchal rules and the purdha (literally, veil) that subordinates women, in a society where 80 per cent of the population is Muslim and the other 20 per cent is Hindu, Bangladeshi women have been increasingly present in the political sphere for the last two decades. The system of quotas has ensured their representation in the national parliament and in local governments. Those outside the political representation arenas have shown much enthusiasm by participating in electoral campaigns and being active in civil society, mainly in the women's movement.

In January 2007, after a period of serious social disorders, a new military regime was established. In December 2008, the latest parliamentary elections took place, and the Awami League party was elected by a comfortable majority, and its female president, Sheikh Hasina, is currently Prime Minister of Bangladesh. The main opposition party, Bangladesh National Party, is also led by a woman, Khaleda Zia, who was the prime minister in the previous parliamentary term. Both the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition party are women with extensive political backgrounds in their families. The prime minister's father was the founder and the first chief of cabinet power in Bangladesh and the opposition representative's husband was president of the country. Despite these examples, women's political representation in Bangladesh is still not very high.

There are still many social, economic, cultural and political barriers preventing women from having an active role in politics. However, in legislative elections women represent 51 per cent of voters and 50 per cent in local elections. In the current national parliament, 18.6 per cent of seats are held by women, that is to say 64 out of 345, from which 45 are reserved for women through the system of quotas and 19 seats by direct election. There are currently 13,494 female members at the Union Level and 481 female Vice-presidents in the Upazilas. The current government boasts 4 female ministers, the highest ever reached in the country. Moreover they hold ministries that have never before being held by women. Bangladesh also has, in addition to the prime minister, a female minister of agriculture, of home affairs and of foreign affairs.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT

LIMITING FACTORS

- The political culture based on vengeance, distrust and corruption has ideological, political, religious and institutional dimensions that are rooted in the whole of society. The result is an institutionalisation of violence as a means of political expression.

- The years 2006-2008 saw a very serious political crisis. A state of emergency with military control was imposed, and the result was the limitation of certain fundamental rights provided by the constitution, including freedom of expression and the right of assembly. Pro-human rights local groups still denounce abuses committed by the military and extra-judicial executions.

- Violence against women is structural and it affects all areas of their lives. In 2007, 192 cases of women being attacked with acid were registered, and a significant increase in domestic violence and

women's trafficking has been denounced. More than half of the women's population feels great insecurity and loneliness even in their own neighbourhoods.

- Women face many difficulties if they want to directly present themselves as candidates during elections. They face the violence of the most conservative groups. Despite the regulatory guarantees for their political participation, gender roles and prejudices are very strong, and these view women as not being apt to exercise power. Socio-cultural norms and religious interpretations are very frequently used to cut down on women's rights, to create a climate of insecurity among them and to discourage them from participating in politics.

- The low literacy and education rates of women are a significant barrier for their access to the public arena. The HDI is one of the lowest among the countries studied. Women's illiteracy rate is 68.6 per cent (49.7 per cent for men). Percentage of women registered in first, second and third grade is 88 per cent, 51 per cent y 32 per cent[31] respectively.

- Disparities between urban and rural areas are still very significant. Despite growth in urbanisation in recent years, the current level is 20.17 per cent of the population.

- The decentralisation process has not been coupled with wider democratisation in the country. Local governments are in a position of subordination and are virtually controlled by the central government, where competencies reside.

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- A shortage of analytical studies of women's political participation and a shortage of complete statistical data. There are few pre-electoral studies. It is hard to find documentation on the issue in English. The website of the country's National Institute of Statistics has not been translated to English.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- According to the analysis of the female experts that were interviewed, despite having only few women in leadership positions in the political parties, their number has increased in recent electoral campaigns as a way of prompting women to vote.

- During the latest elections, there was a significant increase in the number of female candidates, especially at local level. At present there are 4 female ministers in the government (highest ever level), one Prime Minister, two female judges in the Supreme Court and 19 women directly elected as members of parliament. The percentage of women parliamentarians has tripled in less than 30 years.

- International cooperation agencies and the Electoral Committee, during the months preceding the 2008 general elections, supported national institutions in order to contribute to transparent elections. The actions put in place were:

- Registration of voters. Giving each registered person an identification document with their details and photograph. For many citizens this represents their first and single identity document, acknowledging them as citizens. Its delivery represented an exercise of democracy encouraging participation in elections;

- Voters' education. The media was used to encourage general participation and specifically women's and youngster's participation;

- Capacity building in both male and female politicians. With a view to achieving greater transparency in elections;

- The logistics for holding the elections. It included electoral places only for women where the management and reception of votes was carried out by women themselves;

- Monitoring of elections.

31 UNSTATS Statistics 2000-2004 http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/education/ed2.htm#IWM

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Having significant financial resources is one of the conditions for participating in politics, both for organising of the electoral campaigns and for benefiting from a sphere of influence. Membership of political parties depends on the organisational and electoral needs of each party. There is no statistical data on women's presence in the parties, but very few hold leadership positions within them.

- The political parties electoral programmes make little reference to gender equality and it is not a priority in their policies. Although most candidates express their support of gender equality, the truth is that few support the necessary legal and electoral reforms to meet it. Muslim parties such as Jamaat-e-Islami do not defend equality of rights and they explicitly express their preference for gender segregation.

- The mechanisms for women's promotion haven't got enough resources to make it a reality. Many are being forgotten, as is becoming the case with the National Plan of Action for Women's Advancement (1998). Moreover, these mechanisms do not include specific measures to integrate women from ethnic minorities or women in situations of social exclusion. Government initiatives in favour of women, such as the Advancement of Women Policies (1997), were blocked by the government's most conservative factions. On the other hand, some positive action measures, such as the 10 per cent of women's representation in institutional bureaucracy, are not observed.

- There is a shortage of analytical studies on women's political participation and on the difficulties they face.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are systems of quotas for different levels of exercise of power. Since 1980, 45 seats of direct election by parties are reserved for women in the national parliament. Thanks to this measure, women's advancement in parliament has been very positive: In 1980 they represented only 6 per cent and nowadays they represent 18 per cent. In 1997 the government passed a law on quotas for women in local elections (Union Parishad). There are three seats reserved for them, which represents 25 per cent. These are occupied via indirect election but they can also obtain any of the general seats via direct election. At the next level, Upazila[32], there is also a quota for a female vice-president. Moreover, the Electoral Committee's regulations require all political parties that wish to be registered in the general elections to have 33 per cent of women, giving until 2020 for the implementation of this rule.

- Women in power positions, and specifically the Prime Minister, have expressed their wish to include gender equality in their political agenda. The priorities set out are the following:

  - In Parliament: increase of reserved seats from 45 to 100, and to make them elected seats and not by free election by the parties.

  - In the other levels: increase in the seats reserved for women to a 30 per cent of their members, setting their competencies and giving them decision-making power and specific competencies.

  - At administrative level, observance of the reserved quota of 10 per cent at all levels, and that this is gradually increased to reach 30 per cent.

At the political party level, that they include in their lists female candidates at 30 per cent.

- There are international and national instruments for Bangladesh to advance in gender equality. In 1984 it ratified CEDAW but with reservations regarding two articles related to equality of rights in matrimony and family.
Moreover the government has adopted the Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA) without reservations. Both regulations are the reference frameworks for equality policy at national level. The Constitution, in addition to the abovementioned quotas, expressly declares equal rights for men and women. In 1995 the National Council on Women and Development is founded and in 1998 the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs. The same

32 Administrative sub-divisions in the districts. There are 481 Upazilas, divided in Parishad Unions (Council Unions). They are all part of the local government system.

year witnessed the adoption of the National Action Plan for Advancement of Women.
Also the Advancement of Women Policies policy, presented on International Women's Day, 8th March 1997, includes as a strategy for Poverty reduction "quotas reserved in parliament, at local level, in public administration and in the composition of political parties". It is worth mentioning the Acid Control Act, dated 2002, a regulation that prohibits production without licence, importing, transport, storage, sale and use of acid, with sentences ranging from 3 to 10 years in prison.
Since this law was adopted, the number of attacks on women involving acid has decreased. The government is currently working on the Domestic Violence Bill that punishes domestic violence. There are also some public institutions, such as the National Institute of Local Government, training women to become leaders.

- The main two political parties in the country are led by women, whose efforts made possible the unification and consolidation of their parties at times of political crisis. They have also contributed to the changes in gender prejudices regarding women's political role, especially in a traditional and patriarchal culture, such as Muslim and Hindu cultures. They represent therefore powerful leadership models for all Bangladeshi women. The presence of female representatives in the local government has turned them into agents of change for rural women and for NGOs working in this area.

- There are numerous awareness actions carried out by NGOs and civil society associations and organisations in an effort to boost women's political participation. The organisations have female gender experts who also collaborate and work with international bodies. At present, with the support of the women's movement and as an awareness campaign, public TV is showing "Women in politics and good governance", at the same time as local elections are taking place, and it is very popular. At national level, the women's movement celebrates dates such as the 8th of March, human rights day or the day against violence. Likewise, they give publicity to cases of violence against women, with them participating in demonstrations and appearing in the front cover of printed media.

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The political arena is dominated by men, therefore women are forced to adapt themselves to the male models and styles of power exercise. The consequences are many: for example, women cannot prioritise their needs and interests, they suffer discriminatory and derogatory attitudes and behaviours on the part of their male colleagues and they cannot count on the cooperation of the latter to incorporate their decisions. Moreover, since their educational levels are lower, especially in rural areas, they lack the necessary tools to operate on an equal footing.

- Reduced presence of women in political parties, and especially in leadership positions.

- Bangladesh has implemented positive discrimination reserving a percentage of seats for women in the various political bodies of the country. However, they are frequently assigned tasks related to education or health, without financial resources, dependent on other bodies and with little decision power.

- The system of quotas reserves a number of positions for women, however in many cases their responsibilities are not specified and they end up being excluded from commissions and decision-making bodies.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- Women's presence in the highest political representation spheres does not represent the general trend. The dynamics of being affiliated to big political dynasties is still a factor of access. At ministerial level, this representation has never exceeded 3 per cent. At present there are 4 female ministers, which is a historical record.

- There is no coordination between public institutions and the NGOs comprising the women's movement. Support depends on loyalty and political stability. The result is a weak civil society.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There is a significant women's movement in the country. They work as a network in an effort to be aware of the various actions taken by each of them, and they share an agenda. They have mostly been working towards equality for more than 20 years. The organisations in the country have formed a national network for support and claims. Bangladesh Mahila Parishad gathers together all organisations in the country working on women's political participation. At regional level, Asian Foundation works on this issue and supports training for organisations. Through the Beijing Platform for Action, women's organisations are in contact with the international movement.

- Progress on public policies with a gender perspective was achieved thanks to the demands of the women's movement. At present they are claiming the implementation of the Policy on Women of 1997 and the change in personal laws with a view to making them civil, equal and common to the whole population and not based on the religious faith of each community.

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Women in top power positions have an agenda for gender equality.

- Some of the female ministers came from the women's movement therefore they were well aware of their claims.

2- QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Due to the tense political situation brought about by the change in government, interviews with representatives of public institutions could not be done. None of them accepted our request for an interview. Therefore, to elaborate this qualitative assessment, we used the secondary sources available.

Most women in power structures and decision-making positions acknowledge that this role has given them more power and have raised their status in society. However, many mention the frustrations and limitations they have to suffer. They need to fight against strong gender prejudices and combine this role with their household responsibilities.

Family can be a limitation for their participation in politics, except in the case of those belonging to political clans, which is precisely where most women in Parliament come from. This type of bond implies limitations in the exercise of power since they are tied to dynamics of political loyalty conditioning their decisions.

Many of those interviewed insist on the importance of breaking the gender roles and responsibilities that generate discrimination at all levels of society, including at the political level, hindering and preventing women's political participation. Many talk about the negative attitudes of their male work colleagues, stressing the need for public institutions to create material, financial, psychological and training support and to promote awareness actions for both men and women.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

International cooperation agencies have specific funds for developing cross-cutting gender policies and democratic governance with a gender transforming perspective, with other NGOs or government institutions leading the projects.

They report that the main difficulty in supporting actions is the country's political instability, corruption and the significance of the patriarchal culture in the Bangladeshi society, which slows down a great deal of changes in social practices and in legislation.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

Women's organisations have female gender experts and the directors are always women. They have a significant social base and a wide network of activists, thus greatly facilitating the dissemination and consequences of their activities. All the organisations interviewed have training and political empowerment actions or programmes for women.

One of the main needs detected is training for political female leaders: training in basic capacities, such as learning to speak and express themselves in public, as well as training in specific issues on planning and political design. Due to the low levels of education for women, in many occasions the first step is literacy.

Another important obstacle when working on women's political participation is the relevance of traditional culture, sexual division of work and social resistance to women's presence in politics. Some of the women interviewed mentioned obstacles related to fundamentalism and its impact on all aspects of women's lives.

They state that if projects want to have a sustainable impact in the long run, especially when working on changing discriminatory social practices, they need to have long-term financing and planning, and this is not always the case. It is necessary to develop awareness actions at all levels of society. Furthermore, they stress the need to have adequate materials, such as computers and multimedia equipment, etc.

However, many of them consider that all these initiatives are worthless if women's presence is not promoted and the government does not create the appropriate spheres. At the same time, they believe that the country's political stability is a sine qua non condition to promote women's political participation.

B. CAMBODIA

1- ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN CAMBODIA

Cambodia has undergone one of the bloodiest dictatorships in the region, during the years of the Pol Pot regime more than one quarter of the Cambodian population were exterminated between 1975 and 1979. This period has left deep scars that will take generations and many efforts to heal. People are not trained and they do not have a consolidated experience in universities, ministries or research centres that help them get out of this situation, thus there is a lack of a democratic culture and of a sense of credibility towards people in government.

When the Pol Pot regime came to an end, both men and women had to work really hard, since a great deal of men with specialised training were killed during the said regime, and women had to take on broader social responsibilities and work strenuously regardless their lack of education.

With market liberalisation and the increase in private sector and industries, women were expelled from the labour market and from economic development. At present, literacy among women only reaches 64 per cent, while men's is 84 per cent. There is a significant difference in Cambodia between rural and urban

areas, and the urban population makes 15 per cent of the total population.

The first national elections were held in 1993 and local elections in 1992. Women's representation has gradually improved in terms of numbers. In the Senate, out of the 61 seats, women held 8 in 1998 (13.11 per cent), 11 in 2003 (18.03 per cent) and 9 in 2006 (14.75 per cent). Likewise, in Parliament there is a numeric increase since 1993, when women represented 5 per cent of the candidates, until the 2008 elections, when women represented 17.02 per cent of the candidates. Those women who were elected present similar percentages: 4.16 per cent in 1993, 5.73 per cent in 1998, 12.19 per cent in 2003, and 16.26 per cent in 2008. When forming the government, since 1998 up to the present time, in all mandates out of the 25/26 ministries, only 2 women have been ministers in each government. At local government level, the level of the elected women reached 14.64 per cent in 2007. At commune level and people's level, women hold 10.78 per cent of the elected positions, being less represented at the levels of people's chief, where they represent 3.31 per cent. But despite the numbers, those women who participate in politics still find obstacles and barriers in the form of discrimination based on gender. They frequently hold positions, but they are not allowed to play their part in decision-making and since they are still a minority they have to deal with discrimination coming from their male colleagues. In public administration positions, women only represent 31 per cent (51,046 women of a total of 167,220 employed people in public administration).

In the first elections the Secretary of State for Women's Affairs was founded, and then it became a Ministry. Since the 1990s work has been carried out in an effort to incorporate a gender approach with a view to dealing with gender discrimination, inequality and vulnerability of women.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT LIMITING FACTORS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Cambodian society is very traditional and moralistic and this hinders social changes. The cultural context sets discriminatory social rules for women; women's and men's roles are clearly divided and a code of conduct for women establishing strong limitations for their autonomy remains a reality.

- There are significant differences between rural and urban areas in access to education and health resources. This is the main issue to take into account for analysing the context of women's political participation in Cambodia.

- The Cambodian society does not trust the government system, there is no political culture promoting government accountability. The high levels of corruption in all public administrations and a democratic system led by a single party present a complicated context for changes. Political hierarchy is vertical and in order to be promoted and to enhance a political career many internal supports are needed, which requires contacts, financial resources and knowledge of the dynamics in order to take advantage of them.

To be appointed within a political party individuals need to pay, which limits women's access since the family budget does not stretch so much for women as it does for men.

It is worth noting that virtually the whole democratic system is led by the CPP Party. The people's leaders are appointed by the Ministry of the Interior, and they all belong to this party.

All parties present their candidacies to the elections to the Community Council but people's leaders influence on the vote is important and they support CPP party members. In the current decentralisation process, indirect elections are held in district and provinces governments in 2009, and these will be governments elected by the Community Councils led by the CPP party and therefore they will appoint CPP members in the districts and provinces.

Corruption does not only affect the political sphere, but the whole administrative, judicial and civil service system; the general system has high levels of corruption and they would require integral measures to transform their institutions into fair and democratic bodies.

- The country has a proportional electoral system with closed electoral lists. Political parties, according to their criteria and interests, close these lists and women's integration does not follow professionalism or experience criteria, but they are restrained to allow the placement of party women or relatives of party members without motivation, knowledge or will to participate. Many professional and independent women who could exercise political roles are frequently excluded simply because they are not members of government.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The international context of concern for gender equality has a positive impact on government, civil society organisations and media, since it results in a broader awareness of the problems specifically affecting women, although it could be a double-edged sword provoking an excessive interest in pretending towards and a much more limited actual will for transforming the society.

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The process required to vote in elections is bureaucratically complex, and more women than men decide not to prepare all the paperwork and subsequently not to vote.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are awareness and political education programmes in place developed by NGOs, with the Women's Media Centre of Cambodia proposals as a prominent example.

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- In 1992, CEDAW was signed and ratified but the government did not submit any report until 2003 (they submitted the 1st, 2nd and 3rd period at the same time). In 2006, a delegation presented the report in New York and they brought back those recommendations addressed to the government. It was at that specific moment when the Prime Minister started to grant significance and to finance proposals for the promotion of gender equality. At present the implemented actions appear to be aimed at presenting a portrait of the government favouring equality at international level, since women's representation in political parties is required, but there are no efforts in place to promote their active participation. On many occasions, to keep their positions these women have to align themselves with men's decisions and they cannot defend their interests.

- Knowledge of women's rights is limited and there is a dire need for awareness and training efforts between those who participate in programmes for women's political empowerment. Programmes and mechanisms are being implemented by direct mandate of the prime minister but this does not necessarily mean social transformations.

- Any candidate for elections is required by law to speak and write Khmer. This is an enormous obstacle impeding indigenous women's participation in government. They do not have access to education and since men in their communities are the ones in charge of trade and working outside the communities, they are the only ones who need to learn Khmer. During the Pol Pot period, many indigenous women learned the official language and in some cases held power positions in local governments. However at present they do not have access to education and therefore it is very difficult for them to write in this language.

- Legal measures and institutional mechanisms set up by the government lack the strength to be a positive influence in women's political promotion. The Cambodian National Council of Women (CNCW) disseminates information about CEDAW, but it does not analyse in depth the critical work, it is a government-dependent institution and therefore their assessment and monitoring is limited to government interests.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are legal mechanisms and measures for the promotion of women's and men's equality encouraged by the government.

The Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA): (1998- today): has been given the mandate of being in charge of promoting women's affairs in Cambodia and it is responsible for the monitoring, coordination and implementation of gender mainstreaming in national policies and programmes. They work within the framework of the Neary Rattana II Plan: 5 priority areas: (2004-2008) Gender mainstreaming, focuses on women's promotion to decision-making positions, women's economic empowerment, women's legal protection, Women and education, health, gender focused issues as established by each ministry and coordinated by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, in charge of incorporating gender perspective in each ministry.

Cambodian National Council of Women: CNCW
The Queen is the President of Honour of this council and the Prime Minister's wife is the Vice-president of Honour. The CNCW President is the Minister of Women's Affairs. There are two female vice-presidents: The Secretary of State of the Ministry of Justice and the Secretary of State of the Ministry of the Interior. The members are all the secretaries or vice-secretaries of state of the 25 government ministries. There is a female permanent secretary with a team of 25 people assisting CNCW. They help the government informing on CEDAW and implementing CEDAW in Cambodia. Another responsibility they have is to monitor and assess the implementation of legislation, especially the anti-traffic law, domestic violence, migration and also CEDAW monitoring. The members meet every three months to evaluate what has been achieved during that time.

Technical Working Group on Gender. Within the groups established in the government with a view to strengthening the development plans, the Technical Working Group on Gender was set up in 2004. It is led by the Ministry of Women's Affairs with the technical assistance of UNDP and JICA. The objective of this group is to coordinate a common working plan on gender equality within ministries, NGOs and donor agencies, as well as working on the implementation of the gender perspective cross-cutting implementation plan. With the support of this group, a Gender Mainstreaming Action Groups structure was created in each ministry in order to monitor the implementation of gender plans and strategies in the ministries. (In March 2008, 23 groups out of the 25 institutions needed had been established: all ministries, except MoWA, the Council of Ministries and the Secretariat of State of Civilian Service).

DoLA Gender Working Group (DGWG). In the Ministry of the Interior, the Department of Local Administration (DoLA), in charge of implementing the decentralisation reform (2005), has created a gender working group supporting and monitoring the implementation of the gender approach in the decentralisation process.

Wing Programme. Working network for political women, organised by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. It was set up before the national elections of 2008 and they organised groups in leadership.

The political parties have accepted an agreement for including measures for zipper lists on promoting women's participation in the parties.

- The Cambodian population is very young and many original initiatives have been organised to promote young women's participation. In 2007, UNIFEM organised a Youth Leadership Programme for CEDAW Monitoring Centre (for females under 13 years of age), with the core issue of the Code of Conduct for women.

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- At all levels of government women are relegated to the sectors of childhood, women and social policies. This division is not only discriminatory in itself but it also has a negative impact since budgets for these sectors are minimal and the decision-making power is very limited. Thus women do not acquire the competencies any political man develops and which are so necessary for internal promotion within government structures.

- The current situation with regard to the measures in place only refers to the number of women participating, without considering their capacities and empowerment. Once women are appointed to reserved political positions, they do not receive any kind of support. The established positive actions reserve a sub-management position for women at district and province level and in community councils, with an obligation for a minimum representation of one woman. This situation implies that these representatives with very little experience will be alone in a council made up of men who will not allow them to make any decisions or take any responsibility and who mostly disagree with this situation. Most of the times women are only assigned the role of working on women's and social issues. This modus operandi justifies criticism.

- Decisions suggesting positive action measures are being accepted socially because they have not resulted in social conflicts. Women in politics at all levels are still in charge of the reproductive work in their families and they accept their secondary role within the parties, they do not generate a rupture in the patriarchal order and therefore they are not seen as a problem.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- In the 1990s, funds for official aid to development started to look for potential counterparties and many of the local NGOs organised themselves as companies in an effort to find their place in one of the few markets at that time in the country. During this period, the various international organisations could have influenced local NGOs so they could become active future agents in the process of development with capacity for demanding and putting pressure on the government. However, a trend towards merely individual aid during these first years and the new sources of income that are currently appearing in the country resulted in organisations without the capacity or motivation to organise networks and to coordinate working teams for the creation of an active and critical civil society in Cambodia.

- Both the government system and the Cambodian social structure establish a very hierarchical order and women's organisations reproduce these systems, with the subsequent obstacles to the promotion of youth participation in organisations. This is also a waste of resources, since young women receive more training at present, they can speak English and the have been educated in new technologies that could provide many resources for women's organisations. However the obstacles limiting their capacity to assume an active role and replacing older women are very difficult to topple.

- The Khmer alphabet has problems of compatibility with computer programmes and commercial word processing programmes have not been translated, therefore language is a significant barrier for accessing and using new information technologies, and as a result the potential advantages of internet cannot be used by women's organisations. The Cambodian Open Institute organisation has created a translated open source software called UNICODE which solves the sources compatibility problems, however they have not received the necessary institutional support to be able to make widespread its use and make it accessible to everyone.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Women's organisations think working toward the improvement of women's political participation is a priority. There are organisations focused on this issue and they have gathered together since 2005 in the Committee for the Promotion of Women in Politics (CPWP). It is made up of the following Cambodian NGOs: SILAKA, WFP, GADC, COMFREL, LICADHO, NEFEC, CDOI, CWPD.

They focus on three areas. Firstly, they work on Advocacy and Lobby issues, elaborating awareness material and working on awareness, and pressure on government and political parties. This area is led by SILAKA. The second area works on organising forums at provincial level, led by the organisation GADC, Gender and Development for Cambodia. The third area works on training programmes: for female candidates at Community Council level, led by the organisation WFP, Women for Prosperity. This group receives technical assistance and funding from UNIFEM and GTZ (German cooperation agency). The first activity of this committee took place during the 2007 elections in the Community Councils (at local level).

They shared the same strategy but the activities of each organisation were different. They developed an awareness campaign in the media, they put pressure on political parties, they organised forums with them on education for citizens, in order to promote women in politics, and they provided training to women in 4 political parties in an effort to promote their female candidates.

In 2008, they organised a national meeting in the country's capital with the 300 women elected in the Community Councils. On this occasion for meeting and exchanging experiences, they organised a meeting programme with political party leaders and university students, and lastly they showed the various national structures, explaining their operation (parliament, assembly, royal palace…). During the 2008 national elections they also organised a campaign to promote women's participation, they reached 9 provinces and for the first time they worked on the specific problem of indigenous women.

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Women in decision-making positions are a minority in structures dominated by men and are subject to discriminatory social rules, therefore transforming the agenda priorities proves difficult.

- Knowledge regarding gender approach integration is superficial and groups are limited.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Donor agencies' influence power to include gender perspective in the political agenda is having a positive impact on women in decision-making positions.

- Some of the women in decision-making positions are developing political agendas incorporating a gender approach into their work and they may become positive models.

2- QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Government and power structures are dominated by men who set out control mechanisms so women do not reach power positions. Many of the women selected for positions of power in community councils are not aware of their functions or work goals. They do not have the time, capacity or resources to assume their role, and they do not have financial recognition either.

To improve programmes for the promotion of women in politics, government institutions suggested an increase in financial and human resources, empowerment and

specialised training for staff, as well as coordination of actions between ministries and government agencies for the implementation of measures.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

The International organisations and the technical staff interviewed stress that the Cambodian context lacks a democratic culture and there is no organised civil society structure with lobbying capability. They demand the ratification of the CEDAW optional protocol by the government in an effort to provide tools for change. They also emphasise the significance of working with youth and make men aware of the significance of women's participation.

The international organisations assume the shortcomings in the government and it is important to change the working approach of these organisations towards a real development in order to force the government to assume its responsibilities.

In this regard the integration of a cross-cutting gender approach within donors and international organisations is seen as a must. The technical staff notes also that on many occasions no resources are allocated for this matter and its implementation depends on the staff's will and expertise.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

Organisations specialising in promoting women's political participation mention, as their main problems, the lack of trained personnel, and the lack of economic resources to pay personnel which prevents them from competing with the high salaries offered by international organisations and NGOs. Until the present time there has been no coordination between the government and NGOs, and political participation programmes demand a coordinated effort. They explain that in order for political women elected in the Community Councils to be able to carry on participating in the groups and meetings, they need the support of the council so it does not overload them with other functions and enables them to continue the programmes.

They suggest the relevance of carrying out studies on the impact of awareness programmes and to learn to evaluate the influence capacity in the awareness campaigns. They need to assess the current situation and to improve aid effectiveness.

Local organisations are structured like businesses and they offer very high salaries for managerial positions and very low for technical teams, reproducing the power and inequality hierarchies of the Cambodian society. A review and evaluation process of how to improve this situation is required.

C. THE PHILIPPINES

1- ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN THE PHILIPPINES

The Philippines is an archipelago formed by 7,107 islands with a long history of colonisation, first by Spain (from 1565 to 1898) and later by the United Nations, it is a country that in 1935 initiated a process of transition towards independence interrupted by the Japanese invasion during the Second World War. During the 1930s a suffragettes' movement was organised in the country achieving the right to vote in 1937 under the mandate of the Commonwealth of Manuel L. Quezon. On 4th July 1946 the Philippines declared independence from the United States.

The second half of the twentieth century is scarred by twenty years of the Ferdinand Marcos (1966-1986) dictatorship, which ended with a popular revolution that transferred the power to the first female president of the country, Corazón Aquino, who managed to maintain political and economic stability in the country. The second wave of Filipino feminism revolved around the context of the fight against dictatorship. Within the social movements, women's groups that participated in men's demands and started to suggest that gender differences and patriarchal power should be taken into account in the struggle. When the dictatorship came to and end, they created the feminist party KAIBA (meaning "different"), and their members were later involved in the institutions and NGOs promoting policies defending women's rights. At a later stage KAIBA

divided itself in two groups that are currently represented by Abansy Pinai!, Pilipina and GABRIELA. These groups are currently very active in the Philippines feminist movement.

In 1992, Fidel Ramos was elected president, holding this position for six years; this period is seen as very favourable for the economic development of the country, especially when compared to his successor Joseph Estrada, elected president in 1998 and removed from office in 2001 under corruption charges. The former vice-president Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo replaced him, winning the presidential elections in 2004 and maintaining during the last five years a mandate frequently accused of fraud and corruption. 2009 has seen the start of the electoral campaign for the elections that will take place in 2010.

The proportion of women elected in the Philippines has been on the rise since the first elections, as the following data indicates: 1995 (12,7%), 1998 (16.7%), 2001 (16.2%), 2004 (16.7%), 2007 (17.4%). However, and despite the current president being a woman, it continues to be a very low representation made up of 4 senators (10.8 per cent), 51 district representatives (21.2 per cent), 6 party list representatives (28.6 per cent), 18 governors (22.2 per cent), 13 vice-governors (16 per cent), 123 board members (16.2 per cent), 285 mayors (17.5 per cent), 230 vice-mayors (14.4 per cent), 2,322 advisers (17.7 per cent).

Within public administration positions women mainly hold technical positions. To have access to civil service positions and to reach managerial positions, an exam must be taken. 50 per cent of people passing the exam are women. However this fact does not mean a higher number of women in managerial positions, they have a wider presence in secondary managerial positions (technical level), thus reflecting the glass ceilings faced by women.

The geography and the existing diversity of 111 ethnic groups, cultures and languages form the context of a country that is currently suffering the consequences of a conflict prolonged since 1984 between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front affecting the Mindanao area, currently the most impoverished area in the country. In this context it is worth mentioning the Muslim women organisations working towards peace process and defending women's rights, also participating in national and international networks.

The Filipino indigenous population represents around 15 per cent of the total and, despite the existence of a national framework for the defence of their rights, they are very much affected by land expropriation due to business interests. It is important to point out the specific situation of indigenous women.

The feminist movement in the Philippines, despite being so diverse, displays a very critical opposition to the current government. One of their main and widespread claims has been the approval of a Magna Carta for Women which has faced severe criticism on the part of the Senate, the Congress and the Catholic Church. Despite these opposed positions, between the civil society and the government machinery for equality promotion (National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, NCRFW) there is a relationship based on collaboration and dialogue because within NCRFW there are many women who are active in women's movements and since they hold positions in public administrations they cannot publicly express their opinions. Some of the people interviewed explain that information and opinion exchange between feminist organisations and NCRFW is commonplace.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT

LIMITING FACTORS

- The Catholic Church's power and influence acts as a serious obstacle, both at political level, preventing the approval of legislation defending women's rights, and at social level, causing restrictions and limitations in the roles women can take on. In the Philippines, more than 80 per cent of the population is Catholic and, moreover, the highest economic substrata, especially the political families, are strongly influenced by the church. The role of the Muslim religion in the Autonomous Region of Mindanao is also discriminatory for women, since religion is used to argue that politics is not the place for women and neither fits their role in society. In that area, although they have to accept national legislation, they have not introduced CEDAW into their

regional legislation and formal discrimination against women is still in place.

- The cultural context is patriarchal and women assume all the burdens of reproductive work, therefore they have little time left for training or politics. Access to education presents quite even data and at present a high percentage of women are in university studying in areas such as law and communication. The reality described by professional women interviewed is that the system discriminates against women who want to have access to power networks and acquire leadership and empowerment competencies in order to exercise and oppose the political system of the country.

- The electoral system requires self-financing for electoral campaigns, therefore candidacies need to be supported by steady political machineries and with power networks that are less available to women. The electoral system only favours the very powerful economic classes which are the ones controlling all the political and economic power in the country.

- The population in general lacks confidence in the political system and in the possibility of change; a clear example of this was the current president's public recognition of electoral fraud during the elections that gave her the victory, and the population's reaction to this was the belief that all political groups reproduce the same behaviour. This lack of credibility affects even more rural areas and the civil society organisations interviewed regularly comment that some candidates offer the population money during the electoral campaign.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The feminist movement in the Philippines has a long trajectory of working on political participation, with precedents from the 1930s of an important suffragettes' movement that comes all the way until the present time with several party lists whose agenda is the demand for women's rights.

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The electoral process is not transparent and the reports of the international observers show signs of fraud in the elections. A reliable and computerised electoral roll is needed, as well as a strict counting system to avoid changes in votes and to ensure population's choice prevails. An electoral process without fraud would increase the system's credibility and would allow candidates different from the political dynasties to have more chances of participating in government.

- Women represent 70 per cent of the population that has migrated to other countries and the condition for a Filipino person to vote if he or she is not residing in the country is to sign a statement declaring the intention to come back to the country no later than three years from the time of that statement. Most migrations take place in a search for employment and for an income source for the whole family, therefore they are unlikely to accumulate in three years enough money to come back to the country.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Women's participation as voters in elections is higher than men's. In the 1998 presidential elections, 87 per cent of women voted against 85.7 per cent of men; in the 2001 Senate elections, 76.7 per cent of women and 75.9 per cent of men. This does not imply voting for women, or voting for women's rights, but it shows that women do assume their responsibility as voters.

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Lack of women's political education: women who do not belong to political families do not receive any support or training to participate in decision-making positions. Formations developed by civil society organisations to train people in management and coordination of development projects are in practice targeting men in most cases, thus reducing women's possibilities of political participation through these channels.

- There are no measures to encourage political parties to promote women to decision-making positions. Among the main 12 parties there are between 82 and 155 leadership positions and only 9 women hold this type of position.

- The government machinery for implementation of gender equality policies (National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, NCRFW) is not a ministry and therefore has no political authority to influence any ministry decision. Implementation of a gender approach should be tackled at all levels, from national to local, but NCRFW lacks the human, economic and structure resources to monitor it, as well as the authority to demand changes. At present it is developing projects with the support of bilateral cooperation agencies but the truth is that they lack working capability in the long run and the means to execute actions with a national impact.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The existence of an egalitarian legislation establishing measures to promote women's participation in politics: The 1987 Constitution stipulates in Article 2 (section 14) that the State recognises the role of women in national building and must ensure equality between women and men. The Women in Nation Building Law approved in 1992 includes, among other measures for equality promotion, that at all government levels 5 per cent of the budget must be addressed to gender specific projects.

- The 1995 law on the system of party list establishes that 52 out of the 268 seats in the House of Representatives must be reserved for candidacies of party lists from marginalised sectors. Every 2 per cent of votes from the party list obtains a seat and there is a maximum of three representatives per list. The party lists of Abanse! Pinay and Gabriela have obtained representation in elections thanks to these measures, however it is important to note that apart from the party lists with a feminist agenda, women's representation in the others has been minimal.

- The existence of an institutional machinery, the NCRFW National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, an institution currently working on improving legislation. During this last year, they have focused on two laws: The Magna Carta for Women and the Local Representation Law. The Magna Carta for Women bill was approved the first week of August 2009. The approval process has been very slow and controversial due to the opposition of the conservative forces and the Catholic Church. It states that the government must take temporary measures to speed up women's equal participation and representation at all levels of society and especially in the political processes and the government decision-making structure, as well as in private institutions in an effort to make true women's participation as agents and beneficiaries of development. It includes specific measures at different levels: government bureaucracy, incentives to political parties, increase of women's representation in debates on the peace process and elimination of discrimination against women in the army.

- Local Sectoral Representation Bill. (This law is at the reading stage in the Senate and in the Commission on Amendments to the Constitution, it is not a priority for the government and the process is proving to be very slow). It includes the following measures:

  - All legislative bodies at local level must have 3 representatives: one from women's groups, one from workers' groups, and the third from other marginalised sectors.

- They must be representatives of organisations or groups, not individuals.

- Registered voters have the right to vote for each of the 3 positions reserved by law.

- Those elected for these positions have all the rights of an elected representative and must be treated as the other representatives.

- The Philippines boasts several universities with gender studies and the feminist movement has a long trajectory in the country since the early twentieth century, therefore the country boasts a group of consultants specialised in gender and in many cases with regional knowledge. The area of social research studies with a gender approach is developed and therefore there are information and analytical studies available.

- CEDAW and other international agreements have been ratified by the Filipino government, and the civil society is using this as a tool for their demands. Since these ratifications require their application in the whole country, they become a particularly useful tool for women's organisations in the Autonomous Region of Mindanao, which are working on defending their rights and are facing specific obstacles such as the non-acceptance of CEDAW on the part of the regional government. In the last Shadow Report from civil society organisations there is a specific section on Muslim women drafted by the organisations of the region, thus showing their significant potential as agents of development in one of the most troubled areas of the country.

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- In the Philippines, women have never held more than 15 per cent of the elected positions in the various government levels and many women that have held them belong to the wealthiest and most powerful families in the country. Electoral legislation prevents a person from holding a position longer than three consecutive mandates, therefore the common practice in the political families is to successively nominate several members for the position. The first successor is normally the son and only if there is no son will the daughter be the candidate. Only in cases of a significant age gap between the son and the daughter, the older daughter is given priority. Widows also play an important role in political families, and the most emblematic example of this is Corazón Aquino.
These dynastic structures imply that most women participating in politics have to defend the family interest which does not always meet a political agenda for defending women's rights. The challenge is to influence these women so they are aware of the problems faced by poor women, the specific situation of indigenous women, female farmers and Muslim women.

- Women in power structures for a long time ended up being involved in the dynamics of corruption, it is very difficult to find a way out the corrupt system due to its establishment and hold at all levels.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are examples of women with high level political positions that are developing and agenda in defence of good governance and women's rights. The cases are heterogeneous; a prominent example is the governor of Isabela province, a journalist with limited economic resources who opposed the political family that had been ruling the province for the last forty years and who was accused of numerous cases of corruption and fraud. Other women in power positions come from political families but their formations and experiences are starting to oppose the power structures of their own clans in an effort to advance political measures defending women's rights.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- Women's organisations working on political participation issues lack the economic resources and

human resources to develop all their programmes. This lack of resources results in a shortage of pedagogical materials to distribute and use as a tool to spread knowledge.

- During the opposition to the dictatorship of the Marcos period a united women's movement was organised but it is breaking up. There are groups with different political interests and very controversial issues such as prostitution that provoke in certain strategic moments a lack of agreement in the women's movement, thus weakening sometimes their pressure capacity.

- The political situation marks the activity of women's organisations and feminist groups. Most organisations prefer to focus on poverty and on helping women in vulnerable situations, which provokes social conflicts. Feminist organisations dealing with more controversial issues face social rejection, and criticism mainly led by economic power groups and the Catholic Church. It is important to mention the disappearances and extra-judicial killings, which according to several reports from both civil society and international organisations have increased since 2001 among members of political groups opposing the government. The representative of GABRIELA, feminist party list, states that among their members they have 28 female leaders who have been murdered and 2 who have disappeared since 2006.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are feminist political organisations and parties whose priority is women's political participation. Pilipina is a key example, developing women's empowerment and training projects at local level with a view to strengthening a grassroots women's movement and to applying pressure from the civil society on the defence of women's rights. Pilipina has a Abanse! Pinay party list which has been represented in the House of Representatives. GABRIELA is also worth mentioning. It is a national mass organisation working since 1984 on education, organising and mobilizing grassroots women, mainly farmers, women in the fishing industry and women in poverty. Since 2000 they have a party list represented in the House of Representatives and a female leader, Lisa Maza, who is very popular. The Women and Gender Institute (WAGI) within Miriam College, is a women's university centre that organises training and leadership promotion programmes for young people.

- The existence of civil society groups working on good governance and with a gender approach in their agendas. InciteGov, Akkbayan (party list) or Asian Partnership for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia. (NGOs network working on rural development).

- Filipino women's organisations are known for their participation and work in the network, both at national and international level. At national level the Women for development network stands out, made up by 15 local and national organisations which are currently training local governments on gender budgets.
The shaping of the CAPWIP network of Asia Pacific organisations working on promoting women in politics was created in the Philippines by Remedios Rikken and Silvia Ordoñez (members of Pilipina). This network has an important role in the region and it is a model in training and the empowerment of leading women.

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The increase in the number of women in decision-making positions both in politics and in administration is not offering a wider implementation of a gender approach in policies or programmes. Knowledge on gender is very superficial and the formations aiming to improve it are just a few. The work of the international organisations is increasing the support to gender and development programmes but even within these organisations the implementation of a cross-cutting gender perspective has limitations.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- A gender department has been organised with the government agency in charge of planning economic development in the country (National Economic and Development Authority, NEDA). The AR7190 Women in Nation Building 1999 Law establishes as an obligation that between 10 and 30 per cent of aid for development must be addressed to gender equality projects. Among its roles, this department is responsible for monitoring the measure. It is worth mentioning the improvement in the elaboration of indicators and the collection of gender disaggregated data, as well as in the elaboration, in coordination with international organisations and cooperation agencies, of a guide for the harmonisation of official aid to development.

- The United Nations agencies set up in the Philippines have created an interagency group with a view to evaluating the integration of a gender perspective in all their programmes and a section focusing on gender has been organised in each agency in order to implement the recommendations of the group.

2- QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

Among the government agencies and departments working on gender equality programmes there is a lack of financial resources and specialised personnel, which translates into a lack of capacity for action and implementation for projects and legislation.

The first obstacle for political women and party lists promoting women's rights is the lack of financing and political support for the expensive electoral campaigns. The political system in the Philippines presents high levels of corruption and violence which are a significant barrier for women's participation. The patriarchal structure of society is very strong and the social division of roles establishes restrictions for women to acquire the necessary skills and to deal with a system displaying these characteristics.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

The integration of a cross-cutting gender approach in the international and bilateral cooperation agencies is limited and there is a lack of coordination among the agencies. The attempts to coordinate them come from the individual will of feminist women who decide to dedicate part of their time to developing coordination and debate groups, but it is not part of a strategic plan with an allocation of resources.

It is necessary to assign resources for training and technical assistance from the various levels of government in order to apply the mechanisms that were approved concerning gender equality, since at present they are not implemented due to the lack of capacity and resistance on the part of the chiefs of administration in government at all levels.

The Filipino NGOs have a negative relationship with governmental institutions and from a technical level they consider it important to work on creating forums for debate with these actors.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

It is important to organise a unified women's vote for the defence of their rights, which would require organising and training grassroots level women on gender, and development agendas allowing them to choose their vote. Women in politics with a women's agenda are needed, not just women from political families. A great challenge is to involve women from Visayas and Mindanao.

From a practical point of view, there is a lack of pedagogical material to distribute in the entire country, there is a lack of funding and a situation of dependency from donors. Moreover, a lack of trained human resources has been detected. This represents a problem because organisations cannot compete with the salaries of private companies and it is even harder to recruit voluntary staff. There has been a decline in those youth programmes at university level that used to promote the involvement of young people in development projects; if twelve years ago working on a NGO was an employment possibility, today this is no longer an option.

D. INDONESIA

1-ANALYSIS OF WOMEN' POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN INDONESIA

The collapse of the Suharto's "New Order" regime in 1997, after more than three decades in place, opened a new political era in Indonesia, allowing the start of a democratisation process in the country with the liberalisation of groups and activists participation from various ideological positions. For the first time since 1950, the freedom of expression, freedom of the press and free elections were restored. In this context, Indonesian women and feminist activism increased and was consolidated, as well as their participation in the various sectors of society integrating them into the country's political dynamics.

This new era also gave way to a climate of political violence and to the most fundamentalist tendencies of political Islamism, which even at present position themselves against women's presence in the political and public arenas basing themselves on the holy texts and in the Sharia. In 2001, Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Sukarno, first president of Indonesia, became the first female president of the country, considered by Forbes Magazine as one of the 100 most powerful women in the world at that time. Her mandate lasted until 2004, when she lost the presidential elections in favour of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, the current representative of this position.

However, the fact of having a woman in the highest political power position in the country did not translate into the expected advances in terms of equality among men and women. At present, women constitute 16.61 per cent of the National Parliament representatives, with 21 per cent in the DPD (Senate) and 11.5 per cent in the DPR (Constitutional Assembly). Since the 1987-1992 parliamentary term, a period when women's representation in DPR reached their highest rate, 13 per cent, that number has been in decline. It reached its lowest level during the 1999-2004 parliamentary term, with only 9 per cent. Out of the 33 provincial governors elected in the whole country, there is just one woman and only 1.5 per cent of the municipalities are held by women. The percentage of women in public administration is 7 per cent. In government, out of 49 positions, only 4 are held by women: Trade, Finances, Health and Secretariat of State for the empowerment of women. There is only one female judge in the Supreme Court.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT

LIMITING FACTORS

- The existence of a well-rooted patriarchal culture represents one of the main obstacles for women's political participation. Women are perceived not as citizens but as mothers, wives and people with home responsibilities. This approach limits women's access to the necessary resources to exercise politics and to compete with men, i.e. training, time and financial resources. Another display of patriarchal culture is husbands' resistance to letting their wives participate in political activities. Moreover, Indonesian women themselves have internalised these roles and gender prejudices, thus influencing their attitude and perception of the political world. Finally, the government reproduces through laws and institutions the gender discriminations and coercions characterising the patriarchal system.

- The democratic transition process in Indonesia is quite recent. Women's political participation and representation still needs to find its place within this new model. During Suharto's New Order, the system only had one political party and women's representation was dependent on their contacts with the elites forming the party at national level. With the closed list system, the candidates were not involved in the electoral campaigns. Women were not able to freely participate in the elections until 1999.

- The political climate is known for its corruption, conspiracies and nepotism. The crisis of trust among members of the various communities has given way to strong inter-community violence. This climate of political violence represents a significant barrier for the presence of women in the political arena. Women

themselves think politics is not the appropriate place for them and they prefer to stay away from this sphere which is seen as dangerous and dominated by men.

- The country's decentralisation process initiated in 2004 (Law 32/2004), far from being an opportunity for women's political participation and representation, has meant many step backs for women. It conveyed a revitalisation of the traditional institutions and the adoption of laws and regulations based on religious doctrines, both Muslim (the Sharia law) and Christian. For instance, in Banjar, in west Java, a regional regulation forces Muslim civil servants and students to wear Muslim traditional dresses every day, and in Bulukumba all women must wear the yilbab to benefit from the resources and services provided by the local government. Laws governing personal status are directly motivated by a very conservative reading of the Sharia and they establish the superiority of the man/father/husband versus the woman in marriage, divorce and inheritance. Muslim citizens witness how non-secular laws are applied and how they are subjected to religious tribunals. This situation implies a great deal of lack of protection and discrimination against women, under the auspices of the law.

- After the fall of Suharto's New Order in 1998 and with the liberalisation of the political field, there is a very powerful wave of radical Islamic political parties and groups. These movements follow a very radical interpretation of Islam and defend the return of the patriarchal traditional family and an absolute control over women. They include the following: The Indonesian Council of Mujahidins, Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia. Some of these groups, such as The Islamic Defender Front, Soldiers of Jihad, or Jamaah Islamiyah, use violence to express their ideas. They accuse feminists of polluting society with western values, a secular society and liberalism, which they consider to be against Islamic teachings. Activists have constantly been accused of promoting pornography, prostitution and child abuse.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Since the fall of Suharto's New Order in 1998, the Indonesian political system has undergone many changes towards the democratisation of the country: a presidential conventional system separating powers with a bicameral legislative authority was established. In 2004 the first direct elections took place with two rounds for electing the President of the Republic. In the Senate the rate of women in office is higher since candidates are directly elected through preferential vote system and not through electoral lists. This system has favoured women's political representation since they can count on the direct votes of other women. In 2004, the new electoral law introduced two important changes that benefited women's political participation and representation. The first was the introduction of a limited open list system in which voters can vote for a party and at the same time for a candidate of the party. This person would therefore be elected if he or she received a certain number of votes, even if he or she is not at the top of the list.

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The non-existence of gender disaggregated data on electoral participation.

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The processes for nominating candidates in the political parties are carried out by a much reduced number of party leaders, mostly men. Male political leaders nominate other men and on some occasions women, but only because of their connection with influential politicians. The political parties do not try to adapt their structures and operation to women's needs and/or obligations. For example, the important decisions take place during meetings starting in the evening and that may last until dawn, a period of time when it is virtually impossible for women to be present

due to family obligations.

- The political area is still mostly unaware of the significance of women's political participation and representation and this is not among their political priorities. Therefore women's interests are poorly represented and the government does not put measures in place to improve their welfare. For example, Indonesia has the highest infant mortality rate in the whole South-Eastern region. However, the budget allocated to health resources for reproductive health is very inadequate for this problem. Another example is the economic crisis that started in 1997 and that has had very negative effects on women. Many women have had to emigrate in search of employment. Despite the significance of the contributions to the Indonesian economy, the government has not implemented protection measures for these women, many of whom are raped and exploited.

- Women in power structures and decision-making positions haven't got a women's agenda, they do not come from the women's movement and are unaware of the demands of the movement. They may even boycott the initiatives and demands of Indonesian feminists. In 2001 Megawati Sukarnoputri, in a speech addressed to activist women undermined the usefulness of the positive action measures for the promotion of women's political participation, arguing that they deteriorated women's position.

- In 2008, the positive action regulations approved by the Parliament, concerning the 30 per cent quota for women on the electoral lists and the rotation system of 1 women per every 3 men on the list, were annulled by the Constitutional Court. The Court rules that the nomination of each candidate to the legislative elections must be based on the number of votes obtained. This new parliamentary position forces women to directly compete with men, despite all the factors against them: they have to work longer hours and harder, they need to have more financial resources to be elected and they need to have the power of influence.

- In the political area, women representatives are concentrated in institutions working on issues concerning "women's affairs". For example, the distribution of representatives in the parliamentary working committees shows the traditional sexual division of work. Women are mostly in committee VIII (religion, social affairs and women's empowerment) and in committee X (education, youth, sports, tourism, art and culture). They are poorly represented in the committees with more "prestige", such as those concerning the economy and politics, which are important for the design and implementation of executive programmes and budgets.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are analytical studies on gender and political participation: "Country Gender Assessment Indonesia" South-East Asia Regional Department, Regional and Sustainable Development Department, Asian Development Bank, Manila, Philippines, July 2006. "Developing critical awareness about the importance of representatives of potential women in politics in Indonesia" Kalyanamitra Foundation. "Decentralisation as a Narrative of Opportunity for Women in Indonesia", by Edriana Noerdin and Sita Aripurnami. Women Research Institute 2007. The National Democratic Institute will shortly publish "Best Practices for Women in Politics". Most of these studies are written in Bahasa Indonesian.

- The climate of political openness since the country's democratisation has benefited women's activities: there are more women's organisations and two women's political groups have been formed: Kaukus Perempuan Parlemen (the legislative group of women) and Kaukus Politik Perempuan Indonesia (the political group of Indonesian women). In 2003 these associations developed a women's network involving parliament, political parties and mass organisation leaders. This coalition of activist women and representatives from the political world has put pressure on the parliament to adopt two positive action measures: Firstly a law on quotas aimed at the political parties. The latter must ensure a 30 per cent women's representation in the electoral lists. This law will be accompanied by sanctions for those parties that do not observe this legal obligation. Secondly, the political parties must rotate male candidates with female candidates in the electoral lists, with a minimum of one woman per each three men. According to the "Public Opinion Survey" made by IRI, dated January 2009, 75 per cent of female voters are in favour of introducing positive actions into electoral legislation.

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Very few women are part of the decision-making spheres in the political parties, which feeds male domination in the structures and in the operation of the parties.

- There are many disparities between women's representation at national and local level. The rate is very low at national level but even so some women were elected to the national parliament. At local level, women's presence is nearly non-existent. Debates on women's political participation and representation remain at a higher level in politics. This is also explained by the fact that to compete in politics, women need to have strong family connections and a great deal of financial resources. In the regions and sub-regions very few women meet those requirements.

- The rate of women's representation in power structures has evolved negatively since 1992, according to the data herein presented.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- NGOs and the women's movement do not have the political and financial support of public institutions.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- International cooperation organisations have initiatives for supporting women's political participation. In 2009, the Norwegian Embassy, together with the Asia Foundation, set several programmes: supporting the electoral reform and its positive action measures, helping women consolidate working networks, helping women develop campaigns for the media and to organise training and empowerment courses for female candidates.

- There is a women's movement with a long trajectory dating back to 1928, when the first "Women's Congress" took place. A group of organisations joined forces as feminist organisations working for the defence of women's rights. An agenda was gradually defined and the organisations put pressure on the media and used campaigns to make a political impact. At present they are concentrating their efforts in the political campaign and their slogan is "We women vote women". This was the slogan used by all the organisations in the 8th March demonstration. In 2009, the 8th March, International Women's Day, fell just one month before the general elections of April 2009. That day women's organisations focused the celebrations on the significance of women's political participation. The topic of the day was "Support for female candidates to Parliament".

- There are groups of Muslim feminists[33] who are trying to oppose the arguments of the Islamist radical groups. To avoid being accused of defending western values, they search inside the regulations of Islam the arguments to defend their presence in the public arena and to ask for changes for their social status. They offer new interpretations of the Koran and the Hadiths. One of the most prominent figures of Muslim feminism is Siti Musdah Mulia, researcher in the Department for Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. She was in charge of reformulating the Compilation of Islamic Laws (KHI). This researcher is known for her position against the traditional and radical interpretation of the Islamic laws.

- There are several important networks of women's organisations. For example, the Kongres Wanita Indonesia (KOWANI, National Council for Indonesian Women Organisations) is a federation of 78 women's

33 There is a very intense debate in the academic sphere as well as in feminist spheres on how to name this phenomenon. The names used are: Islamic feminism, Islamist feminism, and secular Muslim feminism. There is no time to deal in depth with each of these concepts since the borders between Islamic and Islamist feminism are very complex and need explanations based on their specific context. We have chosen the term "Muslim feminism". It is more generic and it describes a tendency of the feminism practiced and defended by women from the Muslim world; it may or may not have a secular dimension.

organisations working with women from different ethnic groups, religious and professional organisations. BMOIWI (Federation of Organisations of Muslim Indonesian Women) is a federation of approximately 28 organisations of Muslim women. The Political Women's Empowerment Centre is a network of organisations regrouping various political, religious and professional tendencies, and it includes about 26 organisations. Indonesian women organisations are also integrated into regional networks, such as "Asia Pacific Women Leadership" which will soon open a regional main office in Jakarta, "Asia Pacific Women Law and Development" and they are also actively involved in platforms such as "I Know Politics", "WLUML", "Women Learning Partnership", and "IDEA".

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Institutional mechanisms for women's protection and promotion either do not include a clear equality perspective or they have little resources to implement it. For example, the Indonesian law on violence against women presents a very regressive description of rape and excludes rapes committed by husbands. At national level, the National Development Plan at medium term, 2004-2009, in chapter twelve, includes as one of its actions involving women in political processes and decision-making. It is a formal declaration of intent because it does not actually work on that area. In 2000, a Presidential Decree on gender mainstreaming was issued, addressed to all ministries and national agencies with a view to adopting a mainstreaming strategy in monitoring and development of programmes and policies. However no organisation was appointed to implement this measure. Moreover none of these mechanisms has taken into account the ethnic, religious, socio-economic and socio-cultural diversity of Indonesian women.

2- QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The needs detected are related to women's under-representation in decision-making. The consequences can be seen as a vicious circle: as long as there are no more women in these areas, their interests and needs will not be taken into account and gender equality will not be part of the priorities of the political agenda. No measures and mechanisms for equality will be implemented and, therefore, women will remain subject to the same difficulties in having access to the political scene. This dynamics are even more tangible at local level where women's presence is virtually non-existent.

It is necessary to focus change strategies on three levels: firstly all power spheres have to be made well aware of the significance of women's presence and participation on equal terms with men. A great effort also needs to be made in the political parties' sphere. Secondly, legislative changes for gender equality must be introduced. In other words: 1) analyse the existing legal instruments and detect which ones and in what ways they favour gender discrimination; 2) introduce positive action mechanisms to advance women's integration in all spheres of social and political life; 3) adopt cross-cutting gender strategies; 4) promote the existing institutions with adequate material, economic an human resources. Specific budget and expert organisations are needed so the changes and reforms are real, effective and efficient. Finally, the institutional area must initiate collaborations and consultations with women's organisations and female experts in gender equality, promote analytical studies on women's political participation and elaborate updated statistical and gender disaggregated data.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

There are two types of problems for the implementation and continuity of projects and programmes aimed at promoting women's political participation: 1) women's socio-economic and socio-cultural problems are keeping them away from political participation. 2) the need for funds in an effort to provide continuity to the initiated programmes.

For a favourable environment for women's political participation to come about, their economic and socio-cultural status needs to be elevated. Programmes need to take place at the same time and complement those designed for political participation and also include training and empowerment in terms of leadership. To promote this work, many of the people who were interviewed declare the need to create more synergies among civil society agents (specially from the women's movement), political parties, public institutions and representatives at national and local level to avoid duplicating efforts and to create a process of exchange, trust and mutual support among them.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

Several needs were detected and probably the most frequently mentioned was obtaining enough funds to finance long-term projects. All of those interviewed think that women's political participation involves long-term awareness and training work for the whole population, which cannot be achieved with one-year or two-year projects. However, most of the donor agencies only finance short-term projects at a particular moment, such as in the case of the elections. The lack of awareness by the political powers is another one of the frequently mentioned problems. Civil society agents cannot count on the support and collaboration of public institutions because gender equality is not part of their priorities. Therefore they do not allocate funds and they are not interested in collaborating with NGOs. For those interviewed, who are part of the fabric of the civil society, it is important to be able to count of government's support but they are not willing to give up their independence in exchange for state aid. The women interviewed have also expressed the need for creating working networks with other NGOs in Indonesia and with other countries in order to exchange good practices and recycle knowledge and advancements achieved in other regions.

E. SRI LANKA

1- ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN SRI LANKA

Since 1931, women in Sri Lanka have had the right to participate in elections and since that very same date some of them have started to hold political positions. Sri Lanka was also the first country in the world to have a female Prime Minister, in 1960. A woman has recently been the president, Chandrika Kumaratunga (1994-2005). Women's contribution to the country's economic development is very significant and their educational level is the highest in the entire South-East Asian region: 48 per cent of people enrolled in universities are women. Sri Lanka ratified CEDAW on 5th October 1981.

However, these advantages and advancements have not meant a higher involvement of women in politics or important changes for women in this country. Despite the high number of women participating in the electoral process (electoral records are not gender disaggregated but the estimated participation rate is 48 for women and 52 per cent for men) and in the political campaign, their representation in the elected parliament in 2005 was 5.8 per cent, in local government 1.9 per cent, in municipal councils 3 per cent and in urban councils 3.4 per cent. The percentage of women in parliament since 1931 has hardly evolved and has not been over 6 per cent.

Out of the 49 ministry positions, only 3 are led by women: Ministry of Housing and Common Amenities, Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment and Ministry of Youth. All three positions are very linked to the female roles and stereotypes.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT

LIMITING FACTORS

- The conflict that has been destroying the country for more than 20 years have greatly weakened women's status in Sri Lanka: there are a significant number of widows and 22 per cent of heads of households are women. This condition has kept them in poverty and socially excluded.

- Political culture: political parties' structure and system in Sri Lanka are still mainly dominated by men, and the preferential vote electoral system favours them. The lists are made according to family and ethnic affiliations. Political campaigns have to be financed with candidate's own funds therefore they need to have significant economic resources to get involved in politics and to become a representative of a party many supports are needed. Furthermore, politics is considered a "dirty" world and there is a climate of political violence during electoral campaigns. Many studies reveal that women who want to participate in politics have to suffer more abuse, violence and discrimination than men. Criticism focuses more on these women's political actions than that of their male colleagues. In addition to that, they have to suffer discrimination from the latter.

- Three quarters of the population live in rural areas. Therefore, women in these areas still suffer the traditional norms and are relegated to the edge in the modernisation and development processes. Although human development indexes are very favourable to women in the country as a whole, there are still many disparities between urban and rural areas. This without a doubt implies being excluded from all the decision-making processes. While in the cities they have access to training and therefore to well-paid jobs, in rural areas this possibility does not exist. Women mainly work as cheap labour in tea plantations and 76 per cent of the migrant non-qualified working population is represented by women.

- Society is very conservative with regard to cultural norms, therefore it reinforces the gender roles,

stereotypes and prejudices acting as limiting factors which consider that women's natural role is to assume their home responsibilities and that politics is not the right environment for them. There are many consequences to the structure of gender roles and prejudices. Among them are the following: the lack of public systems for helping with child care, women's lack of time due to them having to meet their home obligations, lack of financial resources, lack of mobility and politics as an inappropriate area for women.

- Structural problem: the ethnic or community affiliation system prevails over any other nomination system for power positions, whether elective or not.

- Decentralisation plays an important role in Sri Lanka since it was used as a conflict resolution strategy to solve matters regarding ethnic membership and local autonomies during the civil war. However, and taking into account the very low percentage of female representation at local level, this decentralisation process was not accompanied by measures to integrate women into power structures. Therefore, the same limitations presented at the central level are reproduced at the local level.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There is a long trajectory of women in politics, both from the point of view of the right to vote as to the presence of women in power structures. This fact is very much in the mind of those women interviewed as all mentioned it. But this trajectory involves very few women and it is dependent on the above-mentioned factors (links to political families). However, Sri Lanka appears as the regional leader in this sense and it has initiated a tradition of women in politics that could be usefully recovered.

- Sri Lanka presents a very high human development index, from the point of view of women's life expectancy and their literacy and education levels. Sri Lanka is considered to be one of the pioneers in the region concerning free and universal education, ranging from primary education to university level training. In 2002, the general literacy rate for people over 15 years was 90.8 per cent. The rate of literate women over 15 years of age was 96.1 per cent. Out of the total of people admitted into universities, 52.8 per cent are women. 75 per cent of law students are women, as well as 67 per cent in traditional medicine and 60.2 per cent in agriculture.

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Statistical data is only gender disaggregated when referring to women's situation. With regard to enrolment rates in electoral lists, participation and abstinence, there is no gender disaggregated data.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The female participation rate in elections is always quite high (around 52 per cent).

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The context of the conflict has used up all political energy and questions regarding equality seem to have been relegated to the lowest priority. This fact can be seen in institutions political agendas and in civil society and international organisations' activities. Therefore very few public resources are allocated to this issue. The conflict has accentuated the community divisions in the society thus increasing political violence and hindering advances for peace negotiations. Even in the specific area of conflict resolution, there are no government initiatives to include women in the peace negotiation process, as recommended by resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council.

- There are no support mechanisms for women who want to be candidates. In general terms, there is no single public policy with a gender approach.

There is a lack of institutional tools and mechanisms for the promotion of women's political participation: since the CEDAW ratification in 1981, Sri Lanka has put forward few legislative measures for gender equality. There have been some advances in legislation but none

regarding equality in power structures and decision-making positions. The Ministry of Women's Empowerment was set up in 1982, and the Charter of Rights of Women was adopted in 1993 but without legislative significance. It is rather a declaration of intent, but it established the National Women's Committee, whose work is to advise, inform and organise evaluations and monitoring for the government. In 1996, after the Beijing Platform for Action, the National Action Plan was adopted. In 1999 the Gender Complaints Centre was established in an effort to deal with all claims regarding gender discrimination and equity.

In 2002-03 the Ministry of Women's Empowerment together with the Ministry of Planning Implementation started an action to cross-cut gender in the national machinery and to research a budget with a gender perspective. Even so, resources for these organisations and for these initiatives are very limited and do not permit integral plans with specific actions. The "Ten Year Horizon Development Framework 2006-2010" prepared by the Department of National Planning must be mentioned. This plan recognises the relevance of gender equality in some areas, such as the work and educational areas, however, it does not involve those public institutions in charge of women's affairs and does not mention the National Action Plan (reviewed in 2006-2007).

However, there is no additional instrument, apart from the constitution that is dedicated to the principle of non-discrimination and promoting women's political participation. There are no quota systems. The proposal for a 25 per cent level of women's representation in local institutions was rejected by the 2000 constitutional reform. Political parties argued that it was not possible to find that amount of female candidates.

- There are not many initiatives by political parties, NGOs, women's associations or other organisations from civil society. Those in place are mainly focused on the raising of awareness and their impact is quite limited.

- The empowerment and support measures for political participation are very scarce and when they are in place they are addressed to everyone and they are not designed to meet women's specific needs. Women in power positions, at all levels, have not formed any type of alliance or formal or consolidated working networks, neither have they integrated a gender perspective into their working agendas.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The most active sector in women's political participation has been the research and study centres. There are many professionals in Sri Lanka working on studies or researching the social and political situation. The Centre for Women's Research (CENWOR) is a support documentary source centre. In addition to this, the Social Scientists' Association organisation, whose purpose is to carry out social studies, has a centre specialising in gender. The International Centre for Ethnic Studies also has a women's area. The University of Colombo presents a gender area with training in the subject and postgraduate studies in gender. All these studies regarding the list of documents researched have revealed very interesting data on women's political participation in Sri Lanka helping us to complete our analysis.

- There are some interesting initiatives concerning women's political participation by international organisations, with an aim to being prolonged in the future

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Very few women in power structures are independent candidates with a feminist or women's agenda. Many of them have been appointed to their positions to replace a resignation or after the death of a male relative, and they all belong to the big political elites.

- Women's presence in political parties also responds to this dynamics and many of the candidates belong to the important political

dynasties. In fact, the press and public opinion refer to them as "daughter of", "widow of" or "wife of", and they hardly ever report on them independently from the family dynasty they belong to. The political parties do not present women in their central role in the structure, and the latter do not hold decision-making positions. They are mostly in the "women's area", which is usually not very representative and has no power, or they work on administrative and logistic tasks. From the point of view of the voters, this division and the affiliation system also prevail, even if an independent woman stands for elections with an agenda for women's equality.

- Despite having achieved the highest levels of political representation, their presence in this sphere is in general quite weak. Women's political participation rate in elected assemblies at local and national level is the lowest in the region. In nominated and trust positions, the number of women is very small and their presence depends on their political affiliation.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- The women's movement with little capacity to influence: with regard to identity, belonging to a social class or ethnic group has a great influence on the alliances that women can form in politics and in civil society. Evidence of that was the NGOs and women's groups inability to create a real mobilisation of women against the war and for the peace process during times of conflict. Women's solidarity was weakened by the pressure they experienced on the part of the community groups.

- Therefore, this dynamic prevents women in power positions from having a gender agenda, since the priorities are established by the community groups. This ethnic affiliation sums up the reasons behind the lack of a women's and/or feminist movement in this country, since affiliations win out over female solidarity. This important factor explains, on the one hand, the criteria for women's organisations to be able to benefit from the government support at a particular time and, on the other hand, hinders the creation of women's organisations networks working on synergy and empowering women's movements.

- Lack of initiatives by the civil society to promote women's political participation: there are many women's organisations and associations but none presents a specific agenda on women or is specialised in issues regarding women's political participation.

- As for work in collaboration with public institutions, the dynamic is very much linked to, on the one hand, government's strategic priorities which do not include equality issues and, on the other, matters of community affiliation.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Despite not having a structured women's movement as such, there are many interesting feminist initiatives by women's organisations or groups. In 2007 there was a small advancement in the creation of a united women's front in an effort to promote women's political participation, when on the 8th March 17 women from different political parties and from different ethnic, religious, etc. groups presented a shared declaration on the end of women's political exclusion, the strengthening of women's equality and the promotion and protection of women's rights. This declaration was published by various newspapers in the country. The main obstacles identified for this exclusion were: lack of financial resources, violence against women in politics, lack of women's political training, and the current electoral system structure. Sri Lanka Mother's Conference, Mother's and Daughter's of Lanka, and Sri Lanka Women's NGO Forum are some of the umbrella organisations for women's NGOs.

- There are also other international organisations, such as United Nations Compound, working for the integration of women in peace processes based on the United Nations Security Council 1325 resolution. The Asian Development Bank in the

region, including Sri Lanka, plays a key role with its research and statistical work. They support development projects in the region but none concerning women's political participation. Another interesting initiative is that carried out by the Canadian agency for international cooperation whose gender equality programme in the region dedicates part of its efforts to women's political participation.

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Political parties are not taking any type of measure to favour women's inclusion. This affects women negatively, hindering their candidacy and participation in the political arena.

- The political climate in recent years has made the work of foreign NGOs, international cooperation agencies and United Nations organisations in general very complicated. Criticism of government actions and positions place them under direct suspicion and hinder their work with local and grassroots organisations.

- Some foreign NGOs and cooperation agencies think good governance must be a priority action in the country, however, they do not include a gender perspective in their work and neither do they work directly on women's political participation. Their line of work focuses on women but not on issues concerning political participation, they deal with violence, sexual and reproductive health, etc. With the exception of some organisations, promoting women's political participation and representation is not a priority for these organisations.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- In 2008 due to the low presence of women in politics, a National Advisory Dialogue was held, organised by the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment in collaboration with UNDP. It emphasised the need for establishing a quota system in the country and for working on women's education and training in rural areas with a view to empowering them and awaking their interest in politics.

2- QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

As mentioned in the Sri Lanka analysis process, the context of the country at the time of carrying out the field work prevented us from contacting female representatives at an institutional level. However, UNESCAP's "State of Women in Urban Local Government in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Report" presents a study on women's political participation at a local level. The qualitative section describes the views of women in power structures and decision-making positions. Most of them believe that the main obstacles to having access to and being able to keep power and decision-making positions are the traditional roles and prejudices with regard to women's function in society. Moreover social and cultural prejudices are very powerful and they consider politics a male territory. Finally, the climate of violence in politics does not contribute positively to a change in the situation.

Therefore, at this level they expressed the following needs: gender awareness to educate the whole of society, both men and women. They transmitted the need to create programmes specifically aimed at men and women separately, in an effort to make them aware of women's dual role in society and to show the significance of women's presence in politics, of equality of rights and changes in traditional roles. For these women, awareness programmes are a strategic priority, in the form of workshops, debate groups, etc. Furthermore, they emphasised the need to create working opportunities for women in order to raise their status in society. Finally, they think training and empowerment for women's groups is paramount if they are to be included in the various levels of the political sphere.

The other needs we have detected are related to the dynamisation of public institutions in charge of defending women's rights. The latter need more

material and economic and human resources to be able to lead an efficient cross-cutting gender policy, with integral plans, specific actions, and mechanisms to empower and make women aware in the national and local political arenas, as well as to be role models setting the trend of action for the other institutions.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

The fragile political situation in the country, affected by a political crisis and armed conflicts, has greatly weakened the work carried out by international cooperation agencies and by United Nations agencies. They are not allowed to criticise the government or its actions, risking a halt of their activities and coming under suspicion if they do so. This situation also restrains the work they can carry out with local and grassroots organisations, which in difficult times prefer to work directly with the local population to avoid putting their personnel at risk.

The needs detected at this level are related mainly to the conditions imposed by the context. As for the subject of our analysis, international cooperation working towards women's political participation is nearly non-existent. Most actions are addressed to the general population but without a gender perspective or, when addressed to women, they deal with issues such as sexual and reproductive health or gender violence.

In any case, at this level, actions need to be implemented to promote gender equality in terms of women's political participation, since this is an imperative established by international instruments, such as CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and the MDGs. Action platforms at regional level are also crucial, and they need to be promoted by United Nations organisations or international cooperation agencies.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

Civil society actions are affected and they depend on the political situation of the country. In addition to this, the tsunami disaster monopolised all social and political energy in recent years.

Most organisations interviewed have many years of experience which provides them with a good knowledge of the country's reality, a network of contacts and a certain continuity in their work. The support they can get from the government depends greatly on the type of affiliation they have. At present, most of them express their concern regarding government's control of the organisation's actions and positioning of the government's policies. International donors support is subjected to the guidelines they have to follow, sometimes without actually knowing the country's reality, thus hindering their work and even making it impossible.

In general, very few actions aimed at promoting women's political participation are developed. These are the reasons: 1) the present political climate of violence; 2) the prejudices concerning women's roles; 3) it is not considered as a national priority, and funds are usually dedicated to reconstruction or humanitarian aid issues. The work carried out in this field, if any, deals essentially with awareness and training, but the organisations recognise that this does not ensure the genuine inclusion of women in political participation because, to be able to enter this arena women need financial resources they do not possess and finally, in the case of political parties, for example, they prefer to nominate men rather than women. Therefore they recognise the need for integrating and involving other entities, such as political parties, trade unions, etc. in their work, so the actions can be more effective.

F. EAST TIMOR

1- ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN VIETNAM

East Timor's history has determined Timorese women's methods of political participation. During more than 450 years of Portuguese colonial power, the economic, social and political empowering development of the population was very limited, especially for women. From 1974, after the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship and the beginning of the decolonisation, women organised themselves politically and, despite the difficulties and limited representation, they struggled to end the discriminations of the colonial era. The Indonesian occupation (1975-1999) was a period of lack of rights and freedom for the Timorese population and, despite the lack of reliable data, many women are believed to have been part of the resistance and as a result they were raped and tortured. In spite of women being an active part in the fight for independence, at all levels and in all spheres, they have seen themselves excluded from the later recognition and appreciation processes. Examples of this were the first independent government, mainly formed by men, elected among the leaders of the independence movement, or women's exclusion from the lists of veterans and fighters and, therefore from the economic and social support measures.

In 1999, women were involved in politics in an effort to build the new State, and they again suffered the consequences of the violence sparked by the independence referendum. Within the framework of the United Nations mission to support a peaceful political transition, a gender unit was created in April 2000 which, in addition to dealing with the specific needs of Timorese women, tried to integrate a cross-cutting gender approach into the mission's work. During the 2001 election and despite women's groups demands, no participation quota measure was established, which did not prevent 27 per cent of seats in the Constituent Assembly from being held by women. At district level representation was lower, out of eighty-three candidacies only four were women's. In the current government there are three women leading ministries: The Minister of Finance, Minister of Justice and Minister of Social Solidarity who, together with a Vice-minister and a Secretary of State, are the highest ranking positions held by women in the country.

Despite the periods of deep crisis and violence in the country's recent history, both the women's movement and international organisations have constantly worked on promoting equality between women and men. However, there is still a significant gender gap which is especially obvious in areas such as access to decision-making positions, and education and access to resources; this reality is even worse in rural areas, where illiteracy rates among women are very high. Access to education, especially higher education, and participation in the labour market are low. Another important piece of information concerning women's situation in East Timor is the fertility rate which, with an average of 7 children per woman, is among the highest in the world.

The women's movement in East Timor has established a network to coordinate the work of the organisations and to provide logistic and technical support from its executive office. Since the founding of the constitution of the country, women have been organising national congresses which allow them to establish work priorities and elaborate, since last 2008, the Platform for Action for Timorese women 2008-2012. This strategy establishes an action plan demanding various actors' involvement, from civil society, government and international agencies. The influence of women's organisations has made it possible to demand a commitment by the government on the implementation of measures and a remarkable degree of coordinated work between the government and civil society has taken place. Finally, it is important to point out that one of the priority concerns for women's organisations and government is the elimination of violence against women in the family sphere which continues to be taboo among many sectors of the population.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT

LIMITING FACTORS

- In East Timor, religion plays a very important role in social and political life, with over 90 per cent of the population being Catholics. The Catholic Church expresses a strong resistance to accepting social transformations involving promotion of equality between women and men. During recent months, the debate on the legalisation of voluntary interruption of pregnancy –in the event of risk for the mother and pregnancies resulting from rapes– has come to a halt due to the strong opposition of the Catholic Church, which influences the population and the Timorese authorities.

- The society and cultural norms are patriarchal resulting in a strict division of female and male roles, being very restrictive for women by limiting their possibilities for holding decision-making positions in public life as well as economic and mobility independence. The traditional cultural system establishes that the daughter has to move to the husband's family house after marriage, therefore families' educational investment tends to concentrate on men, who stay in the family unit. Women get married earlier than men and once married they stop studying.

The sexual division of work results in girls assuming responsibilities at home before boys and, therefore, in many cases, leaving school early. In addition to transport and infrastructure limitations hindering access to school in many areas, the families' economic limitations means that they don't have enough money to pay for all the costs involving their daughters' education. These are some of the main causes for the significant gender gap that is still in place in East Timor regarding secondary and higher education. Data regarding primary education levels is more even, but as soon as we look toward higher educational levels the difference in access is very marked. This means that women's training is more limited than men's.

- The traditional justice systems are lead by suku council leaders, mainly men, and the lack of women's participation in these councils means that in most cases women's needs and problems are disregarded. The cases of violence within the family brought to the courts are evaluated following traditional patriarchal criteria, without applying a gender perspective, therefore leaving women in a situation of great vulnerability against their attackers.

- Political stability and security in East Timor is still a problem. In 2006 and 2008 the political crises in the country resulted in a halt to programmes and projects and, despite currently living in quieter times, those interviewed think that the current post-conflict situation in the country has some impact on planning and organising training projects and on creating women's organisation networks.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The Timorese women's movement has a long trajectory and many women have political careers and a great degree of social recognition. Women's involvement in the resistance against Indonesian occupation was very significant and, after independence, women's fight to demand their participation in the building up of a new state has had a great influence. The big demonstration organised by Rede Feto to demand a representation quota reserved for women of 30 per cent in the Constituent Assembly was a key factor and, despite the measure not been approved, it created an environment in favour of women's participation; in fact, they achieved a 27 per cent representation in this assembly. Since 2000, women's groups organise general congresses at national level and they have created a platform for action to demand the various agents involved to take measures to promote equality in all areas of political, economic and social life.

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- There is no complete data on women's participation in the electoral processes as voters. Women's organisations working on political participation think that women vote, but they usually follow the instructions of the male head of the household or, in many cases, the instructions of male leaders in the communities.

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- The political party structures are made up mainly of men, they are patriarchal structures governed by norms and criteria which do not consider women's rights at all.

- The political centralisation in Dili and the limited communications with the districts result in a lack of access to information and resources for women working in local government. Likewise, women's organisations are centralised in the capital and the awareness campaigns and training programmes are scarcely accessible to women in the districts.

- The government, due the pressure exerted by international organisations and women's movement, has set up measures to promote women's political participation at national and local level, and has also created a structure for a cross-cutting implementation of the gender approach in all ministries and governments in the districts. However, these mechanisms do not yet receive enough resources. We could say that the government's will to approve these measures has been made public but its application is limited and monitoring and implementation mechanisms need improvement.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- The Platform for Action for Timorese women 2008-2012, agreed upon in the last national congress, establishes specific legislative measures to ensure women's political participation and it also requests the implementation of training programmes so women can undertake the duties involved in their positions. This strategy establishes government responsibilities, asks for action to be taken by donor agencies and sets the objectives for civil society organisations. The parliament has had to take into account these recommendations, thus reflecting the potential of the women's movement in the country. At present, Rede Feto is drafting CEDAW's Shadow Report.

- East Timor has ratified various international treaties, including CEDAW in 2003. It has the support of international institutions to work on women's rights. There are now institutional and legal mechanisms to favour women's political participation, including:

  - The electoral law, establishing as compulsory the presence of one woman for each four candidacies in the political party lists for parliamentary elections, therefore implying a participation of nearly 30 per cent. In the current government three Ministries are led by women, there is also one Vice-minister and one female Secretary of State.

  - Within the parliament, Committee E has been founded to work on gender issues, and together with the women parliamentarians Caucus group are open to receive claims and comments. They are giving a response to women in economic, social and education spheres.

  - The previous Office for the Promotion of Equality (OPE) transformed itself in 2007 into the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI), thus broadening their capacity of action and allowing arguments and a direct participation in the Council of Ministries debates.

  - Establishment of a structure for the implementation of a cross-cutting gender approach in the entire government, creating the figure for a gender focus in each ministry and each district. This structure, despite the lack of resources aimed at it, is already in place therefore the work only needs to address its reinforcement.

  - The law for elections to local government councils (suku) stipulates that two women be placed in each of them, one as a representative of the women's area and the other as a representative of the youth's area. At present in local governments, women are leaders in 7 suku councils and 27 villages, and there are 1,350 women's representatives in a total of 442 sukus.

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Women in decision-making positions are a minority and they face obstacles in the exercise and fulfilment of their political obligations. The time schedule, the evaluation criteria for curriculum trajectories, the significance of supports and alliances created in male-dominated environments, they all set up structures where women do not have a space to participate, they cannot meet the time requirements due to their responsibilities at home and, when they do manage to meet them, their responsibilities as women are put into question and they are judged negatively for that.

Many of the political women do not have a prior trajectory as leaders, neither have they access to training in the political communication and public speech techniques needed to participate in discussions, according to the criteria established and accepted in politics. When they participate they are constantly scrutinised by public opinion in a more rigorous way than men are. Lastly, women participating in politics point out that as an obstacle they lack emotional support at home, they do not have anyone to take care of them and to support their continuation and value their work, a support most political men have at home, especially from their wives.

- Alliances between women parliamentarians are limited, since political party interests are prioritised.

TRENGTHENING FACTORS

- There are examples of political women with widely recognised trajectories at social level and who defend a political agenda in favour of women's rights.

- UNIFEM – East Timor has one of the biggest offices with more resources in the Asia Pacific region. At present they are working on several programmes: Programme on women's political participation, CEDAW programme and a programme against gender violence. UNIFEM has a team of 16 people in total, including three female expert consultants who work daily in the offices of the Ministry of Education, Agriculture and in the Secretariat of State for the Promotion of Equality (SEPI).

Within the framework of the political participation programme, they work from national to local level in the whole round of the electoral process, identifying and supporting potential female candidates, supporting them during the electoral campaigns and later advising the elected women on how to assume their responsibilities. In quantitative terms, they have trained a total of 1,300 female candidates and potential candidates. In collaboration with UNDP, UNIFEM supports a resources centre for women parliamentarians. It was founded in 2008, and it has an internet room, a library and provides training on implementing a gender approach. It also provides a meeting place between women parliamentarians and civil society.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- The two official languages in East Timor are Portuguese and Tetum. Data on the use of languages indicates that between 60 and 80 per cent of the population uses Tetum, among 40 to 20 per cent uses Bahasa Indonesian, only 5 per cent uses Portuguese and 3 per cent of the population speaks English. The use of languages implies many limitations for women's organisations, especially in rural areas for several reasons. Firstly, international agencies reports and pedagogical material are mainly written in Portuguese and English, therefore they are accessible to only 8 per cent of the population. Participation in international congresses, training programmes, seminars, etc, mainly organised in English are inaccessible to most in the women's movement, thus representing an obstacle to

having access to information and to creating networks with organisations in the region. The restriction in the use of language also acts as a limitation for drafting proposals and for being able to sum up information with a view to finding external support.

- Women's organisation movement started and had a significant role during Timorese resistance against the occupation of the Indonesian army. This results in the current formation of the movement establishing legitimate power hierarchies according to involvement in the resistance. This context establishes significant obstacles to young women and is generating a lack of interest on the part of this generation, since they do not find common ground with women with a longer trajectory.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Rede Feto (women's network), made up of 18 organisations coordinated among them, has a history of close collaboration with the government and with international organisations existing in the country. Within the network there are women's organisations specialised in political participation promotion and developing specific training and awareness programmes. Among them, CAUCUS and FOKUPERS NGOs are key organisations, as well as those programmes coordinated by Rede Feto. In September 2009, there will be elections to local government and CAUCUS, together with the Secretariat of State, is carrying out workshops on the electoral law and to promote women's participation in the elections in all districts.

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Women in power positions are a minority compared to men and, since they do not make up a critical mass, it is difficult for them to integrate women's needs into the political agenda. Within the parliament, the priorities and interests of each political party are put before the potential proposals for promoting measures in defence of women's rights.

2- QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

The strong patriarchal culture makes women who work on politics face significant resistance because they are seen as taking time away from their real obligations, the family; this idea is more present in rural areas. Those women involved in politics who were interviewed explain that their work is always subjected to a much more comprehensive evaluation than that of their male colleagues. Some of the female interviewees also emphasise that the very same parties they belong to tend to provoke confrontations with women from other parties, thus generating a very negative image of lack of unity regarding defence of women's rights. The most important priorities for Timorese female politicians include their own training, especially in women's equality and rights, in order to enhance their positions of responsibility.

Government institutions working on promotion of equality lack many resources, such as trained personnel with the capacity to apply a gender approach. Resources allocated to training and information dissemination are very limited and, therefore, applying the programmes proves a difficult task. This situation results in them having no influence on the highest power positions and, in turn, it results in a great reduction of capacity for action in the districts, where the patriarchal culture is stronger.

The presence of many donor agencies without coordination may pose a problem for government institutions, which consider it necessary to establish a unified work methodology and common objectives, as well as to improve coordination with all stakeholders: civil society, donors and other government institutions.

Women parliamentarians think it is important to improve their knowledge of other countries experience, thus improving their training. The work of the women parliamentarians Caucus group, founded to help them with their work, is highly valued by them; however, they think that sometimes it becomes too much of a burden when added to the responsibility of their positions.

For the good operation of the gender focus structure in ministries and districts, it needs to be provided with resources. Many of those integrating them do not work full-time in this role neither have they specific gender knowledge. In other cases, even when they have the capacity and the will to perform their function, they lack the authority to influence decision-making or the general planning in ministries. Likewise many of the actions planned by the central government do not reach the districts due to the issues already mentioned.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

The diversity of bilateral cooperation agencies, embassies and United Nations mission in East Timor form a heterogeneous map of donors and agents in need of a serious coordination effort, and at the same time to be coordinated with all government levels, from central to local administrations, proves essential.

Both legislation and mechanisms established by government are good tools to work with, but there is still the need to create programmes to monitor and to provide technical assistance for these measures.

UNIFEM's programme on women's political participation is one of the most integral programmes carried out in East Timor on this issue, working in collaboration with both the government and civil society organisations. The needs identified by those in charge of the programme include: the need to initiate training programmes for men, the lack of analytical studies on the obstacles faced by elected women to improve their positions and the need to work on decision-making at home and in the communities. As lessons learned during three years of work, they affirm that centralisation in Dili is a negative factor because it hinders work in the districts and that Tetum needs to be used at work and all documents must be translated into this language so they can be made available to the population. They deem it important for Timorese women, both politicians and representatives of civil society organisations, to exchange experiences at regional level for the creation of networks and for their own training and empowerment.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

Women's organisations in East Timor see women's political participation as a priority. Firstly, they suggest coordination, exchange of information, monitoring and evaluation of all government, international and civil society actors working on gender equality projects is necessary, especially with female politicians in central institutions. The platform for action for Timorese women 2008-2012 is a strategy agreed upon by women's organisations that requires mechanisms for its implementation. Moreover for the effective implementation of these projects, it is necessary to work on educating the whole population on politics, especially young women, providing them with the tools and capabilities to promote their active participation thus facilitating the generation take over.

Rede Feto, Timorese women's organisations coordinator, believes strengthening women's local organisations is a priority. Due to the inequality in resources and capabilities between organisations in Dili and at local level, the latter are suggested to be in need of strengthening so they can participate and defend their interests based on their real needs. In order

to do so, it is necessary to create alliances and to establish means of collaboration between female parliamentarians and women in local governments.

Participation in international events is seen as very positive for learning from other organisations experiences and for creating alliances. However, there are always problems when selecting the representative, since usually only one person is invited and financed per organisation or country, therefore they have to decide between sending the best candidate with more experience or sending young women who are getting trained and promoted.

Lastly, women's organisations representatives see a problem in the lack of financial resources and their allocation only to specific short-term projects, thus hindering stable and continued work. The various demands of donors also prove to be a burden, since women trained in design and implementation of projects have to adjust themselves to every request form. Among the other areas where more training is said to be needed, apart from technical and financial management of organisations, are leadership, use of new technologies, communication and advocacy. These needs are important because an international presence is only ensured until 2010 and therefore they need to be prepared for the potential reduction in international aid.

G. VIETNAM

1- ANALYSIS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN VIETNAM

The Socialist Republic of Vietnam was founded in 1976, organised as a one-party system, the Communist Party of Vietnam. In 1992, a new constitution was passed giving the party State power based on centralisation. The National Assembly is the people's highest representative body and the only one with legislative power. The government is the executive branch of the National Assembly, and it has a people's committee structure at all levels: provincial, municipal, district and commune level. The Politburo is the supreme leading body and comprises 14 members elected by the party central committee; only one woman is involved in this institution.

Currently, women participate in all different levels of government and decision-making positions in mass organisations. However, the situation with regard to gender equality still lacks the necessary support for structural transformations, the traditional attitudes still contribute to maintaining a discriminatory society against women hindering them from having a voice and claiming their rights. The government has established measures to encourage women's participation in governmental positions from commune to central levels. At present, 26 per cent of positions in the National Assembly are held by women. At local level, participation represents around 19-20 per cent. However, women always hold political sectors considered feminine, and mainly vice-management positions. Women's participation in the labour market is rising, currently at 48 per cent, which is making clear the significance of reproductive work and the need to establish public services to cover it is being increasingly questioned publicly.

The Vietnamese Women's Union mass organisation presents a hierarchical organisation self-described as representative of all women in the country. It is losing its capability for influence at present and its functions for promoting equality after the changes in the government machinery structure are being somehow diluted, with part of their competencies transferred to the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs. On the other hand, the Women's Union has a structure that facilitates contact with all levels of administration and with women at all levels, coordinating its agenda under the guidelines of the party and establishing channels for women's social participation, although, at present, there is no feminist transforming ideology that might result in a real social conflict in favour of gender equity.

AREA 1: POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CONTEXT

LIMITING FACTORS

The cultural context establishes limitations to women with regard to their political and social participation. Women are responsible for all family care and they must remain at home, they lack the support of their communities and families for being involved in politics. Moreover there are no measures in place to implement public services to support family care and so far private services are very expensive, thus it makes economic sense for women to take on all responsibilities involving the family.

Rural population in the country represents 75.7 per cent and nearly 80 per cent of Vietnamese women live in rural areas. Data indicates that they produce 60 per cent of the country's agricultural produce and they are responsible for all family reproductive work, thus limiting the time available for women to participate in politics and to get training. Most of the people who were interviewed agree on emphasising that the gap in access to financial, educational and health resources between rural and urban women is huge, and it is especially worrying for women belonging to ethnic minorities.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Women's right to vote and right to be candidates is granted in article 54 of the Constitution of Vietnam (1992) as well as in the electoral legislation of the National Assembly, article 2 (1997) and People's Councils, article 2 (2003).

AREA 2: WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- There is no complete data on women's participation in the electoral processes as voters.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- According to the evaluation of the Vietnamese Women's Union, women actively participate as voters in elections and its organisation is in charge of providing information on government proposals so women are informed before voting.

AREA 3: WOMEN'S ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Government has limited resources and allocates resources according to priorities, and equality between women and men is not a priority concern.

- The quota measures to promote women's political participation at all levels of government have not been totally met. Although women's participation has increased at all levels, the objectives included in the National Strategy for the advancement of women have not been met. Data regarding elections for the National Assembly in 2007 (12th mandate) shows women's representation at 25.76 per cent while the objective was 33 per cent. If compared to previous mandates participation has decreased, in the 10th mandate it represented 26.22 per cent and in the 11th mandate it was 27.31 per cent. In local governments participation has seen an increase in the 2004-2009 mandate, with 23.8 per cent at provincial level, 23.0 per cent at district level, and 19.5 per cent at commune level. However, the objectives set for this mandate were 28 per cent, 23 per cent and 18 per cent respectively, and they were met in the last two levels.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Existence of institutional and legislative mechanisms to promote women's political participation.

  - Action Plan for the advancement of women in Vietnam (2006-2010). Objective 4 is to improve the quality and efficiency of women's participation in political, economic, cultural and social spheres with the purpose of increasing women's numbers in leadership positions. They establish indicators for their fulfilment, such as the increase of women's proportion in the party, a 30 per cent representation in the national assembly or having a minimum of one female leader per ministry, central agency and People's Committee. Lastly, it establishes measures to meet the objectives primarily with a view to organising training programmes, implementing legal measures and introducing a gender approach to all human resources policies in public administration.

  - National strategy for the advancement of women for 2010, establishing women's participation percentages in the different levels, as well as the deadlines to meet those objectives. Objective 4, indicator 2, sets as an objective a 30 per cent representation by women in the 11th parliamentary term of the National Assembly and 33 per cent in the 12th parliamentary term. Indicator 3 sets percentages for women's representation in People's Councils at a provincial level of 28 per cent for the 2004-2009 mandate and 30 per cent for the following mandate; at district level, 23 per cent must be achieved for the 2004-2009 mandate and 25 per cent for the following year, and at commune level, 18 per cent and 20 per cent for the following mandate.

  - Law on gender equality. Article 11 stipulates that one of the measures to promote equality in politics is to ensure an adequate proportion of female representatives in the National Assembly and in the People's Committees. Article 19 declares that National Assembly, the permanent Commission and government have the authority to establish other measures for the promotion of equality and for monitoring implementation and the authority to eliminate the measures.

  - The National Assembly electoral law states that the Permanent Committee will suggest a number of female representatives upon request from the

Central Committee of Women's Union to ensure a fair proportion of women. The People's Councils electoral law establishes the same measures at local level.

- Existence of government machinery for the promotion of equality, led by a different organisation. Previously there was an independent and interministerial structure, reporting directly to the Vietnamese Women's Union (National Committee for the advancement of women, NCFAW). At present it has been included within the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), where the Department of Equality has been created, absorbing the previous structure. This department was established in March 2008 and organised in two offices: the department and the NCFAW office. The main goal of the department is the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality dated 25th December 2007.

- Within the National Assembly there is a Department of social affairs in charge of supporting the National Assembly committee of social affairs. They have been working for the last two years on the implementation of the equality law and CEDAW. They are responsible for integrating the gender approach into the entire Vietnamese legislation.

- Resolution No. 11, dated April 2007, "Communist Party Politburo". This document has not been translated into English, but the women in charge of the Department of Social Affairs of the National Assembly explains that this resolution reviews women's political participation at the various levels and establishes measures to enhance the situation with goals set until 2020 with a view to increasing participation in all sectors of society and in the economy. If these objectives are met, Vietnam will boast the best indicators for women's political participation in the region.

- CEDAW's ratification in 1982 and the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals have made a positive impact on gender equality in Vietnam.

- The Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) is represented at all levels, i.e. central, provincial, district and commune level. The organisation focuses on women's activities and has 13 million members. It is coordinated with all ministries on different issues: with MOLISA in occupational training, with the Ministry of Justice on legislation and dissemination of information on women's legislation, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on international cooperation, with the Ministry of Defence on issues concerning trafficking of women, with the Ministry of Education on education for children, with the Ministry of Agriculture on rural development. The priority at national level is to promote women's political participation and this is a positive factor that encourages other stakeholders, such as local NGOs, to work on this issue. Women's Union work on promoting political participation focuses on training, leadership training and support for elected women. The women's union is involved in women's candidacies in an effort to meet quotas, selecting and presenting candidacies of women capable of meeting the requirements for each position. At the end of the year, they review the quotas, they analyse and classify each province.

AREA 4: CONSOLIDATION OF WOMEN IN INSTITUTIONAL POWER STRUCTURES AND DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

LIMITING FACTORS

- Women in decision-making positions are mainly in charge of sectors considered as women's privilege, such as education, social issues, youth or ethnic minorities, and their presence in sectors such as the economy, budgets, security or defence is minimal.

- Women's participation at local level is limited, although less than that at national level. Women's positions in government local levels are not strategic and they are not given the same responsibilities as the ones provided to men in the same position. In the provinces, in the party buildings and in the people's committees there are no women, they can only be found in the Women's Union offices.

- Legislation establishes a different age for retirement for women and men (60 men – 55 women), arguing that women are weaker and they are tired at 55. This measure poses a barrier to women's professional and political careers, since promotion in political positions and administration requires experience and women over 45-50 are no longer promoted since they will not have much more trajectory. In addition to these obstacles, women see limitations in the first years of their career, a period when they generally become pregnant and their devotion to their professional career is not absolute, in contrast with men's dedication. Therefore, men's and women's equal development in their political and professional careers is hindered by these conditions. The discriminatory measure concerning retirement age has been in the political agenda for nearly 10 years, but the National Assembly has decided not to modify it with the Law on Equality since the same argument of women being weaker is still very much in place.

- Some of the women in decision-making positions who were interviewed explain that it is not advisable to accept positions higher than those of their husbands, since this can result in problems within the environment and social stigmatization.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- Women MPs in the National Assembly have made up a group in May 2008 and during these 10 months have organised talks and debates on gender issues; the Department of social affairs in the National Assembly is responsible for supporting and advising this group.

- The Vietnamese Women's Union develops support and training programmes for women in decision-making positions.

AREA 5: WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN CIVIL SOCIETY AS AN AREA FOR POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

LIMITING FACTORS

- The Vietnamese Women's Union coordinates all training actions targeted at women with the positive aspect of having a coordinated strategy and planning, but presenting some problems with regard to the possibility of presenting a critical approach. All power positions in the Women's Union are determined by the government and not by female members and, therefore, they follow the party guidelines and do not defend a women's rights approach if the party does not agree. This limits women's demands, since on many occasions they still defend traditional views in order to avoid conflict.

STRENGTHENING FACTORS

- NGOs work on gender issues is increasing, they used to work only with women belonging to the Vietnamese Women's Union but now more organisations are developing projects. The most prominent NGO in projects promoting women's political participation is CEPEW, founded in 1999. It develops training and leadership projects for women at district and commune levels, and at provincial levels the projects focus on the People's Councils. CEPEW coordinates its projects with the Women's Union and with the National Committee for the Advancement of Women (NCFAW). They are currently implementing two projects. The first project focuses on implementing work and collaboration networks for women in decision-making positions. The second project targets women's clubs where meetings are organised every three months, inviting female politicians to promote other women's participation. The work developed by the NGO Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CGFED) is also very significant. Founded in 1993, it was the first NGO registered in Vietnam after the approval of the law on organisations. It focuses on multidisciplinary research on gender, family, society and the environment with a development approach, and implementing the results of the research in intervention activities concerning women and gender equality. They work with women in rural areas, and in Hanoi they have a documentation centre with free access on gender, development and environment issues.

AREA 6: INCLUSION OF A GENDER PERSPECTIVE IN THE POLITICAL AGENDA OF WOMEN IN POWER STRUCTURES OR DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS

- Women in decision-making positions are a minority and they have not formed a critical group that has the ability to confront the government's priority lines.

- The Vietnamese Women's Union, representing and establishing women's priorities in the country, establishes measures and priorities with a limited capacity for deep transformation.

2 -QUALITATIVE ASSESSMENT OF THE CONTEXT

INSTITUTIONAL LEVEL

At this level, institutions in charge of implementing measures and legislation for the promotion of women's political participation indicate that the main priorities are training and empowerment for women with a view to taking on their responsibilities in power structures and to working on making access to this training egalitarian. They want to take measures for the promotion process in government and public administrations to be more transparent and to establish measures to facilitate women's promotion. They think it is important to involve leaders so implementation of measures is facilitated, especially regarding the implementation and improvement of passed legislation, which establishes a good framework of tools with which to work on the issue of political participation. Lastly they emphasise the need to carry on working on awareness campaigns on gender equality and the significance of women's political participation for the population as a whole.

TECHNICAL LEVEL

In the analysis carried out in Vietnam we detect that, given the one-party political system with institutions that are unique to the country, such as the Politburo, mass organisations or the Vietnamese Fatherland Front, international indicators on women's political participation may not reflect the reality of the country. Women's participation in the National Assembly or in local governments is increasing because it is responding to the quotas set by international organisations, but in the case of other institutions with a great deal of power there are no participation quotas or measures to facilitate participation and women's presence is insignificant there.

We can also see the need for participation quotas to be enforced. Quotas are set but they are allowed to not be fulfilled if trained women for these positions are not found, thus justifying their lack of implementation and hindering their role as a tool for transformation.

CIVIL SOCIETY LEVEL

The organisations interviewed mention the need for exchanges with organisations from other countries with broader experience in this issue, since Vietnam's trajectory with NGOs is slightly more limited.
They affirm that NGOs points of view do not always correspond to that of government or mass organisations. They believe that approved laws on gender equality promotion are the result of the work carried out by NGOs and that they need to continue so they are adequately implemented while some aspects of the laws are improved.
women and gender equality. They work with women in rural areas, and in Hanoi they have a documentation centre with free access on gender, development and environment issues.

chapter 5

5. REGIONAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS for women's political participation in 7 South-East Asian countries

A. COMPARATIVE AND REGIONAL OUTLOOK ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

I. Political participation context

In all contexts studied, there are socio-cultural and ideological factors that constitute powerful barriers for women's political participation. Well-rooted patriarchal norms and values establish discrimination mechanisms and systems based on gender roles, stereotypes and hierarchies.

LITERACY RATES FOR WOMEN AND MEN (PER CENT, OLDER THAN 15)[34]

	WOMEN	MEN	DIF.
Bangladesh	40.8	53.9	13.1
Cambodia	64.1	84.7	20.6
The Philippines	93.6	91.6	-2
Indonesia	86.8	94.0	7.2
Sri Lanka	89.1	92.3	3.2
East Timor	-	-	-
Vietnam	86.9	93.9	7

Disparities in literacy between men and women are quite significant and they are almost a general trend in all countries studied, except in the case of the Philippines, where women's rate is higher than men's. In some cases, this difference can get to 20.6 points, as it is the case with Cambodia or 13.1 points in Bangladesh. In the other countries, this difference is not so big but it becomes more obvious when we analyse the figures concerning gender differences in primary and secondary education, and especially at graduate level. For example, in Bangladesh, the percentage of women enrolled in primary, secondary and at graduate level is 88%, 51% y 32%[35] respectively.

34 2007/2008 Human Development Report, UNPD, http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_BGD.html
35 2000-2004 Statistics by UNSTATS http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/sconcerns/education/ed2.htm#IWM

Regional disparities are also significant if we consider the differences between women's literacy rate in Bangladesh (40.8 per cent) and that of women in the Philippines (93.6 per cent). These disparities can be explained partly due to the differences in the influence the patriarchal and conservative culture has in each country, but in order to correctly assess these figures and understand these differences, many factors need to be taken into account, factors that can have a positive or negative influence on this inequality. We can quickly mention some of them: for example, government initiatives to promote gender equality in education, as it is the case in Sri Lanka, one of the pioneers in the region in terms of free and universal education from primary to university level, where figures are closer to those of the Philippines in spite of having a much more conservative society.

Disparities between rural and urban areas are also to be considered. The two countries with the lowest urban population are Sri Lanka, where only 15.1 per cent of the population lives in urban areas, and Cambodia, with 19.7 per cent. The countries with the highest rate of urban population are Indonesia (48.1 per cent) and the Philippines (62.7 per cent) . Another very important factor, which many times

is disregarded, is the extent and strength of the women's movement, if one exists. It is clear that in a country like the Philippines this factor is essential for many of the advances enjoyed by women. Finally, another factor that should be mentioned concerning literacy rates is the ideological-political configuration of the country. For example, in Indonesia the radical Islamic groups defend a return to the patriarchal traditional family, as well as an absolute control over women. This ideological approach indeed affects the gender relations and it has an impact on the educational possibilities for women at the highest levels.

With a view to getting a more clear and exact picture of the influence of patriarchal culture in each of the countries studied, in a comparative manner, this literacy indicator needs to be combined with other data that provides information on gender roles and hierarchies and which can even come into conflict with the previous data and can reveal paradoxes that are inherent to each country.

The next two tables provide an estimate of women's and men's purchasing power and they indicate the disparities which exist with regard to access to material resources; the second table shows the economic activity rate of women but does not inform about the sexual division of work.

ESTIMATE OF WOMEN'S AND MEN'S PURCHASING POWER (PPP –US$)

	WOMEN	MEN	DIF.
Bangladesh	1.282	2.792	1.51
Cambodia	2.332	3.149	0.81
The Philippines	3.883	6.375	2.149
Indonesia	2.410	5.280	2.87
Sri Lanka	2.647	6.479	3.83
East Timor	-	-	-
Vietnam	2.540	3.604	1.06

36 http://esa.un.org/unup

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY RATE FOR WOMEN (PER CENT, 15 YEARS OLD AND OVER)

Bangladesh	52.7
Cambodia	74.4
The Philippines	54.7
Indonesia	51.0
Sri Lanka	34.9
East Timor	54.3
Vietnam	72.2

The Philippines is still the country where, in comparison with its neighbours in the region, women have higher purchasing power in terms of money, but the gap between women and men in this country is one of the biggest, after Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Cambodia and Vietnam present a less significant purchasing disparity between men and women. The economic activity rate for women in Cambodia is the highest in the region. This situation results from the country reconstruction process, after the Pol Pot period, when more women than men were employed, since most men, especially those with more education and training, were killed during the Pol Pot regime.

Women's literacy level is therefore not directly related to women's purchasing power level, nor to the economic activity rate. As we will show later on, neither is it a guarantee for having access to power structures and decision-making. Factors concerning gender roles and hierarchies would need to be combined with other factors such as the economic ideology of the country, the relevance of migratory flows and the significance of those migrating workers, the degree of urbanisation of the country, and the use of women as cheap labour force both in the most industrialised sectors and in agriculture. Furthermore, the differences between women's formal paid work, work in the shadow economy, and non-paid work should be clearly stated. This would take us to considering many issues that go beyond the framework of this analysis, focused on women's political participation and representation, but we believe it is important to mention these factors so they can be taken into account in any study with a gender transforming perspective.

With regard to this study, this data reveals an organisation of the society in all countries studied that limits women's capacity for choice and access to material, financial and educational resources needed to be able to compete with men on an equal footing in the political arena. The mainstream social perception of the roles and functions appropriate for women and men must be added. This perception sees the political sphere as inappropriate for women, whose exclusive role is to be wives and mothers caring for their family and home. Several female politicians interviewed in Vietnam explained that it is not advisable to accept positions higher than those of their husbands, since this can result in problems in the family environment and social stigmatization. This same feeling was communicated by all people interviewed in the different levels in the 7 countries analysed. They all say that the cultural factor constitutes one of the biggest barriers for women's political participation because it influences all the other aspects of this participation and it requires wide and long-term changes.

Another relevant aspect to be considered for assessing the impact of the context on women's political participation is the climate of political instability characteristic of the democratisation process in the countries studied. Many of these processes result in situations of violence and political conflict, corruption, political repression and nepotism. For example, in Cambodia the whole political sphere is dominated by just one party, the CPP. To be able to participate in elections, individuals need to have internal support, contacts and financial resources. In Indonesia, the liberalisation of the political arena after Suharto's period in power has given way to Islamic radical groups that use violence to impose their ideas. In the Philippines, the reports of international observers show evidence of fraud in the elections, according to Human Right Watch in 2007

Many of the women interviewed, at the institutional level, affirm that this political context reinforces gender prejudices and has become a significant obstacle for

their access to political spheres. In fact, the whole society, including women themselves, thinks that politics is not an appropriate area for women.

Finally, in most countries studied, the promoted decentralisation processes have not resulted in the higher political participation of women at local level. In Bangladesh this process has not come along with higher local autonomy or reforms for a wider integration of women. In Indonesia, the decentralisation process has strengthened traditional institutions and has implied the adoption of laws and regulations based on religious doctrines, both Muslim (Sharia law) and Christian. There are however some interesting initiatives, for example in Cambodia, where the Ministry of the Interior has established a working group (DoLa Gender Working Group) to support the implementation of a gender perspective in the decentralization process.

II. Women's participation in elections

A quick look to the history of women's political participation in elections reveals that these countries already have a long tradition of women participating in politics.

YEAR WHEN WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE WAS OBTAINED [37]

Country	Year
Bangladesh	1935, 1972
Cambodia	1955
The Philippines	1937
Indonesia	1945, 2003
Sri Lanka	1931
East Timor	-
Vietnam	1946

All countries have established universal suffrage before the 1950s. In Bangladesh and Indonesia, this right was interrupted by the changes in political regimes and it was restablished in 1972 and 2003. As a comparison, let us remember that in Spain, after a first recognition of this right in 1931, there was not until 1977 that universal suffrage was reintroduced.

Countries such as Sri Lanka have been pioneers in the region in terms of women's political participation, since they have recognised the right to vote and participate in elections for women in 1931, 13 years before France.

YEAR WHEN WOMEN'S RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE IN ELECTIONS WAS OBTAINED [38]

Country	Year
Bangladesh	1935, 1972
Cambodia	1955
The Philippines	1937
Indonesia	1945
Sri Lanka	1931
East Timor	-
Vietnam	1946

However, and despite this regional historical trajectory, and as it will be showed in the following points, these qualitative progress have not reflected quantitative advances in terms of women's political participation and representation.

At present, official gender disaggregated data about participation in elections is almost impossible to get. All our assessments were based on the estimates provided by male and female experts interviewed. According to them, the general trend is a lower rate of participation for women, although they see an increase in women's participation in elections as voters and as members of political parties in the electoral campaigns. The case

37 2007/2008 Human Development Report, UNPD, http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_BGD.html
38 2007/2008 Human Development Report, UNPD, http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/data_sheets/cty_ds_BGD.html

of the Philippines is quite remarkable because the number of women voters is significant and exceeds that of men (87 per cent versus 85.7 per cent).

The limiting factors most frequently mentioned by the experts include the power of the patriarchal culture that considers women as not suitable for participating in the political game. Choosing leaders is seen as a responsibility of the men in the family. They either tell women in the family whom to vote or they believe women do not need to vote. Another important factor is linked to the complicated bureaucratic process required to exercise the right to vote. Women decide more often than men not to prepare all the documentation and not to vote, because this responsibility will be assumed by a male relative. Finally, the female vote can discover obstacles because of the female migrations in the region, which in cases like the Philippines amount to 70 per cent of migrant workers.

However, in some countries there are awareness programmes aiming at promoting women's participation in elections, such as the Women's Media Centre in Cambodia. These programmes are focused on spreading the culture of democracy among women, explaining to them the electoral process and giving them information on the candidates and their programmes.

The rates of women presenting themselves for elections as candidates are still very low in all countries studied and, except in the direct vote systems with open lists, women have very little chance of being elected.

ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AVAILABLE FOR ELECTING REPRESENTATIVES TO THE PARLIAMENT[39]

Bangladesh	300 representative directly elected by simple majority, with 45 seats directly reserved to women, for 5 years
Cambodia	123 representatives elected in a proportional representation system with closed lists, for 5 years
The Philippines	240 members elected by a mixed system for 3 years: 219 seats by simple majority, 21 seats by proportional representation system with lists
Indonesia	560 members elected by a proportional representation system with open list with 30 per cent of women, for 5 years
Sri Lanka	225 members elected by preferential vote by proportional representation system, for 6 years
East Timor	65 representatives elected by proportional representation system with list. Each list must include one female candidate per 4 male candidates, for 5 years
Vietnam	498 representatives elected by a system of two rounds by popular vote for 5 years

At present, only Indonesia has an electoral system with open lists, and it is worth mentioning that the Philippines is also planning to establish a system of quotas for women's representation in political parties.

The leaders of the political parties prefer to support male candidates. Moreover, in all the countries, the electoral campaigns financing has to be assumed by the candidates. Since women, for gender reasons, have limited access to the financial resources, this condition becomes a significant barrier for their presentation as women candidates in elections. Other common limitations in all the countries studied include household responsibilities, lack of time and need of husband's authority in many cases to participate in any activity outside the private arena. All the above socially undermines their role as citizens and "political beings". Families and political parties see it as more profitable to invest material and financial resources in male members than in female members to compete in the elections.

39 http://www.electionguide.org/index.php, http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm

III. Women's access to institutional power structures and decision-making positions

As previously mentioned, women's political participation in the region boasts a long trajectory. Although these figures only concern a tiny minority of women belonging to the elite or to important political dynasties, they do however constitute significant precedents for women's political representation. Women in politics have contributed to changing gender prejudices with regard to women's political role and they represent important leadership models for other women. The following table should be linked to the "Year when women's right to participate in elections was obtained" to prove the following fact: when women have been able to be elected they have not hesitated to use this right, despite the numerous existing barriers –cultural and ideological, political and structural.

YEAR WHEN THE FIRST WOMAN WAS NOMINATED (N) OR ELECTED (E) IN PARLIAMENT

Country	Year
Bangladesh	1973 E
Cambodia	1958 E
The Philippines	1941 E
Indonesia	1950 E
Sri Lanka	1947 E
East Timor	-
Vietnam	1976 E

However, the limiting factors create a significant disparity between "normal" women and those belonging to the elites with regard to access to spheres of power. The latter have more access to the resources and to men's power of influence in politics. In Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and the Philippines, politics is dominated by the big political dynasties. The common practice within political families is to present various members successively for the position. The first successor is normally the son and only if there is no son the daughter will be the candidate. Widows also play an important role in political families, and the most emblematic example of this is Corazón Aquino in the Philippines.

Therefore, in order to widen this representation and to promote women's access to power structures and decision-making positions, certain institutional mechanisms are needed, such as specific political or legislative measures and mechanisms for promoting equality between men and women, like the ministries for equality, committees, working groups, etc.

One of the significant prior steps would be the ratification of international treaties establishing the elimination of discrimination against women. Their relevance lies in the existence of a hierarchy of rules at international level and the binding nature of these treaties. As a result, signatory countries commit themselves to adopt the necessary legislative and institutional measures to meet their international committee.

RATIFICATION OF CEDAW (CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN – 1979).

Country	Year
Bangladesh	1984
Cambodia	1992
The Philippines	1981
Indonesia	1984
Sri Lanka	1981
East Timor	2003
Vietnam	1982

All countries studied have ratified this convention which is a significant international legislative framework of reference in terms of equality and which has a binding nature for the signatory countries. Articles 2 to 4 and article 7 of CEDAW (1979) include specific measures concerning the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women's political participation and they recommend legal and temporary measures, as well as positive actions.

We have seen at an earlier point dealing with women's participation in elections that electoral systems, except the open lists ones, do not ensure adequate representation of women as candidates or as elected members. Even with open lists, other factors need to be in place for enough women candidates to be elected, due to the power of the patriarchal culture and to women's limitations in terms of material, financial and educational resources preventing them often from being candidates or from having their political parties nominating them in the lists.

Therefore, it is important to consider positive action measures, as CEDAW recommends, to somewhat overcome the above mentioned barriers. The systems of representation quotas can act as effective measures when going along with a true political will to promote equality at the political level; in other words, when they go along with mechanisms of control and guarantee observance of these measures.

However, the following table clearly shows the lack of these mechanisms in most cases:
Only the Philippines has positive action measures in political parties for the electoral lists, for the national parliament and for local elections. Indonesia displays a system of quotas at parliamentary level. Only Bangladesh establishes it in the constitution. In this country, 45 women are directly nominated to the parliamentary seats and that does not prevent direct election of other women. The electoral law also includes a similar system of quotas for the nomination of women at local level. However, no country has mechanisms of control or guarantees for these measures, and they do not ensure their representation and participation in strategic decision-making positions, such as parliamentary commission, for instance.

In addition to the legislative or positive action measures, there is also a need for mechanisms promoting equality between men and women. Public bodies for promotion of equality must act, on the one hand, as a monitoring centre for inequalities at all levels: governmental, institutional, political and social. On the other hand, they need to act as models for equality and advisors for governmental policies, or to directly design national strategies for equality between men and women, and ensure their implementation and observance. As with international treaties and positive action measures, these organisations represent an

POSITIVE ACTION MECHANISMS[40]

	CONSTITUTIONAL QUOTAS FOR NATIONAL PARLIAMENT	QUOTAS IN THE ELECTORAL LAW FOR NATIONAL PARLIAMENT	CONSTITUTIONAL OR LEGISLATIVE QUOTAS AT SUB - NATIONAL LEVEL	LEGAL SANCTIONS FOR NON-OBSERVANCE	QUOTAS IN POLITICAL PARTIES FOR THE LISTS
Bangladesh	YES	NO	YES	-	NO
Cambodia	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
The Philippines	PREVIOUSLY	NO	NO	-	YES
Indonesia	NO	YES (annulled)	NO	NO	NO
Sri Lanka	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
East Timor	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO
Vietnam	NO	NO	NO	NO	NO

40 Global Database of Quotas for Women, IDEA, http://www.quotaproject.org/index.cfm y « The Implementation of Quotas : Asian Experience », IDEA, Quotas Workshop Report Series, Jakarta, Indonesia, 2002

essential support for the gradual and lasting elimination of all inequalities in a society. Their existence is necessary and they represent an instrument to evaluate the degree of advancement of a society in terms of gender equality.

The following shows the existence of these public institutions in each of the countries studied.

As revealed herein, in all countries analysed there are organisations and action plans and gender equality laws in place. Many of them follow the numerous studies made, by country, on gender equality in various spheres. However, for these mechanisms to be effective and to reach the objective of equality, they need to be supported by real political commitments. The analysis of the different contexts reveals a very varied situation. There are interesting initiatives but in most

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS AND MECHANISMS WITH REGARD TO WOMEN'S AFFAIRS AND/OR EQUALITY

	PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS	NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR EQUALITY
Bangladesh	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, National Council on Women and Development, WID Focal Point Parliamentary Committee on Women and Children's Affairs, Committee for the Evaluation and Implementation of Women's Advancement	National Policy for the advancement of women and National Plan for the advancement of women 1997 and fifth five-year plan (1997-2002)
Cambodia	Ministry of Women's Affairs, Technical Women Gender Working Group, National Council for Cambodian Women, Wing Programme, Action Groups for gender cross-cutting, Focal points for women and children	Neary Rattanak II Plan: 6 priority areas (2005-2009), Law for the Prevention of domestic violence and for the protection of victims (2005)
The Philippines	National Commission on Filipino women's role, Official Development Assistance Gender and Development Network	Law against sexual harassment (1995), Law against rape (1997), Anti-traffic law (2003), Law on violence against women and their children (2004), Magna Carta on Women Bill (2009)
Indonesia	Ministry for the Empowerment of Women, Centre for Women Studies	Law 23/2004 against domestic violence, Presidential Decree 2000 on gender cross-cutting
Sri Lanka	Ministry for the Development of children and empowerment of women, National Committee of Women	Carta of Women in Sri Lanka (1993), National Plan for the advancement of women (1995)
East Timor	Secretariat for the promotion of gender equality	Gender cross-cutting policy in the National Plan for Development (2002)
Vietnam	National Committee for the advancement of women, Vietnamese Women's Union	Action Plan for the advancement of Vietnamese women 2005

cases these mechanisms lack real scope because they do not have enough financial and human resources to put them in practice. They are declarations of intent integrated into their international commitments but they are not part of an active and priority policy in terms of gender equality.

In 1988 Bangladesh adopted a National Action Plan for the Advancement of Women, but due to lack of adequate financial provision it was never implemented. Moreover, many government initiatives are halted by the most conservative factions of the government. The Philippines, East Timor and Vietnam do not have a Ministry for Equality or for the Promotion of Women. Therefore, the government machinery for implementing equality policies does not have enough political authority to influence decisions in other ministries. Another example is the Charter of Rights of Women adopted by Sri Lanka in 1993. It is a declaration of intent but with no legislative significance.

Despite that, there are significant initiatives or mechanisms for the promotion of gender equality that are worth mentioning. In Bangladesh, the government, together with the feminist association, has created an awareness television programme aimed at breaking through the stereotypes of women in politics. In Indonesia, the climate of political openness has favoured the emergence of women's political groups such as the Kaukus Perempuan Parlemen (the women's legislative group) and the Kaukus Politik Perempuan Indonesia (the Indonesian women's political group). In 2003 these associations developed a network of women throughout the parliament, political parties and leaders of mass organisations. There is also the Centre for Women Studies that carries out an important research work with female experts in gender of international prestige.

Finally, the Vietnamese Women's Union (VWU) needs to be mentioned. It is represented at all levels, i.e. central, provincial, district and communes. The organisation focuses on women's activities and has 13 million members. It is coordinated with all ministries dealing with various topics and their national priority is to promote women's political participation, and this acts as a positive factor for other stakeholders, such as local NGOs, to work on this particular issue. The Women's Union work on promoting political participation focuses on training, leadership training and support for elected women. The Women's Union is involved in women's candidacies in an effort to meet quotas. It selects and presents the candidacies of women capable of meeting the requirements for each position. At the end of the year, they review the quotas, they analyse and classify each province's results.

IV. Women's consolidation in institutional power structures and decision-making positions

The analysis of the context at regional level reveals what some experts have called "the Asian paradox"[41] . In other words, a very low rate of representation of women in power structures and decision-making positions, in quantitative terms, despite having historically reached very high power levels, with chiefs of state, prime ministers, presidents, general secretary in political parties, and having held ministries that were traditionally held by men, such as foreign affairs, home affairs, agriculture, trade, justice, etc. Let us not forget that the first woman in the world to become a prime minister did so in Sri Lanka in 1960, and at present this region has two female chiefs of State in Bangladesh and the Philippines.

WOMEN CURRENTLY HOLDING THE CHIEF OF STATE POSITION: WOMEN PRESIDENTS AND WOMEN PRIME MINISTERS [42]

	POSITION
Bangladesh	Prime Minister Sheik Hasina Wajed
Cambodia	–
The Philippines	President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
Indonesia	–
Sri Lanka	–
East Timor	–
Vietnam	–

42 Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership, http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/index.html

The average for women's representation in the national parliament, for the whole region, does not reach 19 per cent, far below the 30 per cent objective set by UNDP and the Beijing Platform for Action, despite the significant advancements in terms of women's political participation in the region. In fact, this average has gone from 11.4 per cent to 18.9 per cent in 12 years.

DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN'S PRESENCE IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT: SEATS IN THE NATIONAL PARLIAMENT (PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN) [43]

Country	2009	2002	1997
Bangladesh	18.6%	2%	9.1%
Cambodia	16.3%	7.4%	5.8%
The Philippines	20.5%	17.8%	11.1%
Indonesia	16.6%	8%	11.4%
Sri Lanka	5.8%	4.4%	5.3%
East Timor	29.2%	26.1% (2003)	-
Vietnam	25.8%	27.3%	26.2%

The previous table shows the development of women's presence in the national parliament in the various countries studied in the last 12 years. This development has been subject to fluctuation with periods of backward trends for women's representation, as in the case of Vietnam in 2009, Bangladesh in 2002, Indonesia in 2022 and Sri Lanka in 2002. Except for Vietnam, all the other countries have seen a significant increase in women's representation in the national parliament in recent years. The case of Bangladesh and Indonesia is quite remarkable: Indonesia has doubled the figure and Bangladesh has multiplied by 9.

The factors favouring this development do vary depending on each context: in Bangladesh the key factor for women's representation at national level was clearly the positive action measures. Out of the 64 women currently in parliament, 45 have been nominated due to a positive action measure. This same attempt was stopped in Indonesia by the Constitutional Court which annulled the quotas for women's representation in political parties, thus leaving the law of quotas without implementation. Other factors to take into account are: the presence of women in high power spheres (ministries and government leadership) and the existence of an important women's movement, acting on the changes in social attitudes and gender prejudices concerning women's political participation.

Finally, we can also mention the renewal of international commitments in terms of gender equality, for instance through the Beijing Platform for Action +10, in 2005, or through Objective 3 of the Declaration of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, which have provided a new boost to the promotion of equality at an international level.

This increase in women's presence in national parliaments does not correlate with their presence in other areas of political participation such as political parties, ministries and local governments. In addition to the quantitative issue, it is necessary to examine and assess what type of positions women hold and how much room for action they have in power structures and decision-making positions. According to the female expert interviewed, in Indonesia the numbers of female members in political parties have increased, but their main role is to recruit voters and to campaign, and none of them has leadership positions within the parties. In Bangladesh, the two main political parties are led by women but they are the exception and they have not integrated other women in the power structures within the party. All their advisers and councillors are

43 Women in Parliaments: World Classification http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm

men. In the Philippines, in the main 12 parties there are between 82 and 155 leadership positions but women only hold 9 of these positions.

With regard to ministries, women represent a very low percentage of individuals holding these positions. Except for the Philippines and East Timor, this rate is just around 10 per cent. The ministerial positions held by them are those traditionally given to women due to their gender and moreover they are ministries with less resources and budgets allocated to them, such as Health, Youth, Education, Children, and of course Women's Affairs. However, some countries have nominated women to ministerial positions that have not been traditionally held by women. Bangladesh boasts a female minister of Interior and Agriculture, Indonesia has a female minister of Finances and Trade, and East Timor presents a female minister of Justice and another female minister of Plans and Finances.

In short, we can state that the regional tendency is marked by a climate of violence against women in politics, male models for power exercise, systems of political and community associations to enter politics, corruption and trading in influence. These factors clearly limit women's ability to exercise real decision power in politics.

At all levels, women are mainly concentrated in less prestigious positions with a reduced Budget, and/or positions related to issues symbolically linked to women (health, education, social welfare, etc.). When they hold decision-making positions, the fact of being in minority in a world of men weakens the initiatives that they wish to or could take for promoting gender equality and for eliminating discrimination against women.

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT AT MINISTERIAL LEVEL (PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL) AND POSITIONS HELD

Country	% of total [44]	Ministerial positions held [45]
Bangladesh	8.3%	Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Cambodia	7.1%	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport, Ministry of Women's Affairs
The Philippines	25%	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Welfare and Development
Indonesia	10.8%	Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Finances, Ministry of Health, Secretariat of State for the Empowerment of Women.
Sri Lanka	10.3%	Ministry of Housing and Common Amenities, Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment, Ministry of Youth
East Timor	22.2%	Ministry of Plans and Ministry of Justice and Finances
Vietnam	11.5%	Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs

44 PNUD, IDH 2008, http://hdrstats.undp.org/es/indicators/311.html
45 Only ministerial positions have been considered. The percentages in the previous column include all roles played at ministerial level: Secretariat of state, Vice-secretariat of state, assistant to ministries, etc.

V. Women's presence in civil society as an area for political participation

Civil society is without a doubt the space more occupied by women for political participation. In all countries studied there are many women's NGOs, associations and groups whose focus is the defence of women's rights. Many of them have a feminist agenda and in some countries there is a significant women's movement with a long trajectory. Civil society, more independent than government's policies, has provided women from different spheres the opportunity to use these spaces to organise themselves and demand their rights. In Bangladesh and Indonesia, the Muslim feminist women's movement is remarkable – they are trying to oppose the arguments of the Islamic radical groups who speak up against women's rights.

In the Philippines, in the context of the struggle against the dictatorship, women's groups participating in men's demands started to suggest a feminist agenda. When the dictatorship came to an end, they founded the feminist party KAIBA (meaning "different"). Its members were later involved in the institutions and NGOs promoting policies defending women's rights. At a later stage KAIBA divided itself in two groups that are currently represented by Abansy Pinai!, Pilipina and GABRIELA. Both groups are very active at present within the feminist movement in the Philippines.

In Bangladesh, there is a network of women's organisations that have been working on equality for over 20 years. They are part of a national network called Bangladesh Mahila Parishad and many of the advances in terms of public policies with a gender approach have been achieved thanks to their activism and militancy.

Promoting women's political participation is the objective of some of the organisations interviewed, which have significant experience in training, empowerment and good practices for female political leaders. In Cambodia, for instance, there are organisations specialised in this matter and in 2005 they created the Committee for the Promotion of Women in Politics. In 2008, they organised a national meeting with the 300 women elected in the Community Councils.

In East Timor, within Rede Feto (Women's Network) there are women's organisations specialised in the promotion of political participation which are developing specific empowerment and awareness programmes. Among them CAUCUS and FOKUPERS NGOs are key organisations, as well as those programmes coordinated by Rede Feto.

There are also regional networks which focus on women's political participation, such as CAPWIP (Centre for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics) or Asia Pacific online network of women in politics, governance and transformative leadership (onlinewomeninpolitics.org). These networks provide training, material and documental resources and they organise regional meetings among different stakeholders from civil society. Many of the organisations interviewed are part of or collaborate with these networks, or they are incorporated into national networks registered in the regional networks.

However, the scope of activity of civil society NGOs is limited due to various factors, common factors in all the countries:

The controversial political climate and the dynamics of affiliations hinder their activism. Benefitting from government's support involves in many cases giving up independence. In highly hierarchical political systems, such as in the cases of Cambodia and Vietnam, women's organisations reproduce these systems. As a result, there are many barriers for women who want to act "outside" the system of affiliations and for young women. In the case of young women, this limitation means a huge loss for women's organisations because young women have more training, they speak English and they are trained in new technologies.

The organisations of civil society lack sufficient financial, human and material resources to implement long-term projects. To be able to change people's mentality, it is essential to have the necessary financial and logistic support and to work in synergy with other organisations, including public organisations, donor agencies and the other NGOs in civil society.

VI. Inclusion of a gender perspective in the political agenda of women in power structures or decision-making positions

Excluded from power structures and decision-making positions, women's interests and needs are not taken into account and are not represented. The political sphere is dominated by forms of male political participation that do not favour women: political parties are led and dominated by men and by male operating patterns. The electoral lists follow the same male preferential logic, especially when they are closed and they are influenced by community affiliations.

When the issue of gender equality is part of their political agenda or when they have some kind of link with the women's movement, the latter cannot give priority to their needs and interests, they suffer discriminatory and derogatory attitudes and behaviours on the part of their male colleagues and no one counts on their collaboration to include their opinions. Moreover women's actions are subjected to a wider public and political criticism than men's actions. All of this results in women having to be subject to a male-dominated and discriminatory political game.

In general terms, this analysis has revealed that just in very few cases women in power structures and decision-making positions come from feminist groups or from the women's movement. Their presence in politics is directly linked to their family relation or to their political affiliation to some important political man. Although their presence in politics represents some sort of advancement towards equality, this does not necessarily imply that they are committed to issues related to gender equity. Unfortunately, there are no gender training and empowerment resources aimed at both women in men in power structures and decision-making positions to make them aware and to explain to them the significance of equality between men and women at all levels of social and political life.

The slight influence exerted by the women's movement in politics does not become apparent due to the lack of women with an agenda for equality in politics, it is also clear in the lack of an adequate and harmonised definition of the concepts of gender equality, non-discrimination and a gender transforming perspective. In Indonesia, the Law against violence towards women has a definition of rape that excludes all rapes committed by husbands to their wives.

There are however initiatives of, or in collaboration with, international agencies to alleviate this problem. The United Nations agencies set up in the Philippines have created an interagency group with a view to evaluating the integration of a gender perspective in all their programmes and a section focusing on gender has been organised in each agency in order to implement the recommendations of the group.

In 2008 in Sri Lanka, due to the low presence of women in politics, a National Advisory Dialogue was held; it was organised by the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment in collaboration with UNDP. It emphasised the need for establishing a quota system in the country and for working on women's education and training in rural areas with a view to empowering them and awaking their interest in politics.

B. STRATEGIC AREAS FOR CHANGE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SPANISH COOPERATION AGENCIES

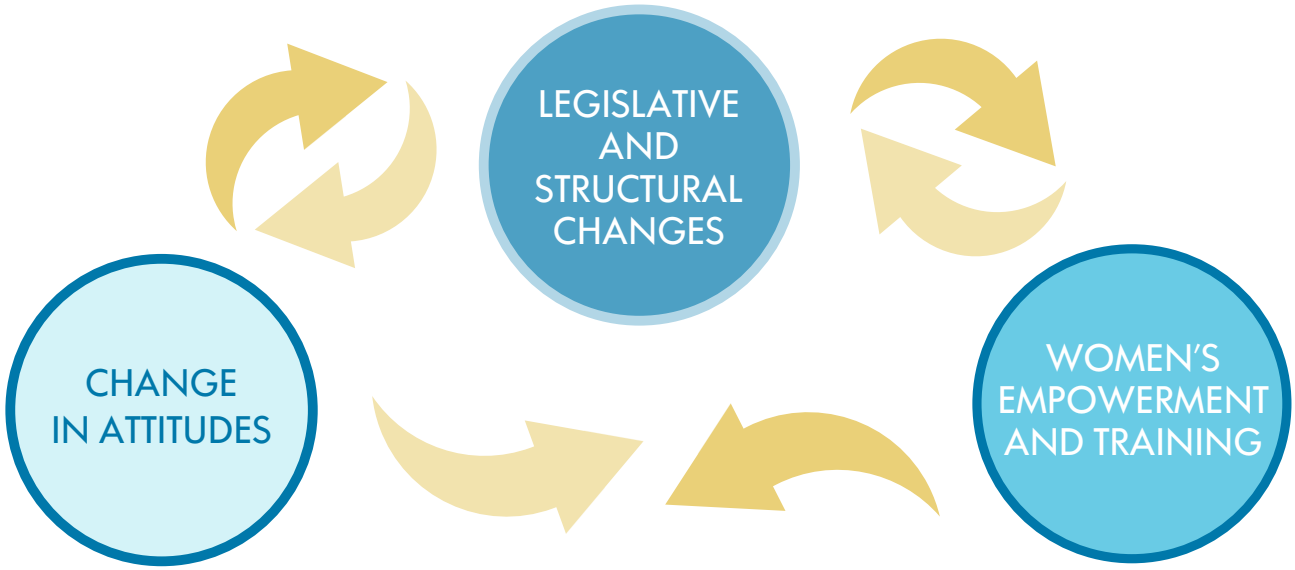
The priority areas can be divided in three blocks shared by all 7 countries studied. These are the areas where the most significant barriers and needs for promoting women's political participation were identified. Furthermore, we believe these areas are complementary and interlinked. A regional gender strategy should therefore establish for each of these areas preferential actions adapted to the specific context of each country, following the conclusions of this analysis in order to achieve the priority objective identified. This planning task comes from the framework of a previous analysis, however we have tentatively include some examples of potential actions for a future regional gender strategic plan.

The general aim of the proposed recommendations is, on the one hand, to strengthen the possibilities and the advancements achieved in each country in terms of women's political participation and, on the other hand, to favour and support the creation of dynamics and synergies in the region with a view to allowing all actors involved to benefit from and to exchange successful experiences, resources and the knowledge acquired by all other actors in this field, as well as to develop shared strategies and positions to meet the goal of gender equality in terms of women's political participation.

Beyond the specific recommendations for each block, we believe that a regional gender strategy should also aim to achieve the following objectives:

1. Reinforce international commitments in terms of gender equality (CEDAW, BPfA, MDGs) with objectives and schedules for realistic action, as well as implementation, monitoring and assessment mechanisms.
2. Encourage coordination between and with international organisations, especially those working on gender equality.
3. Find strategic partners in the region to lead regional programmes or projects, based on the established areas. These should have a significant presence in the region so they can see the figure of the leader with possibility of development in the future.
4. Elaborate and disseminate regional studies and analysis of women's political participation.
5. Harmonise the regional policies of the Spanish cooperation agencies and to create efficient mechanisms for a cross-cutting gender approach in all strategies designed for each priority country or country meriting special attention.

The priority blocks identified for the promotion of women's political participation in the South-East Asian region are structured as follows:



I. LEGISLATIVE AND STRUCTURAL CHANGES

It is obvious that formal equality measures, as well as systems of quotas or laws on equality, cannot by themselves ensure the effectiveness of equality between men and women. However, it is a necessary step, because they provide the basis to formally consolidate political-legal decisions in favour of women's rights. In addition to helping evaluate the advances in terms of equality in a specific country, laws and reforms constitute the framework of reference to support human rights, and the demands of women and the feminist movement.

The last two can formally demand their observance and they can report the lack of compliance.

For these formal regulations to have a practical effectiveness for women, they need to be accompanied by mechanisms for promoting women's presence in political areas and in decision-making. Therefore, we think that the priority actions for this particular point are complementary.

Some countries have already started moving in that direction and they could well be a regional example of good practice in terms of women's political participation. In the case of Bangladesh, for instance, the positive action measures included in the electoral law have been a decisive factor for the increase in the number of women in the national parliament. There are institutional mechanisms for equality in all countries, although, as we have seen, in most cases there is a lack of material, financial and human resources to implement the designed policies and plans.

Legislative and structural changes for gender equality need an integral and global perspective. Those laws, politics and structures that perpetuate inequalities between men and women must be modified at all levels: education, health, work, family, etc. This involves a cross-cutting gender approach in all institutions and for all their policies. In order to do so, there is a need to create organisations specialised in the implementation and evaluation of public policies aimed at achieving gender equality with adequate financial and human resources (budgets and trained agents).

Moreover, to favour women's integration in power structures and decision-making positions, the countries need to have the mechanisms to ensure access of women to power positions. This refers to all the measures to promote women's participation in elections, mainly in political parties. Changes in the electoral systems should be considered for proportional representation systems with open lists and quotas of women's representation both within parties and in the lists. It is also essential to plan ways of financing electoral campaigns so women from the most disadvantaged areas and those that do not belong to political elites can get involved in the political game.

On the other hand, once they have reached those political spheres, women should be able to compete on an equal footing with men to have access to key decision-making positions and to have the support and the necessary conditions to remain there. Other actions include: mechanisms to control discrimination and violence against women in power positions and the integration of women's needs and interests in the daily routine of the power and decision-making structures in an effort to facilitating their participation.

The changes suggested need to start being implemented at an institutional level. However, we think that, both the technical and the civil society levels can play a significant role by supporting and collaborating with organisations in the implementation of these changes or as "pressure" groups to demand and to obtain these commitments on the part of public institutions.

The recommendations for Spanish cooperation agencies in this section have two dimensions; firstly, the collaboration to develop and strengthen all conceptual, theoretical and practical aspects related to women's political participation. The actions could include training and empowerment of experts in gender equality, and with regard to political participation, the elaboration and design of supporting material, guidelines for good practices in the region in terms of democratic governance and women's political participation, promoting the use of new technologies. The organisation of national and regional meetings would facilitate the creation of alliances to spread information and good practices in terms of women's political participation and representation.

Secondly, collaboration in terms of consultancy, design, implementation and monitoring of public policies regarding gender equality, national and/or regional strategic plans, national laws, public programmes, elaboration of statistical data, etc., all aimed at favouring the inclusion of women in politics.

II. CHANGE IN ATTITUDES

In a repeated and general manner in all countries studied, the power of the patriarchal culture and its endless ramifications in all aspects of life were seen as one of the main barriers to women's access to politics. They come from a sequence of representations, roles, prejudices and responsibilities that are seen as appropriate for women and men. They are part of the culture and they have a wide and deep social base. They are found in all layers and spheres of society, they are assumed both by men and even women and they are well rooted in social practices by roles considered "natural" for women and men. Moreover, they frequently go beyond the boundaries of social practices to settle themselves in the laws that regulate people's lives.

Therefore, working on changing attitudes constitutes our second priority area with a view to promoting women's political participation and representation in all spheres of society because advances achieved in this area have an influence in the advances achieved in all the other priority areas identified. For example, having quotas of representation for women in the decision-making area in local governments or organising training courses in leadership will prove inefficient if women have no access to these areas due to issues such as gender roles and gender responsibilities.

The changes in attitude require extensive awareness programmes within a strategy of fighting against discrimination in the area of political participation and representation, designed for different levels and areas such as media, political parties, trade unions, public agents, schools, rural areas, etc. They should be addressed both to men and women in all age ranges. Moreover, they should be placed within the cultural context of each society. Awareness programmes also need to focus on promoting a democratic culture among women, explaining the electoral processes, the voting systems, the political parties, etc.

The "Change in attitudes" area must be the focus for a close collaboration between the three levels of action, because the changes suggested for this area require the involvement of all agents of change in order to reach wide social and political spheres with very long-term actions.

Recommendations for Spanish cooperation agencies in this section would be to respond to the financial, material and human needs with a view to maintaining the existing successful initiatives that have been identified in this analysis, both those undertaken by civil society and by governments. It can also support new initiatives of awareness campaigns designed and adapted to diverse populations and areas. It would also be interesting to promote the creation of alliances between civil society and public institutions with a view to developing the awareness campaigns, as it was the case in Bangladesh, for example, through the television programme about women in politics. In fact, civil society organisations are well rooted in the grassroots movements while public institutions have the necessary material and financial resources. Moreover, in many of the countries studied a successful awareness campaign cannot be implemented without the approval or support of the government.

III. WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND TRAINING

This area constitutes a component as important as the previous ones for the promotion of women's political participation and representation. It aims at providing women with the necessary tools and resources to efficiently and effectively exercise their participation and representation power. Having enough capability to exercise politics is not a natural endowment in human beings; it is rather part of a process of learning and socialising based on gender roles and stereotypes, which has allowed men to have access to the necessary resources, means and training and has limited women's access to them.

Therefore, actions in this block should be addressed towards women in power structures and decision-making positions, but also towards women who aspire to reaching them, paying special attention to rural women, women in a situation of social exclusion and minorities, in order to offer them training programmes on democratic governance. The resources and

research centres with the information and consultancy resources play a key role in the development of this objective. To integrate this block into a regional perspective, the creation of platforms, exchange and mutual support networks for women in civil society and for women in power and decision-making positions need to be promoted as well. In fact, in order for women to be empowered, they need spaces where they are visible, can express themselves and can claim their rights. And, more importantly, they need areas where they can build alliances with other leading women or women aspiring to be leaders. Given the specific aspects of the history of women's political participation in some of the countries in the region, it would also be interesting to bring back those women who have been pioneering figures in gender equality and who may well become real and tangible models of leadership for today's women, especially the younger ones.

For this third block, civil society involvement is a decisive factor. Our analysis has revealed that the agents more involved in this area are mainly feminist and women associations in each country studied. In many cases, the advances enjoyed by women depend on the level of cohesion and strength of the women's movement, therefore it is a decisive factor that needs to be seen as such if the objective of equality is to be reached. However, other combinations of strengths are not to be excluded and they depend on the nature of the proposed action or on its financial, material or human requirements.

Our recommendations for Spanish cooperation agencies regarding this block would be to support the existing resource centres or to favour the creation of new training, empowerment and research centres by providing the necessary human, material and financial means to carry out extensive long-term activities, promoting the use of new technologies and the production of adequate training materials. Furthermore, support to the initiatives of women's and feminist organisations working in the area of women's political participation should be provided, especially to those focused on training and empowering leading women. On the other hand, Spanish cooperation agencies should collaborate with the public institutions of each country in an effort to promote similar actions and programmes at the highest positions of power, for those women already involved in politics. Another interesting strategy would be to consolidate, at regional level, the existing initiatives by creating platforms in the countries or virtual platforms for all agents in different countries to share the knowledge acquired in practice by each one of them. These platforms will act as spaces for reflection and for the creation of common strategies for women.

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