

AIPA Seminar on
“Accelerating the Achievement of MDG-5 through the
Role of Women MPs”

Phnom Penh, Cambodia, 9 -12 March 2011

**Vietnamese woman parliamentarians
toward implementation of MDG-5**

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Parliament roles

- Parliaments have a crucial role to play on MDG-5 issues within the broader context of the health sector and the overall national development agenda.
- IPU have identified five core actions that MPs can take in positioning, promoting and protecting the health of women:
 1. Representing the voice of women
 2. Advocating for MDG-5, nationally and internationally
 3. Legislating to ensure universal access to essential care
 4. Budgeting for maternal health
 5. Holding the government to account for implementing policies

1. Representing the voices of Vietnamese women

- We speak on behalf of women, to ensure that their voices are heard, and to make sure that their rights and concerns are reflected in national development strategies and budgets.
- In Viet Nam, with **Woman Parliamentary Group** we have a bigger voice to deal with the other branches of government, and with various international and sub-national bodies.
- The Woman Parliamentary Group is really a common roof for us. We debate regularly on all issues relating women and children.

2. Advocating for MDG-5

- What?
 - Raising awareness about the MDG-5
 - Their importance in development
 - The challenges: gender bias, discrimination
- How?
 - Committee work, debate in session
 - Press interview, talk with voters
 - Work with ministries and local governments
- What we need?
 - Law on Gender equality
 - National Strategy for Gender equality 2020
 - Public consultation on policy, voter's contact

3. Legislating to ensure universal access to essential care

- In Viet Nam, the National Health Insurance Law, Law on Public Health Care, Law on Medical Consultation and Treatment, Labour Law, Law on Medical Insurance were passed in favour of women.
- MPs played a critical role in the development of both of these laws. We organize visiting our voters, ensuring that voters' concerns were reflected in the drafting process.
- Success:
 - Equal access of women and children to medical services.
 - Woman's right to decide to have safe abortion.
 - Women access easily to gynecology consultation and treatment, right of woman workers to have health care and hygienic facilities in work place

4. *Budgeting for maternal health*

- Good policy without resources likes clap with one hand, so we do:
 - Gender budgeting through examination of annual national budget.
 - Local gender budgeting through people's council's allocation of resources.
- In 2007, Da Nang Peoples Council had a debate on choosing between a sport stadium and a gynecology hospital. The sport stadium is adopted at last, but from then every problems concerning women's health budgeting had been considering seriously.
- In 2008, National Assembly of Viet Nam helped to secure an increase from 8% to 10% in the health sector's share of the total government budget in the last term.

5. Holding the government to account for implementing policies

- National Assembly of Viet Nam is very active in monitoring, especially the Committee for Social Affairs, who is in charge of oversight on implementation of Gender Equity Law and of gender related examination of draft laws.
- MPs organize meetings at the central level with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labours and other relevant ministries. They also make field trips and organize meetings with provincial and district leaders as well as members of local communities.
- The monitoring missions' findings and recommendations are documented and reported to the Health Ministry, which has an obligation to tell parliament how the recommendations will be addressed.

- Monitoring efforts lead to better implementation of the laws. Between 2007 and 2009, the proportion of the population covered by social health insurance increased from 49% to 55%. Further monitoring of the health insurance law is needed to ensure that coverage continues to increase and that benefits are delivered effectively.

- In 2007, the government declared to reduce supporting to state schools by encouraging private schools to establish.

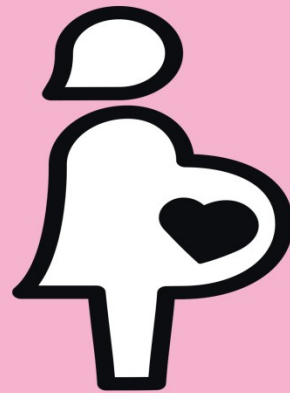
One oversight in Mekong Delta area had found that the number of female pupils in secondary schools had been decreased.

To be aware of this, the government had decided to continue supporting state school in this region.

How we exercise our role in Viet Nam ?

- Vietnam's Woman Parliamentary Group was established. Capacity of female MPs had been reinforcing through seminars and training courses.
- We persuade active male MPs to support us, like Dr. Phan Trong Khanh, the only male-delegate-head in this seminar.
- In Viet Nam we have a proverb that “soft bamboo string ties securely”. It means “The soft and flexible ways to get the goals is usually unbreakable”.
- So we know our goal, we go flexibly to this end, and we will arrive !

Thank you for your attention !



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**IMPROVE MATERNAL
HEALTH**