

# *Gender Profile: Philippines*

## A. Human Development Indicators : Progress on the MDGs

Target Number/ Indicator Number	Series name	Data for Year 2005 or whichever is latest
3/6	Education enrolment ratio, net, primary level, both sexes (UNESCO)	94% (2004) <sup>1</sup>
3/6	Education enrolment ratio, net, primary level, girls (UNESCO)	95% (2004) <sup>2</sup>
3/6	Education enrolment ratio, net, primary level, boys (UNESCO)	93% (2004) <sup>3</sup>
3/8	Literacy rates, aged 15-24, both sexes, per cent (UNESCO)	95.1% (2004) <sup>4</sup>
3/8	Literacy rates, aged 15-24, women, per cent (UNESCO)	95.7 % (2004) <sup>5</sup>
3/8	Literacy rates, aged 15-24, men, per cent (UNESCO)	94.7% (2004) <sup>6</sup>
5/14	Infant mortality rate (0-1 year) per 1,000 live births (UNICEF estimates)	26 (2004) <sup>7</sup>
6/16	Maternal mortality ratio per 100,000 live births (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA)	172 (1998) <sup>8</sup>
<b>HDI Rank</b>		<b>GDI Rank</b>
84 (2005) <sup>9</sup>		63 (2005) <sup>10</sup>
		<b>GEM Rank</b>
		46 (2005) <sup>11</sup>

## B. Women in Decision making roles - Gender disaggregated data

### 1) Legislature

	% of women	No. of women	Total No.
National – House of Representatives	15.7% (2006) <sup>12</sup>	37 (2006) <sup>13</sup>	326 (2006) <sup>14</sup>
National – Senate	17.4% (2006) <sup>15</sup>	4 (2006) <sup>16</sup>	20 (2006) <sup>17</sup>

<b>2) Executive</b>				
<b>a) Government – Ministerial Positions</b>				
	<b>% of women</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>Comment</b>
National	14%	3 (2006) <sup>18</sup>	21 (2006) <sup>19</sup>	
State (Provincial)	24%	17 (2006) <sup>20</sup>	71 (2006) <sup>21</sup>	
<b>b) Local Government Units</b>				
	<b>% of women</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Governors	19%	15 (2001) <sup>22</sup>	77 (2001) <sup>23</sup>	
Vice Governors	13%	10 (2001) <sup>24</sup>	77 (2001) <sup>25</sup>	
Board Members	16%	120 (2001) <sup>26</sup>	727 (2001) <sup>27</sup>	
Mayors	14%	241(2001) <sup>28</sup>	1702 (2001) <sup>29</sup>	
Vice Mayors	12%	192 (2001) <sup>30</sup>	1548 (2001) <sup>31</sup>	
Councilors	17%	2198 (2001) <sup>32</sup>	12665 (2001) <sup>33</sup>	

<b>3) Judiciary</b>			
	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>Total No.</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Supreme Court	4 (2004) <sup>34</sup>	15 (2004) <sup>35</sup>	
Court of Appeals	10 (2004) <sup>36</sup>	51 (2004) <sup>37</sup>	
Sandiganbayan	3 (2004) <sup>38</sup>	15 (2004) <sup>39</sup>	
Court of Tax Appeals	0 (2004) <sup>40</sup>	3 (2004) <sup>41</sup>	
Regional Trial Court	103 (2004) <sup>42</sup>	831 (2004) <sup>43</sup>	
Metropolitan Trial Courts	30 (2004) <sup>44</sup>	67 (2004) <sup>45</sup>	
Municipal Trial Courts	59 (2004) <sup>46</sup>	281 (2004) <sup>47</sup>	
Municipal Circuit Trial Court	42 (2004) <sup>48</sup>	244 (2004) <sup>49</sup>	
Shariah Courts	0 (2004) <sup>50</sup>	2 (2004) <sup>51</sup>	
Shariah Circuit Courts	0 (2004) <sup>52</sup>	19 (2004) <sup>53</sup>	

<b>4) Political Parties</b>			
	<b>% of women</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Membership of men and women	Not Available	Not Available	
Women in executive committees or equivalent decision making bodies in the party	Not Available	4	Of the total 24 elected party-list representatives from 16 parties/ organizations <sup>54</sup>

<b>5) Trade Union</b>			
	<b>% of women</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	
Women in the governing bodies of major National Trade Unions	Not Available	Not Available	
Industry wise (as available in respective countries)	<b>Industry</b>	<b>Male (%)</b>	<b>Female (%)</b>
	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
	Not Available	Not Available	Not Available
Initiatives for gender equality in the trade unions <sup>55</sup>			
a) Conduct gender sensitivity and leadership trainings within and among trade unions and labor centers			
b) Skills development and capacity building among women trade unionists			
c) Formation of women's cooperatives in the trade unions and other sectors			
d) Implementation of Beijing Platform for Action through advocacy			
e) Conduct of baseline data survey on women trade unionists and gender impact analysis			
f) Creation of service center for migrant women workers			
g) Organizing women domestic workers in Hong Kong			
h) Addressing HIV/AIDS and other gender issues by promoting gender equality			
i) Advocacy against sexual harassment at work			

<b>6) Private and public corporate business<sup>56</sup></b>			
	<b>% of Men</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>% of women</b>
Top /middle management and Managers and Executives			35% (2003) of Filipino administrators and managers are women
Agriculture and Forestry		1,247	21.7
Fishery		202	19.9
Manufacturing		30,472	35.3
Electricity, Gas and Water		1,768	25.3
Construction		1,388	19.5
Mining and Quarrying		89	10.5
Wholesale and Retail		16,369	39.5
Transportation, Communication and Storage		5,216	35.8
Financing, Intermediation Establishments		27,603	50.3
Hotels and Restaurants		7,775	55.1
Real Estate, renting and Other Business Activities		6,461	40.1

Women entrepreneurs
Not Available

<b>7) Academic World</b>			
	<b>% of women</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
Top and middle academic positions	56.25% (February 2000) <sup>57</sup>	9 <sup>58</sup>	16 (Regional directors of the Department of Education) <sup>59</sup>
	61.48% (February 2002) <sup>60</sup>	3 <sup>61</sup>	5 ( school superintendents) <sup>62</sup>
	46.9% (February 2002) <sup>63</sup>	Not Available	Not Available (faculty members of higher education institutions)

<b>C) Women in the workforce – Gender Disaggregated Data</b>			
Formal Sector <sup>64</sup> <b>By Occupation Group</b>	<b>Sector (by Occupation Group)</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>% of women</b>
	Laborers and Unskilled Workers	4.2 million	35.4%
	Officials of government and special interest organizations, corporate executives, managers, managing proprietors and supervisors	1.9 million	16.1%
	Service workers and shop and market sales workers	1.4 million	11.5%
	Farmers, forestry workers and fishermen	1.1 million	9.2%
Formal Sector <sup>65</sup> <b>By Major Industry Group</b>	<b>Sector (by Major Industry Group)</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>% of women</b>
	Wholesale and retail trade	3.5 million	29.1%
	Agriculture, hunting and forestry	3.0 million	24.8%
	Private Education Services	8,286	60.3
	Health and Social Work	1,961	59.8
	Other Community, social, and Personal Services	1,878	40.9
Informal Sector	<b>% of women</b>	<b>No. of women</b>	<b>Total No.</b>
	80% (2006) <sup>66</sup>	16 million <sup>67</sup>	Not Available
	35.6% (2006) in agriculture <sup>68</sup>	Not Available	Not Available

## **D) Policy framework for gender equality**

### **UN/ International Conventions ratified**

- a) UN International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- b) UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- c) UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
- d) UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- e) UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
- f) UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families
- g) UN International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
- h) ILO Workmen's Compensation (Accidents) Convention, 1925 (No. 17)
- i) ILO Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948 (No. 89)
- j) ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- k) ILO Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98)
- l) ILO Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87)

### **National policies/ plans for gender equality/mainstreaming<sup>69</sup>**

- a) Local Government Code of 1991. Provides for the election of sectoral representation, including women, in local legislative councils.
- b) Party List Law. Provides for the creation of women-oriented or women-based parties to compete under the party-list system. Women is one of the 9 sector identified in the law.
- c) Labor Code (1989). Covers issues such as night work prohibition, specifies that employers must provide special facilities for women, prohibition of discrimination against women in respect to terms and conditions of employment, prohibition of discrimination by reason of marriage of a woman worker.
- d) Women in Nation Building Law. Republic Act 7192 (1991) is an act promoting the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building. The law provides that a substantial portion of government resources be utilized to support programs and activities for women. The law also encourages the full participation and involvement of women in the development process and to remove gender bias in all government regulations and procedures. In relation to gender budgeting, the law specifically mandated all agencies to allocate a minimum of 5%, increasing to 30%, of all official development funds in mainstreaming gender concerns. Through executive directives however, this 5% allocation is further expanded to cover the total budget appropriations, not only development funds, of all government agencies and local government units in the country. This is known as the Gender and Development Budget or GAD.
- e) Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Law (1988). Gave Filipino women the right to own land that previously reverted to sons and other male family members.

- f) Republic Act 7688 (1994). An act giving representation to women in social security commission.
- g) Anti-Sexual Harassment Law. RA 7877 (1995) an act declaring sexual harassment unlawful in the employment, education or training environment.
- h) Republic Act 7822 (1995). An act providing assistance to women engaging in micro and cottage business enterprises.
- i) 1990 Day care Law (RA 6972) and 1996 Paternity Leave Act. Both of which acknowledge that children is both a parental and state responsibility.
- j) Republic Act 8353 (1997). An act expanding the definition of the crime of rape reclassifying the same as a crime against persons. While the constitutional and legal framework acknowledges the need for gender mainstreaming, gender equality is indeed still a work in progress. Thus, one can find a myriad of projects, initiatives, and processes on the gender challenge that are corollary to gender-oriented legislations.
- k) Framework Plan for Women (FPW). This is part of the Philippine Plan for Women which the current administration developed to focus on three thrust namely: promoting women's economic empowerment; advance and protect women human rights; and promote gender responsive governance. This plan identifies the concrete gender issues that will be addressed, pinpoint targets and indicators, name programs, formulates the implementation plan, and set-up tools for monitoring and evaluation. Philippines has a well-developed legal framework for gender equality. This is even reinforced by the ratification of international instruments on women (e.g. Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women or CEDAW) and clear commitments to the outputs of the UN Women Conferences. This is already a good handle for gender equality but their implementation and the "real politics" surrounding these legal norms leave so much to be desired.
- l) Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development (1995-2025). The National Plan for Women that consolidates the action commitments of the Philippines during the Beijing World Conference on Women. This is the over-all frame that is also the point of reference for the discussions and monitoring of gender mainstreaming.
- m) Gender and Development Budget (GAD). Integral to the national plan, it is aimed at institutionalizing gender concerns in the mainstream development process and agenda and not just peripheral programs and projects of the government". Concretely, it prescribes for the allocation of 5% of the government agency's/local government unit's budget on gender-responsive activities and projects. As a result, implementation of the development programs and policies of government also means women partaking a role in governance. As primarily stakeholders in the development process, women have the right to maximize their involvement in governance, be it at the local or national level.

## **E) Institutional Mechanisms**

### **Role and functioning of statutory bodies**

- National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) - Created in 1975, the NCRFW is a government agency under the Office of the President. It advises the President and Cabinet in policy formulation and implementation for gender-responsive development, reviews and evaluates the extent of gender integration and gender equality in sectoral programs, and promotes fuller equality of men and women before the law. Its major programs include the establishment of gender focal points as an institutional mechanism for gender mainstreaming, training in gender and development, research and policy studies on issues such as violence against women, migration, prostitution, family, peace and the media, and development of a sex-disaggregated database on the Philippines. More specifically, the functions of NCRFW are as follows:
  - a) Coordinates the preparation of Philippine development plans for women as well as their monitoring assessment and updating in cooperation with the national planning body and line agencies.
  - b) Acts as a clearing house and data base for information relating to women.
  - c) Conducts gender-consciousness raising programs.
  - d) Conducts policy studies and reviews legislations to integrate women's concerns.
  - e) Provides technical services and ensures the development of institutional capabilities for gender and development (GAD) mainstreaming of government agencies and selected partners.
  - f) Monitors and assesses the implementation of laws and policies on women including the implementation of international conventions such as the Beijing Platform for Action.
  - g) Implements pilot projects for the delivery of services for women as basis for policy formulation and program recommendations.<sup>70</sup>
- In partnership with the Department of Budget and Management, NCRFW crafted the GAD Budget Policy that provides for the allocation of at least five percent of the budget of national and local agencies for use in gender and development programs.<sup>71</sup>
- The Department of Interior and Local Governments (DILG) – The government through the in the executive branch started a ‘deliberate’ effort to have women represented in all decision-making bodies. DILG issued an administrative order stipulating a 30% representation by women in all barangay assemblies, and in all mandatory consultations within local governments and in the national government
- The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the government central planning agency, together with the Commission on Women and the Overseas Development Assistance-Gender and Development Network developed the “Harmonized GAD Guidelines for Project Development, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation” which serve as a tool for all government agencies, development practitioners and international donor organizations to ensure that gender concerns are fully integrated in the various stages of the project cycle.<sup>72</sup>

- The United National DeUNFPA provides funding to local NGOs working in 18 provinces and complements services provided by the government. The NGOs provide services to hard-to-reach groups like sex workers, unmarried women and adolescents. They also provide services for underserved poor and marginalized populations. By offering gender-sensitive services and information, education and communication activities, these NGOs promote women's empowerment, increase male participation, and address adolescent reproductive health concerns.<sup>73</sup>
- Women and Young Workers of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) Goals under the 1998 workplan of this organization include intensification of gender mainstreaming, through; Monitoring and evaluation of agency GAD plans, trainer's training on gender sensitivity and gender-responsive planning and training on anti-sexual harassment. It works to take up the needs of women migrant workers.<sup>74</sup>
- University Center for Women's Studies, College of Social Work and Community Development University of the Philippines - Created in 1990, University Center for Women's Studies in the College of Social Work and Community Development of University of the Philippines, Diliman, conducts research, advocacy and outreach services for women. Its research program focuses on theoretical studies, empirical research, issue-oriented studies (focusing on work, health, home and community, and domestic violence) and regional, comparative and cross-national studies.

#### **Parliamentary Committees**

- Senate Committee on Youth, Women and Family Relations
- House Committee on Women, House of Representatives, Congress of the Philippines

#### **F) Legal Equality**

##### **Landmark legislation for gender equality in the last 25 years**

- a) Mail-Order Bride Law, 1990 (RA 6955)
- b) The Party List System Act, 1995 (RA 7941)
- c) Women in Development and Nation Building Act, 1992 (RA 7192)
- d) Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act, 1992 (RA 7610)
- e) Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act, 1995 (RA 8042)
- f) Anti-Sexual Harassment Act, 1995 (RA 7877)
- g) Anti-Rape Law, 1997 (RA 8353)
- h) Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act, 1998 (RA 8505)
- i) Solo Parents Welfare Act, 2000 (RA 8972)
- j) Declaring December 4-10 as National Human Rights Consciousness Week in the Country, 2003 (RA 9201)
- k) Absentee Voting Law, 2003 (RA 9189)
- l) Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2003 (RA 9208)
- m) Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act, 2004 (RA 9262)

### **Discriminatory laws/ policies/practices**

- a) Article 202.5 of the Revised Penal Code defines prostitution as a criminal offense for the prostituted female but not for the male customer/s.
- b) Discrimination in the application of laws against women prostitutes but not against men involved as traffickers, pimps and clients.
- c) Abortion is a criminal offense that burdens women with medical consequences, often fatal, of unsafely terminating a pregnancy. Illegal abortions contribute to the maternal mortality rate.
- e) Labor Code prohibits night work for women, except in specified circumstances. While this might aim to protect women workers, it discriminates against women, as it fails to address the real issue of security for women working at night.
- f) Family Code, the Civil Code, the Code of Muslim, Personal Laws, the Revised Penal Code and Customary Law still contain provisions that are discriminatory to women or are inconsistent with new laws, for example in defining sexual infidelity for women and men.
- g) Limited opportunities women participation in top-level decision-making positions in the public sector as well as in judiciary, police and military academy.
- h) Stereotyped and negative portrayal of women and girls in media.
- i) Filipino women workers suffer from many forms of subtle and overt discrimination in hiring and promotion and through sexual harassment.
- j) In 2003, some 8000 cases of violence against women were reported to the Philippine National Police. However, cases are often not reported. Violence against women causes severe health problems and affects earnings, job performance and job security.<sup>75</sup>
- k) The Philippines continues to have one of the highest maternal mortality rates in Asia while it is also the second highest number of total births per year (1995-2000), This is due to the lower contraceptive prevalence rate among women, who do not control or decide freely on matters relating to their fertility. This results in women being vulnerable to health risks due to complications in pregnancy and reduces their job opportunities<sup>76</sup>

## **G) Affirmative Action Measures**

### **Quotas**

Constitutional Quota for National Parliaments: 1986 Constitution: "For three consecutive terms after the ratification of this Constitution, one-half of the seats allocated to party-list representatives shall be filled, as provided by law, by selection or election from the labor, peasant, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, women, youth, and such other sectors as may be provided by law, except the religious sector." (Article VI, section 5.)

Election Law Quota or Regulation in National Parliament: The Party List Law (RA 7941) passed in 1995 makes it compulsory to include women on political party lists. The law provides for the election of party list representatives from different sectors. The law allocates 20% of the 250 seats in the Philippine House of Representatives (Lower House) for marginalized sectors of society including women. It aims to ensure that representatives of small parties and sectors of society have a voice in the policy making process that is dominated by traditional politicians. The law mandates that voters elect not only a district representative to Congress, but also a party or sectoral group of their choice. To elect one candidate, each sector must get at least 2% of the total number of votes cast for the party list system.

Constitutional or Legislative Quota, Sub-National Level: The 1991 Local Government Code requires that a woman be one of three sectoral representatives that sits in every municipal, city, and provincial legislative council.

Political Party Quota for Electoral Candidates: Yes

### **Other**

The GAD budget is a measure mandating agencies and local government units (LGUs) to provide resources necessary for implementing programs, projects and activities designed to address gender issues and promote women's empowerment and gender equality as identified in their GAD plan. The cost of implementing the GAD plan should at least be 5% of their total budget. The 5% GAD Budget endeavors to directly influence the remaining 95% of agency/LGU budget toward gender-responsiveness.

- Gender-responsive organization: to make these regular programs and projects gender-sensitive to meet the differential needs of women and men who are working within the agency.
- Gender-responsive development planning: to ensure that gender-responsive plans and programs tackle the gender issues and concerns for women empowerment of the agency constituency and external client.

## H) Women's Movement in the country

### Brief history

Filipino women participated actively in the Philippine Revolution (1896–1902), performing a wide range of tasks essential to sustaining the revolutionary challenge against Spanish and American imperialism. Though largely omitted from mainstream histories of the nationalist revolution, women's involvement has been recorded in several marginalized texts.<sup>77</sup>

Women's right to vote was granted in 1937. The Constitution of 1935 stipulated that the right of suffrage would be extended to women, only if 300,000 women voted in its favor during a national plebiscite. This consolidated the emerging women's movement and "...brought to the fore the activism of such women as Concepcion Felix de Calderon who formed the Asociacion Feminista Filipina in June 1905, Rosa Sevilla de Alvero and a young Trinidad Almeda, Miss Constancia Poblete, founder of Liga Femenina de la Paz, Pura Villanueva Kalaw and Paz Mendoza Guazon, Pilar Hidalgo Lim, President of the National Federation of Women's Clubs and Josefa Llanes Escoda, president of the Girl Scouts of the Philippines" (Ugnayan ng Kababaihan sa Pulitika, 1998).

The General Council of Women was then established in Manila to direct the plebiscite campaign. Its aim was to draw the support of the broadest number of women. As it turned out, 447,725 women voted yes in the 1937 plebiscite. Interestingly, 44,307 women voted against the provision. What followed was a colorful history of women's foray into the various levels of electoral victories but generally pushed by familial affiliation and elite association.

The year 2001 was a watershed in the era of "women in politics". The women sector lost their representation with the failure of any women party to reach the 2% threshold of the party-list elections. The two competing parties garnered less than 200,000 votes amounting to 1% of the party-list vote. In a study commissioned by the Ateneo School of Government and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the amorphous sectoral association did not spare the women's sector that is supposed to be the most cohesive as it deal with a group defined biologically. The study concluded that obviously

"...there exists no sectoral vote. Groups representing sectors cannot rely on their sectoral constituencies to win them seats. Certainly, the sectors have the numbers. Millions of peasants and workers can elect many representatives in the House. However, none of the sectors seem united enough or are aware of themselves as a sector with special interests and a point of unity in the electoral arena. Perhaps their votes are more oriented toward causes, personalities or parties." (Rodriguez, 2002: 41)

This observation is bolstered by the fact that in the 1998 party-list elections the women sector garnered 520,565 votes or 5.7% of the total votes cast. Six women parties competed but only 1 party gained a seat (Abanse Pinay!) only to lose it almost two years ago with mere 135,211 votes of 0.89%.<sup>78</sup>

This “sectoral defeat” is aggravated by the fact there are more women registered voters than men (17.2-million to 16.9-million). The 2001 elections even showed a female turnout of 76.7% while the males are pegged at 75.9% (COMELEC, 2001). It must be noted that female participation declined from 87.1% in 1998. While this may be explained due to the fact that 1998 was a presidential election – when turnout is normally higher – it still underscores the absence of a “women vote” in the country. Nevertheless, this system is still an important venue for political involvement in the context of 3Gs (guns, goons and gold) elections.

There are numerous obstacles for women to partake a bigger role and impact in politics. Leadership is still conceptualized in terms of male strength. Social definitions of role still pervade the society with women are pictured as supportive of the “leader-husband” and whose main tasks are to entertain constituents (socialization and diplomacy) and provide charity work (social welfare or even dole-outs). The double burden challenge also contributes to the “glass ceiling” in politics. Wives are supposed to take care of the next generations of the political family. The “old boys” nature of political relations and transactions also put the role of women in the margins. This reduces the access to resources and decision-making thus diminishes their political clout.

Women’s expressions of involvement in civil society could be through organizing along gender-specific issues and formation of all-women groups within broad coalitions as power-enhancing mechanisms. Groups such as the PILIPINA feminist movement, the militant GABRIELA women’s group, the Ugnayan ng Kababaihan sa Pulitika (UKPNetwork of Women in Politics), the KILOS KABARO (Act Sisters Coalition), and SIBOL Legislative Network have trail blazed women advocacies both in policies and in legislations. There also exist a so-called “Philippine NGO Beijing Score Board” which evolved from the National Steering Committee (NSC) of NGOs for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women and this lead in the national monitoring of the government’s implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Along with other women groups and gender-oriented institutions, they have succeeded in raising gender-specific issues such as domestic violence, prostitution, reproductive health, sexual harassment and rape. Intense lobbying efforts by the women’s groups resulted in the passage of several landmark laws, among them the anti-sexual harassment law in 1995 and the anti-rape act in 1997. The gains of the women’s movement are basically achieved through various partnerships with the rest of the civil society.

The last three decades which saw the rise of the women’s movement in the Philippines have resulted to mixed impact – with positive ratings in political participation and law reform but minus points in economic empowerment and sexual and domestic violence. The challenge of gender divide still pervades the Philippine society and the institutions and traditions that sustain it are continuously being buffeted by forces of change.

## **Achievements**

- a) Filipino women have voted since 1937
- b) Through the lobby of various groups in the women's movement, landmark legislations were passed: The Party List System Act (1995), Women in Development and Nation Building Act (1992), Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act (1995), Anti-Sexual Harassment Act (1995), Anti-Rape Law (1997), Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act (2003), Anti-Violence Against Women and Children Act (2004)
- c) A women's rights organization has secured party-list representation in Congress. Civil society/private sector organizations that carry the agenda of marginalized sectors vie for a limited number of seats in the House of Representatives. In 2004, a total of 16 party-lists were given seats in the House of Representatives, one of which is focused on women's concerns.<sup>79</sup>

## **Main issues**

- a) Gender-based Violence and Discrimination - The presence of a broad and active women's movement keeps the gender discourse alive with issues like reproductive rights, anti-abuse of women in intimate relationship (AWIR), domestic violence, anti-prostitution and trafficking, anti-rape and incest, equal employment laws, creation of Commission on Equality of Employment of Women, amendment of the anti-sexual harassment law and even the effective use of gender and development budget.
- b) Political participation of women - The party-list system, which provides for a focused women representation in the House of Representatives, is not useful nowadays due to the failure of any women-based party to get any seat in the 2001 elections. Fortunately, this is compensated by incremental increases in women politicians and bureaucrats at the national and local level. Even the framework for sectoral political representation has evolved into missed opportunity.
- c) Implementation of the Laws on Women Empowerment and Gender Equality - The consultative nature of government processes and the vocal posture of the women's movement can be seen as one of the successes of gender discourse. But the slow legislative mill and half-hearted policy reforms makes the discourse somewhat hollow in terms of final outcomes.
- d) Reproductive Rights and the Church - While the Church has been promoting greater involvement of women, its stance on reproductive health brings it to the opposite side of the women advocacies.

## **Links with political parties/ movements for democracy/peace/social justice**

Women's agenda are also integrated in party platforms and even in legislative hearing and consultation. This gives a semblance of integration of gender issues in formal politics. The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women works on the national policy of gender mainstreaming. Both houses of Congress have committee on women that investigates women issues to aid legislative actions.<sup>80</sup>

### **I) Issues in the country that need immediate attention for gender justice**

a) Gender Violence. According to a study by the Asian Development Bank (Country Gender Assessment), violence against women is widespread in the Philippines. This includes sexual harassment in schools and at work, as well as human trafficking, forced prostitution, domestic violence and marital rape.<sup>81</sup>

b) Women Migrant Workers. In the Philippines, termed as the world's largest exporter of labor<sup>82</sup>, women comprise 72 percent (estimated 6 million)<sup>83</sup> of the 8.40 million migrant worker population. Most female migrants are in reproductive occupations such as nursing and teaching as well as non-skilled employment such as domestic work, care giving, factory labor, entertainment and sex services which are perceived to be extensions of women's traditional responsibilities in society. The nature of these types of work makes them more vulnerable to physical and sexual violence, economic exploitation, isolation and prejudice.<sup>84</sup>

c) Women in the Informal Economy. The phenomenon of the informal economy brings with it issues of low productivity, irregularity of employment and income, lack of social protection and gender issues. The latter is not just about having more women among the working poor, but it also means that women have to work doubly hard to tide over their households and to bring food to the table for their children, when and if their husbands are unemployed and/or lowly paid.<sup>85</sup>

### **J) Enabling factors in the country for gender justice**

a) Impartial and gender responsive government (from the executive, legislative and judiciary branches of government)

b) Full and effective implementation of existing laws promoting women's empowerment and gender equality

c) Sustained capacity building and training on mainstreaming gender.

### **K) Main Challenges/deterrents**

a) Economy and Work (Poverty, Debt-servicing, Un/underemployment, Contractualization, Women Workers in the Export Processing Zones, Informal Workers/Home-based work, Freedom of Association)

b) Access to Basic Services

c) Reproductive Health

d) Gender-based violence

e) Social Cost of Migration and Reintegration of Women Returnees

f) Limited participation in government

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