



# Promoting Gender Equality in the Philippines





Edited by the Gender Mainstreaming Committee,  
United Nations Country Team - The Philippines  
Lay out: Med Ramos

United Nations, The Philippines  
30F/RCBC Plaza, Yuchengco Tower  
6819 Ayala Avenue corner Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue  
1226 Makati City, Philippines  
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# Gender Equality is a Basic Human Right

Gender equality is a basic human right and a necessary condition for the elimination of poverty and attainment of national social and economic development. The principle of basic human rights calls for equal civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights for all individuals. In the Philippines and around the world, there is growing recognition that development and poverty reduction cannot be achieved without equal access by all groups to decision-making, planning, political participation, education, and productive resources.

But gender equality is difficult to achieve. Although there has been much progress, women in the Philippines and elsewhere still trail men in their political representation, economic opportunities, health and well-being and other outcomes.

*Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys.*

## Did you know that...

- While the Philippines has a female president, only 18% of the Cabinet, 25% of the Senate and 15% of the Congress are women?
- Only one of every five judges is a woman?



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### Did you know that...

- Women are 73% of all Overseas Filipino Workers, and many of them work as domestic workers, and performing artists, who are vulnerable to exploitation and abuse?
- 90% of the clients of the International Social Welfare Services are women?

## International Mandates Promoting Gender Equality Adopted by the Philippines

The international community has identified goals and targets for promoting gender equality in several key international instruments. As a signatory to these instruments, the Philippines shares these commitments to gender equality. The key international instruments include:

- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), known as the Women's Bill of Rights, signed by the Philippines in 1979, and the Optional Protocol, ratified in 2003, define what constitutes discrimination against women and obligate governments to take action to promote and protect the rights of women.
- Declaration of Elimination of Violence Against Women (1993) is a clear pronouncement that violence against women is a violation of human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPA, 1995) has been implemented within the framework of the 30-Year Philippine Plan for Gender Responsive Development. It includes agreements for eliminating discrimination against women, eradicating poverty, adopting measures towards placing women in key positions and it provides recommendations concerning unpaid work. It also recognizes women's rights to control their sexuality and reproduction (the number of



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children they want to have). The BPA takes into consideration armed conflict situations as well as the racial and ethnic roots which affect gender equality.

*“The full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and fundamental Freedoms by women and girls is a priority for Governments and the United Nations...”*

*Beijing Platform for Action, 1995.*

The Millennium Declaration and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are being implemented through 2015 by all 189 United Nations Member States with the aim of reducing poverty and improving lives. Gender equality promotion is the specific target of MDG number 3, but is also universally recognized as central to achieving the targets of the other 7 MDGs.

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
- 3. Promote gender equality and empower women.**
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Develop a global partnership for development



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## Did you know that...

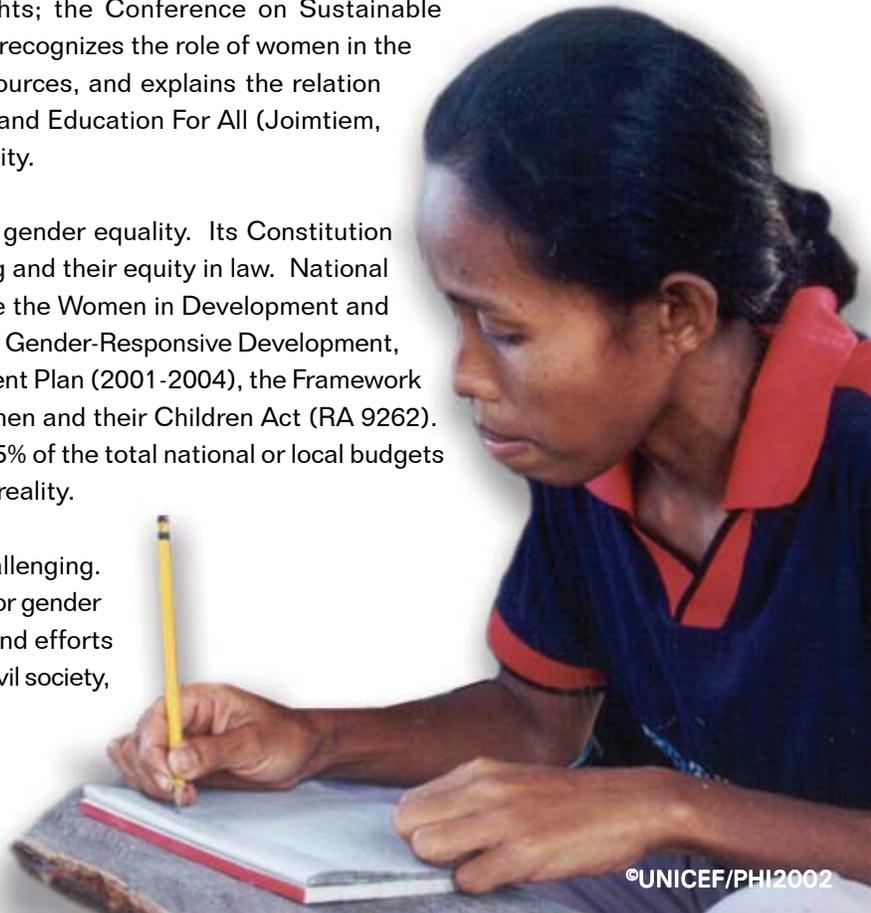
- Women are almost 40 percent of all workers, but 34.4 % of labour union members, and less than 20% of union leadership?
- Ten Filipino women die every day of pregnancy-related causes?

- The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security (2000). Its Constitution recognizes women and men's roles and highlights the importance of specific actions in relation to peace negotiations, conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance and peacekeeping operations.
- The International Labour Conventions concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value (1951) and on Discrimination with Respect to Employment and Occupation (1958) have been ratified by the Philippines in 1953 and 1960, respectively. These conventions set the framework for equal opportunities and treatment of all workers, regardless of their race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national or, social origin, or other bases determined by national law.

- A series of world conferences have reaffirmed these commitments, including the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 1994), promoting women's social, economic and political participation and women's and men's reproductive rights; the Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio do Janeiro, 1992), which recognizes the role of women in the prevention and management of natural resources, and explains the relation between poverty, gender and environment; and Education For All (Jomtiem, 1990), which goals are concerned with equality.

The Philippines has taken positive steps to achieve gender equality. Its Constitution recognizes women and men's roles in nation-building and their equity in law. National laws and policies to promote gender equality include the Women in Development and Nation Building Act (RA 7192), the Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development, (1995-2025), the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (2001-2004), the Framework Plan for Women, and the Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act (RA 9262). The General Appropriation Act requires that at least 5% of the total national or local budgets are earmarked for making these laws and policies a reality.

Full and effective implementation of these laws is challenging. In order to achieve the common international agenda for gender equality, it is necessary to coordinate participation and efforts of national and local governments, the private sector, civil society, international donors and Filipino women and men.



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# UN Agencies in the Philippines and their Efforts to Promote Gender Equality

The United Nations holds gender equality as one of its core commitments for achieving human development. It is considered a basic requirement for achieving sustainable development, poverty eradication and good governance. The UN views gender equality as everyone's responsibility and everybody's commitment. It is an essential part of sustainable and people-centred development, and should be at the heart of human development and human rights.

In the Philippines, the United Nations agencies have undertaken several programs and initiatives to assist the government, civil society, trade unions, the private sector and other institutions in taking action against barriers to equality

## Did you know that...

- Land distribution programs in the Philippines have favoured men over women by nearly 9 to 1?
- In 2004 alone, 7,383 cases of violence against women were reported to the Philippine National Police? This figure is likely to be only a small proportion of all cases, as most instances of rape, domestic violence, sexual harassment, trafficking, forced prostitution and other types of violence against women are never reported.



*Gender equality is critical to the development and peace of every nation [...] every society that wishes to overcome poverty, hunger, armed conflict and disease must draw fully on the talents and contribution of all of its members.*

*Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General*





# UN Actions in the Philippines for Promoting Gender Equality

## **The International Labor Organization (ILO)**

ILO promotes opportunities for men and women to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equality, security and human dignity. In the Philippines, the ILO works with the Department of Labor and Employment, the employers' organizations, the trade unions, and other stakeholders to promote gender equality in the world of work. Examples of current collaborations include initiatives to increase the representation and voice of women in labor market institutions and to mainstream gender in the work of those institutions; extending micro-health insurance to women in the informal sector; social dialogue and training on preventing and addressing sexual harassment in the workplace; training for employers on Equal Employment Opportunity and Non-discrimination at Work; and awareness and education on pay equity and job evaluation for public sector unions. The Philippines ILO office is a subregional office, and works to strengthen networks among organizations promoting equality at work throughout the Southeast Asia and Pacific region.

*\*More information about the ILO's mandate, approach, and programs for promoting gender equality is available at: <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/gender.htm>*

## **The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)**

UNAIDS seeks to raise social mobilization and capacity building of women and men living with HIV/AIDS and aims to prevent and alleviate the impact of the epidemic. Programs include encouraging people to address the biological, social and economic vulnerability of women and girls as well as the different consequences and prevention





measures of the infection for women and men. UNAIDS supports networks of partnership with public, private and civil society – like the Girls, Women & HIV/AIDS Network (GWHAN) and Babae Plus and provides information and technical support to allow more Filipino men and women, girl and boy children to face longer, healthier and more equal lives.

*UNAIDS, the joint UN programme on HIV/AIDS leads, strengthens and supports an expanded response to the epidemic.*

### **The UNIFEM-CEDAW Programme**

The CEDAW SOUTH EAST ASIA PROGRAMME (CEDAW SEAP) is implemented, in partnership with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Vietnam from 2005-2008. The impact goal in the Philippines is a more effective CEDAW implementation that better contributes to the realisation of women's human rights, strengthen capacity of duty bearers and rights holders such as governments & civil society, and strengthen political will and commitment to CEDAW implementation by popularising CEDAW.

*\* The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) CEDAW South East Asian Programme, facilitates CEDAW implementation towards the realization of Women's Human Rights in South East Asia.*



### **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

UNDP promotes women's participation in democratic governance, poverty reduction, energy and environment, conflict prevention and recovery, ICT and HIV/AIDS prevention. UNDP emphasizes the inclusion of gender and human rights perspective in policies, practices and programs of government and various stakeholders towards the attainment of sustainable human development.

Specific entry points for UNDP include sex-disaggregated MDGs monitoring at the country level; gender-sensitive budgeting; reducing the incidence of HIV among vulnerable women, incorporating gender dimensions into macro-economic policies and trade negotiations; and linking women's empowerment to





democratic governance, decentralisation and civil society participation. Capacity development includes sensitisation, training, knowledge sharing, and networking. UNDP Philippines is now embarking on the development of a multi-donor programme on Gender and Governance for the next 2005-2009 programming cycle.

*\* The UN Development Programme (UNDP) is the main body for coordinating the UN development work.*

### **The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)**

FAO promotes gender equality in access to food as well as access and control over management of natural resources and agricultural support services. Priorities include balanced participation of men and women in policy and decision-making process and employment opportunities in rural areas, Agrarian reform communities development project and sustainable forest management, poverty alleviation and food security are some of its projects.

*\* The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the UN works to improve the living standards of rural women and men.*

### **The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)**

UNFPA and its supported programmes derive their mandate from the 1994 ICPD Programme of Action, among others. These are implemented in accordance with the general principles of respect for human rights and advancement of gender equality, equity and empowerment of women. Reproductive rights, as fundamental human rights, include the basic right of all couples and individuals to decide freely and responsibly the number, spacing and timing of their children and to have the information and means to do so. It also includes the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health.

The elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility and male involvement in RH are important prerequisites to exercise women's reproductive rights. Advancement of gender equality, equity and empowerment of women are driving forces for development and are among the major objectives of UNFPA-supported programmes in the Philippines.





*\* The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) extends assistance to countries, at their request, to help them address and raise awareness on population and development, reproductive health and gender-related issues.*

### **The World Bank (WB)**

The World Bank assists member countries by addressing the gender disparities and inequalities that are barriers to development, and by assisting member countries in formulating and implementing their gender and development goals. To this end, the Bank periodically assesses the gender dimensions of development within and across sectors in the countries in which it has an active assistance program. Its Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) draws on and discusses the findings of the gender assessment. In sectors and thematic areas where the CAs has identified the need for gender-responsive interventions, the Bank incorporates measures designed to address this need. Projects in these sectors and thematic areas are designed to adequately take into account the gender implications of the project.

### **The World Health Organization (WHO)**

WHO ensures that the major changes introduced to improve women's health and social status are based on accurate and current data from a number of indicators relating to gender mainstreaming. Programmes, particularly those on reproductive health, are designed with direct and active women's participation and involvement. Among these are provisions for sexual education to adolescents and encouragement of responsible and healthy behaviours in men and women, relating to the physical and social consequences of an unwanted pregnancy; prevention/action on gender-specific illness like cervical cancer screening and self-examination for breast cancer. Pro-poor health policies are also aimed to improve the moral and psychological stature of women.

*\* The World Health Organization (WHO) also works to strengthen health planning, policy-making and service delivery by improving capacities of health managers to analyze and address the interrelationships between poverty, gender and health.*

### **The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)**

**UNICEF** recognises the fulfillment of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) as integral to the fulfillment of the Convention on



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the Rights of the Child (CRC). Both Conventions provide the framework for UNICEF's mandate and mission. UNICEF's commitment is demonstrated through its Human Rights Based Approach to Programming. UNICEF strives to support programs that recognises the rights of each individual and to create enabling conditions for gender equality. Gender is an integral aspect of all areas of UNICEF's work, not only to ensure that the basic needs of girls, boys and women are met, but that they also have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and realize their human rights. UNICEF's programme components are Health and Nutrition, Education, HIV/AIDS, Child Protection, Local Policy and Institutional Development, and Communication.

*\* UNICEF, the UN Children's Fund helps governments, communities and families make the world a better place for girl and boy children.*

### **The United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

In order to promote the social, technical and economic integration of women in the industrial development process, UNIDO supports Women Entrepreneurship Development (WED) programmes that strengthens the support institutions and enhances the business skills of women entrepreneurs through trainings and emphasizing confidence-building for managing their own assets, team-work and negotiations.

*\* UNIDO promotes the industrial advancement of developing countries through technical assistance, advisory services and training. It aims to contribute to poverty reduction through entrepreneurship development.*

### **The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

UNHCR ensures respect for refugees' basic human rights, including their ability to seek asylum and to ensure that no one is returned involuntarily to a country where he or she has reason to fear persecution. As a humanitarian agency, gender mainstreaming is in the forefront with the development of programs and policies that recognize the issues of discrimination and abuse of women and children refugees. Procedures and policies of UNHCR integrate equal access to assistance and protection for both women and men. Advocacy for the development of government policies and procedures relating to refugee protection include gender considerations to allow for better conditions for refugees world-wide.



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*\* The UNHCR is mandated by the United Nations to lead and coordinate international action for the world-wide protection of refugees and the resolution of refugee problems.*

### **The United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat)**

UN-HABITAT, is the United Nations agency for human settlements. It is mandated by the UN General Assembly to promote socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all. The UN-HABITAT's Gender Policy has three overall objectives: (a) To promote women's equal rights and women's empowerment within the area of human settlements development; (b) To support governments, NGOs and other partners in capacity building and development in order to mainstream gender equality in human settlements development; (c) To mainstream a gender perspective throughout the Programme's activities. Gender mainstreaming has been consistently advocated at the policy and technical levels, particularly in the areas of MDG related programmes: shelter and basic service delivery, local governance, urban development and management, and local economic development.

*\* The UN Human Settlements Programme, UN-Habitat, is the United Nations agency for promoting socially and environmentally sustainable towns and cities with the goal of providing adequate shelter for all.*

### **The International Maritime Organization (IMO)**

IMO promotes the development of human and institutional resources in the maritime sector on a sustainable basis, including the advancement of women. In the Philippines, the IMO facilitates and develops training programs and seminars for members of the Maritime Industry Authority (MARINA), a majority of whom are women. Programs on women visibilization includes the creation and formulation of national maritime regulation and forming part of the management of shipping and manning agencies, seafaring and other related entities.

*\* IMO, The International Maritime Organization (IMO), has for its global mandate safe, secure and efficient shipping in clean oceans.*

### **The United Nations Information Center (UNIC)**

The UN Information Center, promotes awareness of the UN activities. UNIC's work includes the provision of information materials to schools and universities on gender issues, the use of non-sexist language in press releases and media alerts and promotion of non-stereotypic images on the role of women and men.





## To know more on Gender Equality in the UN system

- United Nations The Philippines  
<http://www.un.org.ph> (UN agencies)  
<http://www.un.org.ph/wg/gnd.html> (UN Gender Mainstreaming Committee)
- UNIFEM, the women's fund at the United Nations provides financial and technical assistance on innovative programmes and strategies to foster women's empowerment and gender equality  
<http://unifem-eseasia.org> (UNIFEM East and Southeast Asia Regional Office)
- Women Watch, the United Nations interagency website on gender equality and empowerment of women  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

## To know more on the Philippine Situation on Gender Equality Promotion and Women Empowerment:

- Human Development Report 2004 (UNDP)
- To Produce and To Care, Gender Assessment of The Philippines  
<http://www.un.org.ph/wg/gnd/GenderAssessment-ESum.pdf>
- Contact the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW)
- Visit the LGUs Gender Focal Person in your Barangay
- Get in touch with the women movement's groups or NGOs working on gender equality promotion in your area, as well as the women's study centers in the universities



# Women's Rights are Human Rights

## Services

- Right to quality education
- Right to comprehensive health services across the life cycle
- Access to loans and other forms of financial credit
- Right to join leisure, sports, and cultural activities

## Work

- Right to equal access to jobs, benefits, and social security
- Right to equal pay for work of equal value
- Right to be free from all forms of slavery and prostitution

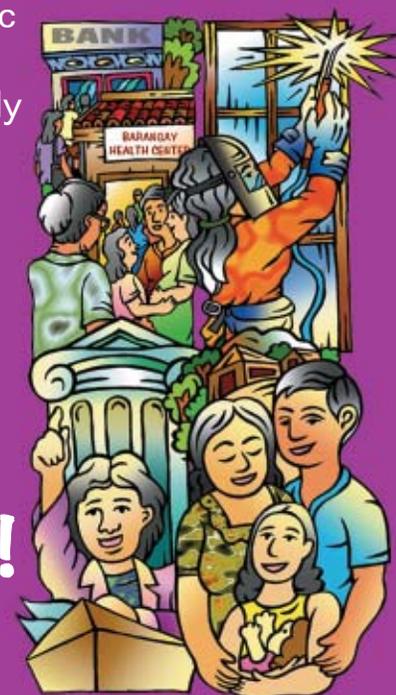
## Politics

- Right to vote, run for election and hold public office
- Right to represent the country internationally

## Family

- Right to decide the number and spacing of her children
- Right to shared parenting responsibilities

**Respect, Protect and  
Fulfill Womens's Rights !**





## United Nations Country Team

Food and Agriculture Organization

International Finance Corporation

International Labour Organization

International Maritime Organization

International Monetary Fund

International Organization  
for Migration

Joint United Nations Programme on  
HIV/AIDS

United Nations Children's Fund

United Nations Information Center

United Nations Development  
Programme

United Nations Educational, Scientific  
and Cultural Organization

United Nations  
High Commissioner for Human Rights

United Nations  
Human Settlements Programme

United Nations Population Fund

World Bank

World Health Organization

