

XXV

TECMUN Jr.

United Nations Entity for
Gender Equality and the
Empowerment of Women

“Cuando pones la proa visionaria hacia una estrella y tiendes el ala hacia tal excelsitud inasible, llevas en ti el resorte misterioso de un ideal. Custódiala; si la dejas apagar no se reenciende jamás. Y si ella muere en ti quedarás inerte; frío. Solo vives por esa partícula de ensueño que se sobrepone a lo real y que te hace sentir vivo”.

José Ingenieros, *El hombre mediocre*, Buenos Aires, 1913.

Delegados, embajadores, jueces, ministros, fiscales y compañeros:

Dentro del cosmos de la modernidad, entre las corrientes de la paz y el conflicto, yacen miles de hombres como tú y como yo, hambrientos de cambio, deleitados con la ficción irrisoria de un mañana distinto. Nuestra realidad es fruto de los sueños de los visionarios de antaño y nuestros ideales son las líquidas y abstractas partículas que cristalizarán la realidad de los hombres del futuro. No es hasta que reflexionamos acerca de la naturaleza de este proceso de transición que valoramos las verdaderas implicaciones de nuestras acciones.

No somos más que individuos aislados entre la masa social, sin embargo, no es esta individualidad lo que genera el cambio, por el contrario, las ideas son la fuerza motriz que marca la senda de las revoluciones; son las ideas aquellas que impulsan la materialización del cambio. No obstante, si demeritásemos el valor de la potencia personal, nos encontraríamos con la nada, pues, no existe revolución que haya sido emprendida sin conciencia individual. Es esta suma de unidades lo que empodera la raza humana y nos aproxima a la evolución perpetua.

TECMUN es el crisol que funde las perspectivas personales en una gran razón colectiva. Es aquella entidad viva que congrega a visionarios aislados en una red de sueños, esperanzas y acciones. Hago un llamado categórico hacia todos ustedes, exigiéndoles que jamás dejen morir sus ideales, pues la decadencia del deseo contrae el desgarramiento del cambio, que conducirá a la muerte de nuestro espíritu y, al cabo, a la muerte perpetua e irreversible de nosotros mismos.

Delegados, nosotros hacemos la diferencia. Vivamos con unidad, conciencia e ideales.

Kevin Zamora González
Secretario General
XXV TECMUN Jr.

Delegados, jueces, embajadores, ministros, fiscales y compañeros:

Son diversas las acciones que nos llevan a corromper la paz y obstaculizar el crecimiento; sin embargo, hay dos actitudes que considero las más perjudiciales para nuestro progreso: la ignorancia y la indiferencia. A mi parecer, una más grave que la otra. La primera se resume en la falta de información y conocimientos sobre conceptos, que sin importar el nivel de dificultad, son vitales para el desarrollo del ser humano, así como la negligencia de las personas de adquirir estos conocimientos inclusive cuando tienen un deber moral o legal. La segunda, y la más grave, se basa en el comportamiento indistinto ante las situaciones que nos afectan tanto individualmente como colectivamente, sin importar el conocimiento adquirido acerca de éstas. Se puede tener la información, pero predomina la inactividad. Ambas representan el mayor peligro para nuestro futuro y lamentablemente están cada vez más presentes, en todos los sectores y en todas las edades.

Todos somos un engrane, que sin importar el tamaño, es fundamental para el funcionamiento de un reloj. En este caso, de una sociedad. Si un engrane falla, el sistema completo cae. Las acciones que decidas llevar a cabo, o la falta de éstas, van a dictar tu porvenir y el de tus alrededores. No se trata de esperar a que alguien tome riendas en el asunto con la convicción de que la decisión que tome, sea la más apta para un futuro del cual eres protagonista. No se trata de estar a la espera de tiempos mejores con la ilusión de que en algún momento llegarán. Se trata de crear y trabajar por un futuro en el que el diálogo y el intercambio de ideas está presente en todos los sectores y en todas las edades; en el que la gente quiera estar informada para poder ser partícipe en la toma de decisiones.

Debemos dejar de ser espectadores del cambio si realmente queremos ver un progreso y empezar a ser intérpretes de nuestro propio futuro. Aprovecha la oportunidad que se te presenta el día de hoy y las herramientas que te brinda TECMUN para trabajar por un futuro en el que la participación ciudadana y la responsabilidad social son los actores principales que van a dictaminar las decisiones que va a llevar a esta sociedad, a este gran reloj, a trabajar de la manera más efectiva posible.

Gisela Anahí Lima Castillo

Subsecretaria General de la Asamblea General

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Delegate,

I want to start by congratulating you. Nowadays we live in a world in which the strength of humanity is being tested and even though everything that has happened you decided not to conform with it. Every day more people is needed to to stand out and lead, so you being part of this Model of United Nations is taking that step further. Being part of this Model means that you have decided not to turn your back on actual problems.

I hope you are proud of yourself, because I am. The sole fact that you decided to be part of this Model, as I already said, means you are one the few people that dare to make a change, to take that opportunity and that challenge. So I exhort you to make your voice heard. Take advantage of every ability you have, improve on those you do not but most important, be aware of the tremendous capacity you have. Make mistakes but learn from them, learn from your fellow delegates, and decide what type of future you want to live in. We live in a world in which most of the decisions we make are based on what others say or what the society will not see wrongly, but then complin on what the consequences are. A world in which is more important to be accepted by society than by oneself, a world that is ruled by ambition, a world in which everyone competes with everyone. This is where you come into place. We need people to not be scared to speak out loud, to express themselves and be the agent of change. Because of people like you that dare to take challenges such as this Model, is why I am able to say that there is still hope. People who are not afraid to make their voice heard are the ones why there is still a reason to fight for.

So I dare you to be that agent, I dare you to take that chance, take the best out of you and make yourself heard, because being here means you can. Do not waste the opportunities life gives you. But also never forget you are not alone, there is no reason to take a fight by yourself, rely on people who have the same lust for a better future that you have. With the risk of it to sound as a cliché, the future is in the hands of people like you, so take responsible decisions, make mistakes, learn, mature, but most important, never forget why you move. Do not lose your path because you have the capacity and people will follow the ones who stand out for good. Make the best out of you.

“There is some good in this world, and it’s worth fighting for”

J.R.R. Tolkien, The Two Towers.

Sincerely

María Andrea Solís Galán

President of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

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Outline of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) was created by the United Nations General Assembly in the resolution 64/289 on July 2, 2010. Its headquarter is located at the United Nations in New York. UN Women works to create an environment in which every girl and woman can exercise their human rights. Focuses on priority areas that are fundamental for the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights and humanitarian action; areas that can unlock progress across the board. These priority areas range between working against discrimination towards women, for their empowerment, for equality between both genders, in protection of their human rights, for a world with peace and security, for leadership and political participation, and for ending violence against women.

Topic A

Increase in Latin American femicides as a consequence of the culture of machismo

*By: María Andrea Solís Galán
Adriana Dae Domínguez Soria*

Background

Violence against women has presented itself since past ages when they were not only physically assaulted or abused but also sexually and emotionally harassed. Between 15 and 76 percent of women are targeted for physical and sexual violence in their lifetime. A Small Arms Survey made in 2016 threw the 25 countries that had the highest rates of femicide, countries which 14 of them are from Latin America and the Caribbean; nowadays Latin America is the region with the most female murders around the globe. Femicide is understood as the act of killing a woman for the sole fact of being a woman. It is not only considered a Human Rights violation but a gender based violent act, a gender based discrimination. Besides the effort made to reduce this crime against women, there has been little change.

Femicide has been a problem of gender and discrimination that has been present for a long time, however, during the second half of the twentieth century it has become more mentioned because of the mass media. The term femicide was born as an alternative to the neutral term of homicide” with the political purpose to recognize and make visible discrimination, inequality and violence against women that in extreme cases ends up in death. This term was first coined in 1970 by Diana Russell. Moreover, she explained “femicide” to every form of sexist murder, in other words, the murders committed by men motivated for having “superiority” above women or only for pleasure.

In Mexico Marcela Lagarde introduced this term after studying what Russell did. Lagarde mentions that the State has the responsibility to the prevention, treatment and protection of women against gender violence and they should guarantee freedom and life of women. Furthermore, she mentions that the absence of sanctions and punishments to murderers makes the state at as irresponsible for the omission and their direct or indirect complicity to this actions.

Violence against women continuously persists worldwide as a violation of human rights and a major impediment to achieving gender equality. Thus, as long violence against women still exist, it cannot be claimed to be making real progress towards equality, development and peace. In Latin America the term femicide began to be even more used in 1993 when female homicides in the city of Juarez, Mexico, began to occur. Standing out three causes to this femicides, the one that was more frequent was the macho culture in Mexico, followed by the corrupt federal and judicial systems and the last one being the lack of security since the vacancy

of jobs that the opening of manufacturers created made women an easy target when returning from work.

After this, activists and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) such as the Organization of Salvadoran Women for Peace (ORMUSA), The Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights (CLADEM); among other, started to look for changes in the legislations. As a result, many other Latin American countries that had plenty of femicide cases, such as Guatemala and Honduras, started to look for a change mainly in the legislations, as Mexico did.

Femicide in Latin America

Latin America, in turn, has paid special attention to femicide ever since the Juarez murders begun in the 1990s. In the Mexican border town of Juarez, an unprecedented number of women were killed and their bodies showed clear signs of torture.

In countries of Latin America such is the case of El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Argentina, Guatemala; among others, femicide has become a more frequent crime every day. A report released by Argentinás Wana Taddei Institute, found that 57 women had been killed so far by February 2017, one of the highest rate in the region. While in 2016, one woman was estimated to die every 30 hours on average, now the time frame has lowered to every 18 hours. By the other hand, in Paraguay, femicides have doubled compared with 2016, making an average of one women killed every four hours. In Ecuador, by January and February it had already been committed 19 registered cases of femicide. Showing up that this is an important situation that is highly occurring in Latin American countries. It has been proven that 14 nations of the 25 with the highest rate of violence against women are located in Latin America according to the United Nations.

Even though there has been a tremendous amount of social movements, campaigns and governmental effort to diminish these, they still do not have the expected impact in society. From security reinforcement to specialized laws and personnel, the effort made has not been able to do enough to finish these crimes.

Causes attributed to femicides

The increase of femicides around the world is just only a sign that violence against women is mainly a social and economic issue. Shown as a result of the relations for gender inequality as well as the permissibility of society to commit this action. There are many reasons why femicide has been growing by decades. Unemployment, has been and always will be a reason why people commit not only femicides but murders and crimes. Moreover, being a gun ownership highly becomes an incentive of committing any type of crime, femicides being one of them. Forcing sexual intercourse on a partner is also a reason why violence begins leading to femicides. On the other hand, problematic alcohol use and illicit drug use, added up mental health problems, as well, increase the percentage of perpetrators who carry out this type of action.

Another environment in which femicide is committed, are either gangs, drug cartels or human trafficking groups. This is because the role that women take in this groups. In human trafficking groups the majority are women between 18 and 28 that are being murdered, sex traded, raped or tortured. On the other hand, in gangs, even though women are not the common victim, they are seen as “property” of the members. Finally in drug cartels, women are used as drug mules so if by any chance there is any inconvenient, they would be the ones leading with the consequences, not only against the legal system but with other drug cartels. Drug trafficking is also an important cause which generates thousands of femicides, especially in Latin American Countries, in where criminal groups are highly known. According to a report from “Derechos Humanos del Equipo Regional de Monitoreo y Análisis de Derechos Humanos” in Central America; in countries such as Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua, femicides have deep historical roots, aiming that homicides against women are being accelerated and deepened by the increase of gangs and mostly by the actions committed by drug trafficking.

Male chauvinism

As mentioned above, there are multiple factors to commit a homicide against women, however male chauvinist culture is the principal. Male chauvinism is the belief that men are superior than women in terms of ability, intelligence, among others; hence a male chauvinist is a man who believes that women are less important, less capable of doing things so they do not treat women equally. Men in Latin America often denominate themselves *machista* and defend their way of acting as a form of protecting women, still their behaviour goes to an extreme point in which women are seen as objects that can be controlled so their rights are not respected.

Even when it's known that it is not correct and it should not happen, most women have perpetuated the culture consciously and unconsciously. Waiting for the man to have to protect the women, assume that the man is in charge of the financial stability of the home or that the woman is the one who has to take care of the children are actions that keep alive the male chauvinist culture. In Mexico there has been several femicide cases in which the reason that drives people to commit femicide is mainly hatred against the opposite gender.

Actions taken

States have the commitment to protect women from violence and to provide justice and remedies to victims. Political will and visible commitment from the State is required in order to make a significant reduction of femicides. Eliminating violence against women remains one of the most serious challenges of our time. However, entities of the United Nations system (UN) in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), have been working on a better understanding of the nature of violence against women and its impacts on societies, many policies frameworks have been developed in order to reduce violence.

Justice systems in Latin America have responded by implementing laws and campaigns. Many countries have developed a Protocol specialized on femicides and in creating tools that work in each of those countries according to their context to properly investigate and punish all forms of violence against women. These all supported by United Nations Women. In 2008, nine countries in Latin America had this legislation, now there are 16 countries. Mentioning that Brazil was the first country to adapt the Protocol, leading to a landmark legislation on femicide, which was passed in March 2015. This year, UN Women is supporting the adaptation of the Protocol in Argentina.

Uruguay has implemented a successful pilot project with courts, the police and the women's ministry. This programme is based that in a "high-risk situation", a judge can ordain the abuser to wear electronic bands connected to an electronic device that the woman at risk carries. If the abuser comes close to her, the device alerts the police automatically. Furthermore, both (victim and abuser) also receive psychological support. So far, not a single one of the women in this programme have been killed.

Ending impunity is the first step towards that. It is needed comparable statistics to analyze and compare between countries what works and what does not to end femicide. Once

there are better statistics, the patterns and the gravity of the situation will be shown leading to make informed policies. Moreover, it is required an integrated and high quality services that women can trust; health sector, social services. Furthermore, prevention is also necessary in order to change structural causes, attitudes and perceptions that drive violence against women. As an example for this, Colombia in 2005, passes a legislation that engages the education sector in prevention activities. In pre-, middle and high schools, children are now studying what gender means and how it affects our societies.

Legislative actions

Countries of Latin America who already have laws against the violence of women:

- Argentina, 2009: Comprehensive Protection Act to prevent, punish and eradicate violence against women in Domains in which they develop their interpersonal relationships.
- Brazil, 2006: Law 11340 (MARIA DA PENHA LAW).
- Colombia, 2008: Law 1257 Violence against Women.
- Costa Rica, 2007: Act criminalizing violence against women.
- Chile, 1999: Law on Sexual Offenses.
- El Salvador, 2011: Comprehensive law for a life free of violence for women.
- Guatemala, 2008: Law against femicide and other forms of violence against women.
- Mexico, 2007: General Law on Women's Access to a Life Free of Violence.
- Nicaragua, 1996: Law 230 for the prevention and punishment of domestic violence.

- 2011: Comprehensive law against violence against women and reforms to the law 641.

- Panama, 2011: Law 38 on Domestic Violence.
- Venezuela, 1998: Law on Violence against Women and the Family.

- 2007: Organic Law on the Right of Women to a Life Free of Violence.

- Paraguay, 2000: Domestic Violence Law.
- Peru, 1997: On the Politics of the State and Society against Family Violence.
- Dominican Republic, 1997: Law against domestic violence.
- Uruguay, 2002: Law on Prevention, early detection, care and eradication of domestic violence.

Although the aforementioned laws have the same purpose of prevent and punished the violence against women, the penalty changes according to the country and the type of femicide. An example is Chile that is the country of Latin America that has the highest penalty; life imprisonment. Mexico also qualifies with one of the highest penalties punishing the crime with 40 to 60 years in prison. On the other hand, countries like Costa Rica and El Salvador only punish with prison of 20 to 35 years.

Consequences attributed to femicides

There are many consequence generated by the cruel actions linked to femicides. Among many, it is visible the death of millions of women in a reproductive age, slowing down the opportunity of growth in countries that are needed such as Latin American countries. Moreover, another consequence is the high damage among families, referencing to traumatic experiences such as the possible leading orphans that remain after their mother's death. Femicides, on the other hand can lead to a wrong learning in those children, this is because they will get a mistaken vision of what the respect for women should be and in the future they could possibly commit the same actions, perceived as cultural violence learned. Furthermore, all these actions gathered up lead to depression in most of the cases.

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Glossary

A

Aforementioned: Denoting a thing or person previously mentioned

F

Femicide: The act of killing a woman or a girl, for the sole fact of being a woman

G

Gender: The male or female sex, or the state of being either male or female

H

Harassed: The act of disturb persistently; torment

Homicide: The deliberate and unlawful killing of one person by another

I

Illicit drug: A drug whose production or use is prohibited or strictly controlled via prescription

Impunity: Exemption from punishment or freedom from the injurious consequences of an action

M

Male chauvinist culture: A male who patronizes, disparages, or otherwise denigrates females in the belief that they are inferior to males and thus deserving of less than equal treatment or benefit

Mass media: Any of the means of communication, as television or newspapers, that reach very large numbers of people

Murders: The killing of another human being under conditions specifically covered in law

O

Omission: The act of omitting

P

Penalty: Refers to a punishment that is imposed to someone for breaking a rule, law or contract

Perpetrators: A person who perpetrates, or commits, an illegal, criminal, or evil act

Property: That which a person owns; the possession or possessions of a particular owner

S

Sexist: Attitudes and behavior toward someone based on the person's gender. Characterized by or showing prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex.

T

Torture: The act of inflicting excruciating pain, as punishment or revenge, as a means of getting a confession or information, or for sheer cruelty

Guiding Questions

1. Has my delegation taken any considerations over the femicide rate it has? Either legal, social, economic or political.
2. What are the main causes attributed to femicides inside my delegation?
3. Has my delegation taken into consideration any recommendations or has recommended other delegations to take action?

Topic B

Emergency efforts to improve Yemen's current humanitarian crisis as a result of the ongoing civil war

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Background

In recent years a new era of women being part of politics has emerged all around the world. However women have had struggles in order to get over those roles, especially their rights to own property and vote in the 19th century and to abortion, equal pay and nursery provision in the 20th century.

Though these signify positive gains from the point of view of equality for women, if women's participation in politics is taken as one of the measurements of their emancipation, it's noticed that the percentage is very low in comparison to men. Even when in the last 20 years the percentage of women in parliament has nearly doubled, it currently translates to only 20.4 per cent of women in parliament according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN WOMEN).

This means that women are underrepresented in all facets of the political processes due to different situations mainly socio cultural barriers, lack of training and resources for the political organization of women, social norms, among others. Moreover, there is no common definition of women's empowerment. In fact, the word "empowerment" does not exist in most languages. Although, the phrase "women's empowerment" is used pervasively in the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment area, it is generally implemented for issues, such as economic empowerment, political participation, and girls' education.

For this reason countries such as India have been empowering women to take this roles. Indian women were among the earliest to get their political rights (right to vote) without any political movement like in United States and many Western countries. They were among the foremost to take active part in politics even in pre-independence times. Indian women have distinguished themselves by becoming United Nations General Assembly president (Vijay laxmi Pandit), India's Prime Minister (Indira Gandhi), Chief Minister (Sucheta Kriplani, Jayalalitha, Uma Bharati, Mayawati and Vasundhara Raje) and even President (Pratibha Patil).

"Empowering girls and women is powerful."(In, 2016). Today, we know it is the key to economic growth, political stability and social transformation. World leaders, experts and scholars alike are giving their voice to this critical attempt. Today's young women are not waiting for things to get changed. From Neda in Iran to millennial women in Tahrir Square and the 2016 US Presidential Election, young women are advocating for and leading the change.

Women as leaders

For centuries, women's leadership wings were clipped as the public sphere was appropriated just for men. But behind the limiters, there have been several women that have made significant changes and gained recognition for their achievements. Women that fought for their rights, either political, social or educational rights, that fought for women's suffrage, property rights and abolition of slavery, for an equal and fair treatment and opportunities.

Scientists as Rosalind Franklin whose research was key in revealing the structure of DNA. Wangari Maathai; Kenyan-born environmentalist, pro-democracy activist and women's rights campaigner. Shirin Ebadi; Iranian lawyer, who has fought for human rights in Iran, representing political dissidents. Benazir Bhutto; she was first female prime minister of a Muslim country, and as long as many other women that have had an outstanding role in society not only in politics but as many other areas such as science, environment, sports, etc.

Although throughout history we have seen different cases about women leaders, there are still doubts about the effectiveness of the participation of women. In universities of the UK the percentage of women who had important positions has had growth in the last four years; 29%.

Political participation of women

Politics is almost everywhere a male-oriented, male-dominated enterprise and female political participation is not as such good as expected. There are just two countries that have more than 50 per cent of women participation that are Rwanda with 63.8 per cent and Bolivia with 53.1 per cent, all other countries have less participation. Some examples are the Nordic countries with 41.1 per cent; Americas, 27.7 per cent; Europe excluding Nordic countries, 24.3 per cent; sub-Saharan Africa, 23.1 per cent; Asia, 19.2 per cent; Arab States, 18.4 per cent; and the Pacific with the lowest percentage; 13.5 per cent.

The lack of women in leadership political roles has numerous explanations which include gender based discrimination, supposed lack of female role models specifically in politics, competitive environments and social norms such as family responsibility. Taking into consideration public support, stereotypes, among other factors that also represent a challenge for women's political aspirations.

Nevertheless, there have been political figures represented by women that have made several achievements both for gender equality in politics and the movement, action, law or position they took charge of. From Margaret Thatcher, the first Prime Minister of England, to women as Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany; Liberia's former president Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf; Theresa May, Britain's Prime Minister. Sheikh Hasina current Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Michelle Obama, an American lawyer and writer who was First Lady of the United States, Erna Solberg a norwegian politician who has been Prime Minister of Norway since 2013, among many other women, have proven the capacity that women also have to take political positions.

Michelle Bachelet actual president of Chile, became the first woman to lead the Defense Ministry, she served president of Chile from 2006 to 2010 and again from 2014 up until now. She was the first woman that created a political career independently of her husband's. Bachelet was the first Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women, which was established on 2 July 2010 by the United Nations General Assembly. Under her support and leadership, UN Women led, supported and coordinated the work on gender equality and the empowerment of women at global, regional and country levels.

As the political figures mentioned before, there are many other women that also have demonstrated to be capable to uphold a political position of great importance, breaking barriers and beliefs that women were not able to take charge of those positions. Still there is a great range of women that do not have the same opportunities as men to aspire to this and are retained from pursuing their goals in a political environment.

Gender Quotas

Given the slow speed by which the number of women in politics is growing, there are increased calls for more efficient methods reach a gender balance in political institutions. Quotas present one such mechanism. The introduction of quota systems for women represents a qualitative jump into a policy of exact goals and means. Because of its relative efficiency, the hope for a dramatic increase in women's representation by using this system is strong.

Taking into consideration that women do not have the same participation as men, since 1970, adopted quotas whereas today, over one hundred countries around the world such as

Canada, Mexico, Brazil, China, Australia, Dominican Republic; among others, has implemented Gender quotas in order to achieve the empowerment of women.

What Gender Quotas do is mainly influence the election of women in order to provide an equal opportunity for women to hold legislative positions and trying to eliminate surface and structural discrimination against women. Quotas are a controversial measure. Various arguments have been set forth for and against the introduction of quotas as a means to increase the political presence of women. However, introducing gender quotas would cause positive effects into politics.

- Quotas for women do not discriminate, but compensate for actual barriers that prevent women from their fair share of the political seats.
- Quotas imply that there are several women together in a committee or assembly, thus minimizing the stress often experienced by the token women.
- Women have the right as citizens to equal representation.
- Women's experiences are needed in political life.
- Introducing quotas may cause conflicts, but may be only temporarily.
- Quotas can contribute to a process of democratisation by making the nomination process more transparent and formalised.

Besides the effectiveness that gender quotas could have had, in several countries of Asia there have been little changes that through the years were supposed to improve still it is the region along with the Pacific that has the less number of women in legislative positions. In the 2012 election of the Korea Republic National Assembly having a “Temporary Special Measure” of Candidate Quotas, there were only 11 women elected over a number of seats of 300.

High human development is a necessary but not sufficient factor contributing to women's political empowerment. While rising prosperity in Eastern Asia has narrowed the gender gaps in these areas, women's political participation has not increased at the same pace as economic development. In the South-Eastern Asia region, claimed high status of women yet they have low levels of women's political representation compared with the rest of the world.

This contradiction can be explained by the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes that do not encourage women to participate in politics.

Besides, South Asia is one of the regions that is more volatile, it has two nuclear armed and hostile states and violent intrastate ethnic conflicts and the majority of states in this region share certain predominant features that include post-colonial state formation, centralised governments, socioeconomic inequalities and intra state divisions and conflicts based on class, gender, religion, language, ethnicity and caste.

The Pacific islands also are a region which has a low percentage of women in political positions, because their parliaments continue to be those most resistant to the inclusion of women of all the four subregions in the Asia-Pacific region. On November 2012, Parliaments of the Pacific Islands Forum member states without taking into consideration Australian and New Zealand, had an average of only 3.65% women in parliament, that is 16 women out of 438.

Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

There are many obstacles to political participation, however, some of the most common are the lack of public support even in the most developed democracies, together with the lack of support from political parties, lack of trust, of financial means, of opportunities, and the fact that it is often physically unsafe to be a part of political processes.

As mentioned before the political participation has its barriers, however, for women there are many more included, such as socio-cultural factors; according to society beliefs, women can just play the role of “working mothers” or “housewives” not of businesses leaders, distinguished doctors or engineers nor political figures.

There are also economic factors that put them in disadvantage. Because of their socio-economic position, arguing that women do not have the solvency needed because they are not the ones that “bring money to a family” many doors are closed to them. Without neglecting the religious factors that often argument about women's inferiority to men.

These factors, besides their variations, all have a common foundation. Stereotypes, discrimination and women objectification have led to a society in which women are seen as less important, less capable, less intelligent when many have proven these beliefs wrong.

Nowadays there are jobs still considered as “for men”, there is still a perception in which women are not able to take higher roles in companies nor in political positions.

Stereotypes that claim that women must have a certain type of body, certain attributes and that only fit for certain jobs have ruled society for ages in spite of the efforts made for these to change and of the women that have risen as leaders, as CEO’s, as prime ministers, as recognized scientifics or as social activists.

Discrimination represents great part of this problem, because of the segregation it has created when women didn’t even have the right to vote. Objectification of women in social media goes along stereotypes. Both limit women's participation in society by creating barriers for them.

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Glossary

C

Controversial: of, relating to, or arousing a discussion marked especially by the expression of opposing views.

E

Emancipation: to free from restraint, control, or the power of another; *especially* : to free from bondage.

Empowerment: to promote the self-actualization or influence of.

Enterprise: a unit of economic organization or activity; *especially* : a business organization.

G

Gender gaps: the discrepancy in opportunities, status, attitudes, etc., between men and women.

I

Intrastate: existing or occurring within a specific state.

P

Parliament: the supreme legislative body of a usually major political unit that is a continuing institution comprising a series of individual assemblages.

Political dissidents: disagreeing especially with an established religious or political system, organization, or belief.

Q

Quota systems: a system which limits or prescribes certain shares, or quotas, etc

S

Segregation: the separation or isolation of a race, class, or ethnic group by enforced or voluntary residence in a restricted area, by barriers to social intercourse, by separate educational facilities, or by other discriminatory means.

Solvency: the quality or state of being able to dissolve or can dissolve.

Suffrage: a vote given in deciding a controverted question or electing a person for an office or trust.

V

Volatile: characterized by or subject to rapid or unexpected change.

Guiding Questions

1. Has the percentage of the women in political positions in my delegation varied in the last years? Due to which causes?
2. Are women in my delegation considered to be underrepresented in politics?
3. Has my delegation taken legal actions in this matter? If so, what has been its effectiveness?