



HOW TO BE A **GENDER-** **RESPONSIVE** LEGISLATOR

SECOND EDITION 2021



HOW TO BE A **GENDER - RESPONSIVE** LEGISLATOR

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How to be a Gender-Responsive Legislator

Second Edition

ISBN: 978-9718701-22-5

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Published and Printed by:

Philippine Commission on Women
1145 J.P. Laurel Street, San Miguel
1005 Manila, Philippines

House of Representatives
Constitution Hills
Quezon City 1126, Philippines

March 2021

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FOREWORD



HON. LORD ALLAN JAY Q. VELASCO

Speaker

House of Representatives, 18th Congress



On behalf of the House of Representatives, I would like to congratulate the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) and the House Committee on Women and Gender Equality (CWGE) for updating and reprinting the “How to be a Gender-Responsive Legislator” Handbook, which was first published in 2001.

Throughout its imposing history, the voice of Congress has traditionally been the voice of men. While Congress has passed landmark laws that aims to empower women, and there had been distinguished champions of women’s rights and gender equality, there remains a lot to be done to dismantle the laws and policies that discriminate or otherwise impede the attainment of healthy and fulfilling lives of women and girls at many levels of our society.

Congress has the capacity to enact transformative laws for women and girls through its legislative priorities, structures, policies, and processes. The way and manner that legislative measures are written or debated in the plenary hall have a significant impact on the furtherance of women’s rights and gender equality. Our lawmakers need to be fully aware and be consistently gender-responsive when drafting their own speeches or legislative documents.

May this Handbook serve as our guide in ensuring that all legislative documents or measures that we craft in Congress are carefully seen through a more-gender responsive lens, amplifying the voice of women and other genders in our august institution, and ultimately contributing to the making of a society that allows genuine empowerment and autonomy of women towards the improvement of their political, social, economic, and health status.

Again, congratulations, at Mabuhay ang mga Mulat na Mambabatas! Mabuhay ang mga Kababaihan!

“...ensuring that all legislative documents or measures that we craft in Congress are carefully seen through a more-gender responsive lens, amplifying the voice of women and other genders...”

MESSAGE



Handwritten signature of Rhodora T. Masilang-Bucoy, PhD.

RHODORA T. MASILANG-BUCOY, PHD

*Chairperson
Philippine Commission on Women*



Legislature has a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and empowerment of women.

The Legislative branch can be a catalyst in overcoming gender disparities and advancing women's rights by giving priority to, among others, women's equal and meaningful participation in politics, provisions for decent work, ending violence against women and girls, decreasing maternal mortality and fulfilling the goal of social inclusion and shared prosperity in the legislative agenda. It is thus imperative for Congress to use the Gender and Development (GAD) perspective when it develops policy. GAD is the key towards the attainment of inclusive governance and effective democratic institutions.

GAD is the key towards the attainment of inclusive governance and effective democratic institutions.

Filipino women are happy that the Philippine Congress has enacted a number of landmark statutes promoting gender equality and women empowerment such as the Magna Carta of Women of 2009, the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012, the Anti-Mail Order Spouse Act of 2016, the Expanded Maternity Leave Law of 2018 and the Safe Spaces Act of 2019. However, much still needs to be done to erase the vestiges of discrimination in our laws, and proactively and effectively address the needs of women and girls.

This revised edition of the handbook for gender-responsive legislators can guide legislators, their staff and advocates in promoting women's rights as human rights and encouraging the rest of our people to share the same perspective. Aside from being a reference on basic GAD concepts and GAD mainstreaming process, this manual can be a tool to gauge the gender-responsiveness of the Philippine Congress.

I highly commend and appreciate the Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the House of Representatives (HOR) of the 18th Congress for collaborating with the Philippine Commission on Women for the production of this comprehensive handbook. I hope this handbook will lead to the passage of policies that can better address the marginalization of women and girls in the Philippines.

Let us all work together to strengthen the status of Filipino women so that we can get closer to our shared vision of a "*matatag, maginhawa at panatag na buhay*".

MESSAGE



REP. MA. LOURDES ACOSTA-ALBA

Chairperson

*Committee on Women and Gender Equality
House of Representatives, 18th Congress*



I am happy to recommend this handbook on “How to be a Gender-Responsive Legislator” for both legislators and non-legislators curious to be informed of the gender aspects of legislation.

The legislative process is a crucial arena towards women’s empowerment and gender equality. The legislature is an essential institution in the democratic landscape of our country. It is our obligation as legislators to ensure that all our output works to eliminate all forms of inequality and discrimination. As legislators, the laws that we create impact directly on the lives of our constituents. The process of crafting laws creates a platform for dialogue on issues that matter most in our society and should include women’s voices, their needs and priorities. Thus, this process presents a powerful mechanism to address and promote gender equality values and principles.

A gender-responsive legislation is not our goal, but our means to achieve gender equality.

Enacting a gender-responsive legislation is very crucial in mainstreaming women and gender framework into our governance framework. This means integration of gender lens into all components of the legislation process--design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation--in order to attain women’s empowerment and gender equality.

A gender-responsive legislation is not our goal, but our means to achieve gender equality.

The task is not easy, my fellow legislators and advocates. But we have warriors like you. Together, we can make a difference.

Maraming salamat! Mabuhay tayong lahat!

MESSAGE



REP. BERNADETTE "BH" HERRERA

Deputy Speaker, 18th Congress

*Chairperson, Committee on Women and Gender Equality, 17th Congress
House of Representatives*



Considering that the Philippines has made many significant milestones to climb and maintain its high ranking on the Global Gender Gap Report, do we still need a book on gender-responsive legislation?

Although we are globally recognized for our substantial strides and refined policies on women's empowerment and gender equality; gender-based injustice, discrimination, and violence still persist in the country, especially for the most vulnerable and marginalized sectors in our society. This handbook not only guides legislators on GAD factors to consider in the context of lawmaking, but also addresses the need to transform some of our laws that are still not gender-responsive, and even reinforce unfair gender biases and relations and bolster discriminatory practices against women.

In fact, these issues gave me, along with my fellow colleagues at the HOR, the impetus to draft and pass the Expanded Maternity Leave Law, allowing women of all sectors to have more time with their children while climbing the career ladder efficiently.

The PCW, together with the HOR, has produced a truly unique and fundamental book; one that combines the basic concepts of gender and gender-related issues and the process of creating transformative laws that address inequalities. It sheds light on how the legislative body has the capacity to prioritize or mainstream GAD issues, and efficiently implement policies that respond to the needs and interests of both men and women.

As public servants, we have the political responsibility and commitment to respond to the various needs of our diverse citizens. This handbook is intended for senators, congressional representatives, local legislators, and lawyers; yet, it is written in a way that is easy to follow and comprehend for all readers. This is one of those rare books that can benefit everyone. Any reader, expert or novice, can use it as a guide on gender-fair language or as a step-by-step crash course on how to apply gender lens in the drafting and passage of bills to strengthen legislation.

The PCW and HOR have certainly fulfilled the requirements, and my personal expectations, of this revised handbook. Every national and local public agency and higher education institution must have this book available in their libraries for reference.

Pag babae ang inangat, buong pamilya aangat.

Every national and local public agency and higher education institution must have this book available in their libraries for reference.

ACRONYMS

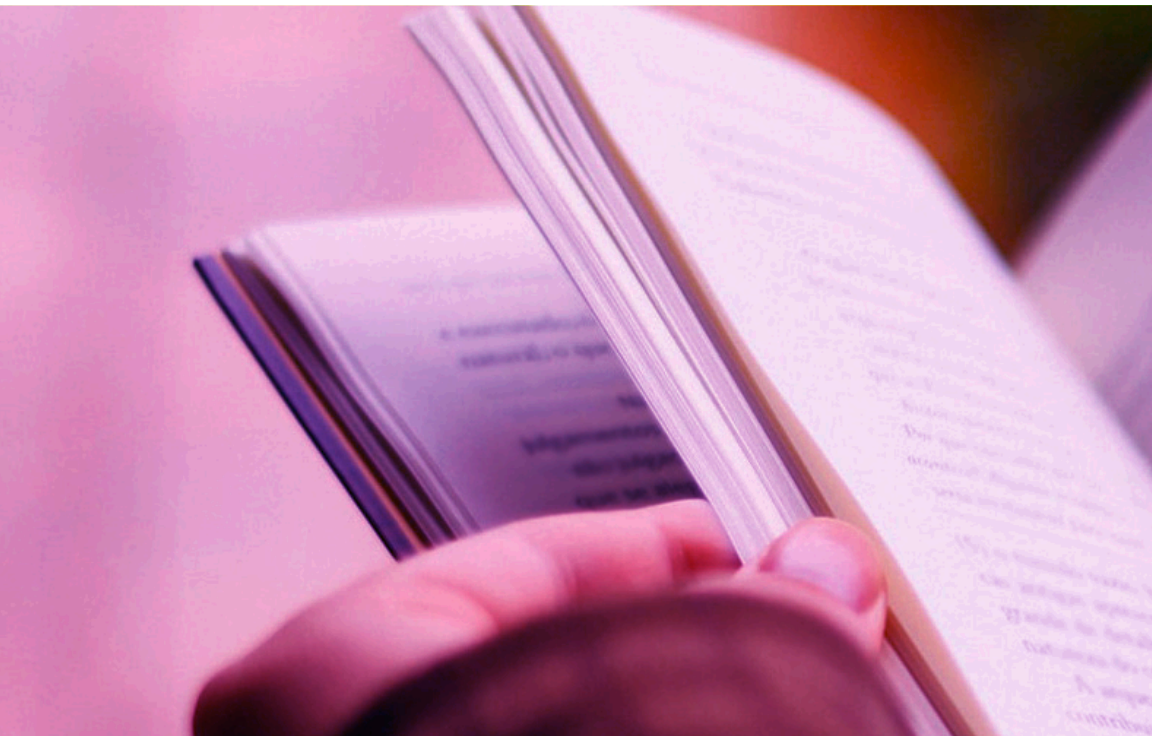
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DOH	Department of Health
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
GAD	Gender and Development
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HOR	House of Representatives
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
LGU	Local Government Unit
NCRFW	National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women
NDHS	National Demographic and Health Survey
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PCW	Philippine Commission on Women
PGN	Practical Gender Needs
PO	People's Organization
RTI	Reproductive Tract Infection
SDD	Sex Disaggregated Data
SGI	Strategic Gender Interests
SGN	Strategic Gender Needs
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infection
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN	United Nations
VAW	Violence Against Women
WEF	World Economic Forum
WHO	World Health Organization





ABOUT THE HANDBOOK





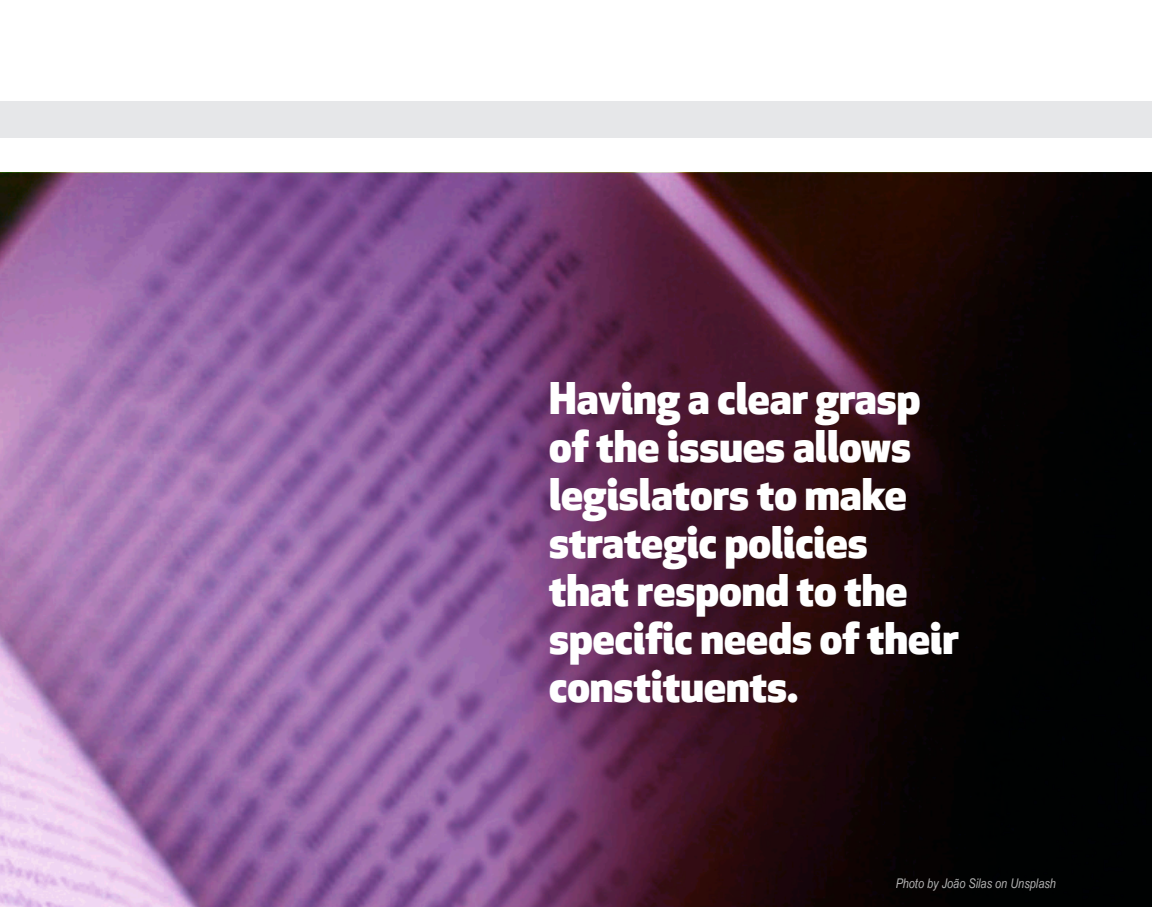
OBJECTIVES & PURPOSE

Lawmakers need to be able to identify and understand issues relating to gender. Having a clear grasp of the issues allows legislators to make strategic policies that respond to the specific needs of their constituents.

This handbook aims to provide legislators with basic information on GAD in the context of lawmaking. It answers questions that lawmakers may have on gender-responsive legislation. It discusses concepts such as gender, gender equality, GAD, and the role of legislature in gender mainstreaming. It presents mandates related to gender mainstreaming, as well as the Women's Priority Legislative Agenda of the PCW. For some historical background, it also traces the GAD-related milestones of the Philippine Congress throughout the years.

This handbook offers several possible uses:

- As a **guide** to help legislators take a critical look at the lawmaking processes and refine this toward gender responsiveness;
- As a **tool** to guide legislators in prioritizing legislative measures that address emerging gender and women's issues and concerns;
- As a **reference** on basic GAD concepts and on mainstreaming gender in the legislative process.



**Having a clear grasp
of the issues allows
legislators to make
strategic policies
that respond to the
specific needs of their
constituents.**

Photo by João Silas on Unsplash

USERS OF THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is useful to readers who want to understand how gender issues and concerns can--and should--inform the legislative process, and which include the following:

- Legislators;
- Lawyers;
- Bill drafters;
- Legislative/technical staff of legislative bodies.

STRUCTURE AND FRAMEWORK

The handbook begins with laying down the basic yet crucial concepts related to gender equality. It then proceeds to weave these concepts through the legislative process to properly contextualize GAD in lawmaking.

It also presents guide questions to ensure that every stage of the bill-drafting process is carried out with a gender lens. Finally, it discusses other recommendations for fully mainstreaming gender in the functions, tasks and initiatives of legislators.





GAD TERMS

LISTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER

Access – in the development context, the means or right to obtain services, products and commodities (NCRFW, 2003, p.21)

Access vs. Control – Access is an opportunity for a person to make use of existing political, economic and time resources or benefits. Control is the ability of a person to define the use of resources and impose this definition on others. (NCRFW, 2003, p.21)

Affirmative Action – a policy action that favors marginalized groups in society, such as women. While it is a special measure, it is not considered discriminatory since it aims to accelerate the attainment of equality between the dominant and marginalized groups. Affirmative action should not result in unequal or separate standards and must be continued even when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved. An example of an affirmative action is allocating 50 percent of top positions in the bureaucracy to women as an acknowledgment that socio-political conditions exist which prevent women from ascending to those positions. (PCW, 2013)

Care Work – work of looking after the physical, psychological, emotional and developmental needs of one or more other people (EIGE, n.d.)

Caring Masculinity – opposite of hegemonic masculinity; based on men taking care-giving roles (as involved fathers) instead of provider roles (as breadwinners) (EIGE, n.d.)

Discrimination against Women – refers to any gender-based distinction, exclusion, or restriction which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment, or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field (Republic Act No. 9710, Section 4b)

Economic abuse – refers to acts that make or attempt to make a woman financially dependent. This includes but is not limited to the following: (a) withdrawal of financial support or preventing the victim from engaging in any legitimate profession, occupation, business or activity, except in cases wherein the other spouse/partner objects on valid, serious and moral grounds as defined in Article 73 of the Family Code; (b) deprivation or threat of deprivation of financial resources and the right to the use and enjoyment of the conjugal, community or property owned in common; (c) destroying household property; (d) controlling the victim's own money or properties or solely controlling the conjugal money or properties (Republic Act No. 9262, Section 3aD)

Economic Marginalization – women being considered a non-essential force in the economy despite their crucial role in production and their contributions to development remain unrecognized or undervalued (PCW, 2013)

Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value – equal pay for work to which equal value is attributed, without discrimination on grounds of sex or marital status, with regard to all aspects of pay and conditions of remuneration (EIGE, n.d.)

Empowerment – In the context of development, empowerment is individual or collective action by the disadvantaged to overcome the obstacles brought about by structural inequality. In another sense, empowerment is not only a process but also an outcome of that process. (NCRFW, 2003, p.25)

Engender – to integrate, incorporate or mainstream the gender perspective in development initiatives (NCRFW, 2003, p.25)

Feminism – a worldwide movement that seeks to raise women's political, economic and social status and fights for gender equality in all aspects of life in all societies. The concepts underlying feminism continue to evolve according to the socio economic, political and cultural context in which the movement is taking place (NCRFW, 2003, p.7)

GAD Budget – a portion of an agency's or a local government unit's yearly appropriation which is not an additional amount over and above its regular budget; the allocation of a substantial amount for implementing programs, projects and activities that address gender issues and the cost and sources of financing a GAD plan (PCW, 2013)

GAD Focal Point System – a mechanism created in all government agencies and local government units (LGU) with the primary function of ensuring the development, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of agency/LGU GAD policies, programs and projects. It also serves as the advisory body on GAD-related matters; leads in assessing the policies, strategies and programs of agencies/LGUs with reference to the priority needs and concerns of women in their area/sector and the performance vis-à-vis GAD-related targets of their agency/LGU; generates statistics on the status of women personnel and clients; and, establishes strong linkages and partnerships with NGOs/POs that have integrated gender concerns in their institutions and promote their participation in the development planning cycle. (PCW, 2013)

GAD Perspective – ability to analyze the socioeconomic, political, cultural and psychological implications of an issue to understand how the difference between the sexes affects and is affected by policies, programs and projects. It assesses how these factors relate to discrimination based on sex and how they impose obstacles to a person's opportunities and self-development. (PCW, 2013)

Gender – refers to roles, attitudes and values assigned by culture and society to women and men. These roles, attitudes and values define the behaviors of women and men and the relationship between them. They are

created and maintained by social institutions such as families, governments, communities, schools, churches and media. Because of gender, certain roles, traits and characteristics are assigned or ascribed distinctly and strictly to women or to men. (NCRFW, 2003, p.11)

Note: Gender is defined under Republic Act No. 11313, Section 3d, as a "set of socially ascribed characteristics, norms, roles, attitudes, values, and expectations identifying the social behavior of men and women, and the relations between them."

Gender Analysis – a systematic way of analyzing and comparing: a) the differential perspectives, roles, needs and interests of women and men in a project area or institution; b) the relations between women and men pertaining to their access to and control over resources, benefits and decision-making processes; c) the potential differential impact of program or project interventions on women and men, girls and boys; and d) the social and cultural constraints, opportunities, and entry points for reducing gender inequalities and promoting more equal relations between women and men (PCW, 2013)

Gender and Development – refers to the development perspective and process that are participatory and empowering, equitable, sustainable, free from violence, respectful of human rights, supportive of self-determination and actualization of human potentials. It seeks to achieve gender equality as a fundamental value that should be reflected in development choices; seeks to transform society's social, economic, and political structures and questions the validity of the gender roles ascribed to women and men; contends that women are active agents of development and not just passive recipients of development assistance; and stresses the need of women to organize themselves and participate in political processes to strengthen their legal rights. (PCW, 2013)

Gender-Based Violence – is violence directed against a person because of their gender. Both women and men experience gender-based violence but the majority of victims are women and girls. There are different kinds of violence, including (but not limited to) physical, verbal, sexual, psychological, and socioeconomic violence.

Gender Budgeting – application of gender mainstreaming in the budgetary process. It entails a gender-based assessment of budgets, incorporating a gender perspective at all levels of the budgetary process, and restructuring revenues and expenditures in order to promote gender equality. (EIGE, n.d.)

Gender Discrimination – overt behavior in which people are given different and unfavorable treatment on the basis of their race, class, sex, and cultural status; any practice, policy or procedure that denies equality of treatment to an individual or group. In the terminology of the United Nations CEDAW, it is any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex, which has the purpose or effect of denying

equal exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of human endeavor. (PCW, 2013)

Gender Division of Labor – the allocation of differential tasks, roles, responsibilities and activities to women and men according to what is considered socially and culturally appropriate. The production/reproduction divide, or the public/private dichotomy, illustrates the gender division of labor. Production, which is paid work done outside the home and in the public arena, is usually attributed to men because of their role as primary breadwinner for the family. Reproduction, on the other hand, is unpaid, domestic work assigned primarily to women and may include such tasks as managing the household, doing household chores, taking care of and nurturing children and other family members. This is mostly done within the private domain of the home. (NCRFW, 2003, p.12)

Gender Equality – refers to the principle asserting the equality of women and men and their right to enjoy equal conditions realizing their full human potentials to contribute to and benefit from the results of development, and with the State recognizing that all human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights (PCW, 2013)

Gender Equity – refers to the policies, instruments, programs, services, and actions that address the disadvantaged position of women in society by providing preferential treatment and affirmative action. Such temporary special measures aimed at accelerating *de facto* equality between men and women shall not be considered discriminatory but shall in no way entail as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards. These measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved. (PCW, 2013)

Gender-Fair Society – a society where women and men share equally in responsibilities, power, authority and decision making (NCRFW, 2003, p.14)

Gender Gap – the gap between women and men in terms of how they benefit from education, employment, services, and so on (NCRFW, 2003, p.14)

Gender Issues and Concerns – problems and concerns that arise from the unequal status of women and men including the differential characteristics, roles and expectations attributed by society to women and men. These societal expectations and perceptions, which are reflected in and perpetuated by laws, policies, procedures, systems, programs, projects and activities of government, could impede women's full development and their participation in and equal enjoyment of the fruits of development. Common gender issues are political subordination, economic marginalization, disempowerment, discrimination, stereotyping, multiple burdens, violence against women and personal dehumanization. (PCW, 2013)

Gender Mainstreaming – refers to the strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic, and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. It is the process of assessing the implications to women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies, or programs in all areas and at all levels. (PCW, 2013)

Gender Neutral – means that something is not associated with either women or men. It may refer to various aspects such as concepts or style of language. However, what is often perceived to be gender-neutral, including in areas of statistics or dissemination of data collected in reference to a population, often reflects gender blindness in practice (a failure to recognize gender specificities). (EIGE, n.d.)

Gender Norms – standards and expectations to which women and men generally conform, within a range that defines a particular society, culture and community at that point in time (EIGE, n.d.)

Gender Quota – positive measurement instrument aimed at accelerating the achievement of gender-balanced participation and representation by establishing a defined proportion (percentage) or number of places or seats to be filled by, or allocated to, women and/or men, generally under certain rules or criteria (EIGE, n.d.)

Gender Responsiveness – the consistent and systematic attention given to the differences between women and men in society with a view to addressing structural constraints to gender equality (NCRFW, 2003, p.34)

Gender Roles – are culturally defined attitudes, behaviors and social positions that are based on sex (NCRFW, 2003, p.15)

Gender Sensitivity – the ability to recognize gender issues and women’s different perceptions and interests arising from their different social position and gender roles (NCRFW, 2003, p.15)

Gender Statistics – are statistics that incorporate a combination of the following: sex-disaggregated data (SDD) that reflect gender issues and inequalities, data that highlight the realities and diversity of the lives of women and men, and data collected using methods and concepts that account for gender biases present in the traditional collection methods (United Nations, 2016)

Gender Stereotyping – unexamined images, ideas or beliefs associated with a particular group that have become fixed in a person’s mind and are not open to change (e.g. women are perceived as weak, dependent, subordinate, indecisive, emotional and submissive and their roles, functions and abilities are seen to be primarily tied to the home) (PCW, 2013)

Gender Subordination – submission, sometimes due to force or violence, or being under the authority of one sex, often resulting in women having no control over available resources and having no personal autonomy (PCW, 2013)

Marginalization – refers to a condition where a whole category of people is excluded from useful and meaningful participation in political, economic, social, and cultural life (Republic Act No. 9710, Section 4c)

Marginalized – refers to the basic, disadvantaged, or vulnerable persons or groups who are mostly living in poverty and have little or no access to land and other resources, basic social and economic services such as health care, education, water and sanitation, employment and livelihood opportunities, housing, social security, physical infrastructure, and the justice system (Republic Act No. 9710, Section 4d)

Multiple Burden – a situation referring to the heavy workload of women and the many, overlapping tasks involved consisting of unpaid reproductive work, paid productive work, community management, and all other work necessary for the survival of the family (PCW, 2013)

Patriarchy – the “rule of the father” or a universal political structure that favors men over women. It was originally used by anthropologists to describe the social structure in which one old man, the patriarch, has absolute power over everyone else in the family. Male domination of political power and domination that maintains an unjust system for the benefit of the rulers at the expense of the ruled. (NCRFW, 2003, p.18)

Physical violence – refers to acts that include bodily or physical harm (Republic Act No. 9262, Section 3aA)

Positive Masculinity – a paradigm that highlights the positive characteristics of males as supportive partners, clients and positive agents of change in sexual and reproductive health and rights, and maternal, newborn and child health

Practical vs. Strategic Gender Needs – the needs of women and men come out of existing gender roles, and are characterized as practical and strategic. Practical gender needs (PGNs) are met through actions that assist women and men to perform existing gender roles more easily. Strategic gender needs (SGNs) are addressed through actions that challenge or change existing gender roles. Addressing the needs of women and men may change existing gender roles (NCRFW, 2003, p.36)

Psychological violence – refers to acts or omissions causing or likely to cause mental or emotional suffering of the victim such as but not limited to intimidation, harassment, stalking, damage to property, public ridicule or humiliation, repeated verbal abuse and marital infidelity. It includes causing or allowing the victim to witness the physical, sexual or

psychological abuse of a member of the family to which the victim belongs, or to witness pornography in any form or to witness abusive injury to pets or to unlawful or unwanted deprivation of the right to custody and/or visitation of common children. (Republic Act No. 9262, Section 3aC)

Rape Culture – complex of beliefs that encourages male sexual aggression and supports violence against women (EIGE, n.d.)

Reproductive Health – the state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. This implies that people are able to have satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. (PCW, 2013)

Reproductive Health Care – the constellation of methods, techniques and services that contribute to reproductive health and well-being by preventing and solving reproductive health-related problems. The elements of reproductive health care according to the Department of Health (DOH) include: (1) maternal, infant and child health and nutrition; (2) family planning services, counselling and information; (3) prevention and control of abortion and its complications; (4) adolescent reproductive health; (5) treatment of reproductive tract infections (RTIs) and sexually transmittable infections (STIs) including human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection; (6) services to victims/survivors of violence against women (VAW); (7) information, education and communication on human sexuality, reproductive health and responsible parenthood; (8) management and treatment of reproductive cancers; (9) male involvement in reproductive health; and (10) prevention and treatment of infertility. (PCW, 2013)

Reproductive Rights – Human rights that are already recognised in national laws, international laws and international human rights documents and other consensus documents resting on the recognition of the basic rights 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, and the right to attain the highest standard of sexual and reproductive health (EIGE, n.d.)

Sex – refers to the natural distinguishing variable based on biological characteristics of being a woman or a man. It refers to physical attributes pertaining to a person's body contours, features, genitals, hormones, genes, chromosomes and reproductive organs. (NCRFW, 2003, p.11)

Sexism – the system and practice of discriminating against a person on the basis of sex (NCRFW, 2003, p.19)

Sex-Disaggregated Data – statistical information that differentiates between women and men and allows one to see where the gaps are in their position or condition (NCRFW, 2003, p.38)

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression – Sexual orientation describes a person's enduring physical, romantic, and/or emotional attraction to another person (for example: straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual) while gender identity refers to one's internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or as someone outside of that gender binary) (GLAAD, n.d.). Gender expression refers to the External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine (HRC, n.d.)

Sex Roles – are those that are based on an occupation, such as being a housewife, or a biological function, such as motherhood (NCRFW, 2003, p.15)

Sexual Violence – refers to an act which is sexual in nature, committed against a woman or her child. It includes, but is not limited to: (a) rape, sexual harassment, acts of lasciviousness, treating a woman or her child as a sex object, making demeaning and sexually suggestive remarks, physically attacking the sexual parts of the victim's body, forcing her/him to watch obscene publications and indecent shows or forcing the woman or her child to do indecent acts and/or make films thereof, forcing the wife and mistress/lover to live in the conjugal home or sleep together in the same room with the abuser; (b) acts causing or attempting to cause the victim to engage in any sexual activity by force, threat of force, physical or other harm or threat of physical or other harm or coercion; (c) prostituting the woman or her child (Republic Act No. 9262, Section 3aB)

Shared Parenting – involvement of both parents in their child's upbringing

Tokenism – policy or practice that is mainly symbolic, and involves attempting to fulfil one's obligations with regard to established targets, such as voluntary or mandated gender quotas, with limited efforts or gestures, especially towards minority groups and women, in ways that will not change men-dominated power and/or organizational arrangements (EIGE, n.d.)

Unpaid Care Work – refers to all unpaid services provided within a household for its members, including care of persons, housework and voluntary community work (Elson, 2000)

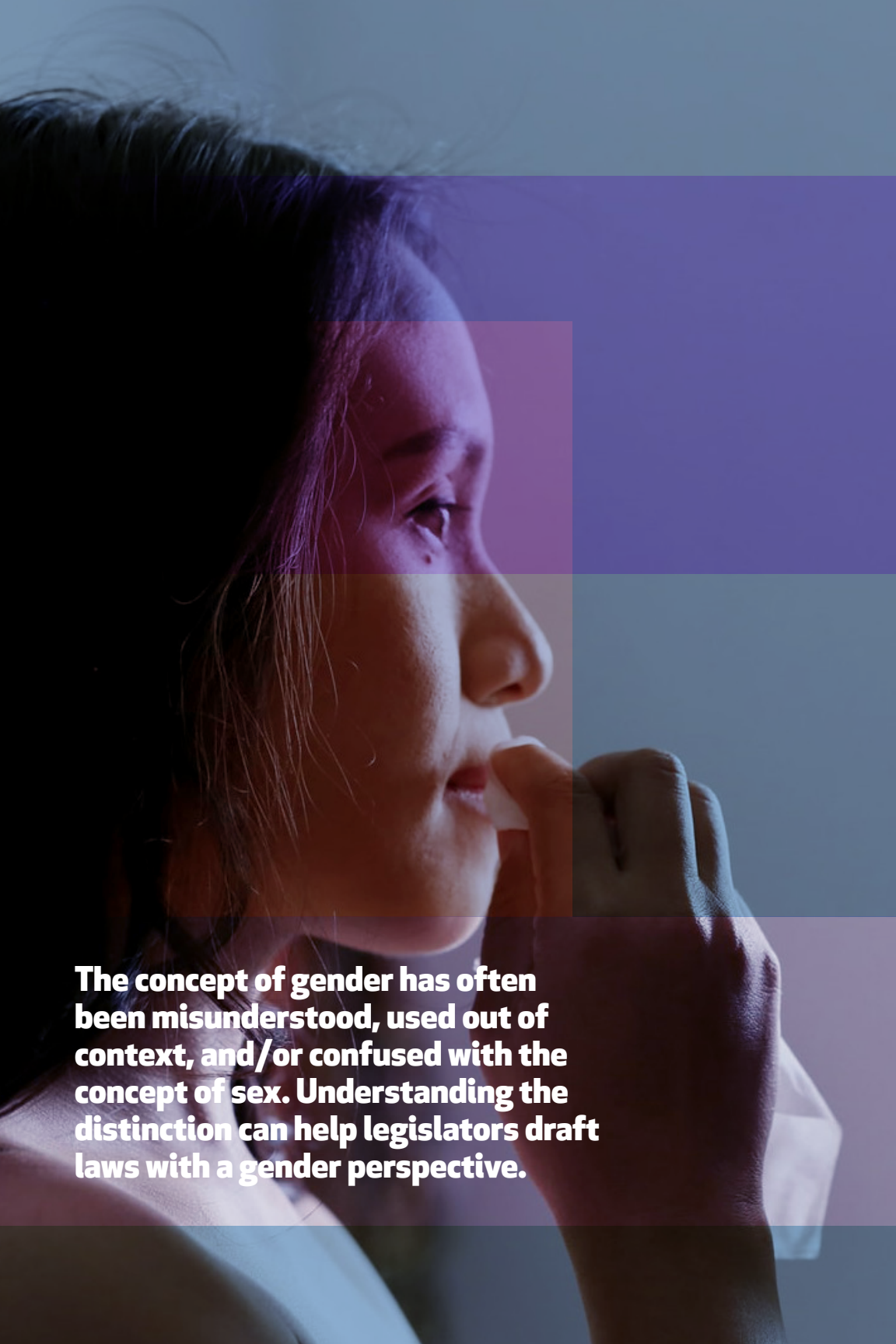
Violence Against Women – any act of gender-based violence that results in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (PCW, 2013)

Women's Empowerment – refers to the provision, availability, and accessibility of opportunities, services, and observance of human rights which enable women to actively participate in and contribute to the

political, economic, social, and cultural development of the nation as well as those which shall provide them equal access to ownership, management, and control of production, and of material and informational resources and benefits in the family, community, and society (PCW, 2013)

Work-Life Balance – achieving balance between not only domestic tasks and caring for dependent relatives, but also extracurricular responsibilities or other important life priorities (EIGE, n.d.)



A close-up, profile view of a woman with dark hair, looking off to the side. Her hand is raised near her mouth, with her fingers slightly curled. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue and purple gradient. The image has a contemplative and artistic feel.

The concept of gender has often been misunderstood, used out of context, and/or confused with the concept of sex. Understanding the distinction can help legislators draft laws with a gender perspective.



I.

UNDERSTANDING THE BASIC GAD CONCEPTS



Gender

Gender is a set of characteristics identifying the social behavior of women and men, and the relations between them. It includes particular traits, roles, capacities and behaviors that are attributed distinctly to women and men.

The concept of gender varies across societies. For example, in Philippine society and culture, housework is an activity largely assigned to women; while income generation is a primary activity for men. The Filipino myth of *Malakas* and *Maganda* also prescribes the appropriate traits for Filipino males and females. Men are physically strong protectors; females are delicate beauties.

Stated simply, gender differences between women and men relate to functions, roles and responsibilities as dictated and perpetuated by society and culture.

Sex and Gender

While “gender” refers to differences that are socially constructed, “sex” relates to the biological characteristics of being a woman or a man. These characteristics include body features, hormones, genitals, genes or chromosomes. To further distinguish between the two, “male” and “female” are sex categories and relate to the biological differences between men and women, while “feminine” and “masculine” are gender categories that refer to the distinct sets of attributes that society assigns to women and men. (WHO, n.d.)

The concept of gender has often been misunderstood, used out of context, and/or confused with the concept of sex. Understanding the distinction can help legislators draft laws with a gender perspective.



Gender and Human Rights

The concept of gender equality can be further understood using the human rights perspective. The United Nations (UN) Charter, of which the Philippines is a signatory, provides for “equal rights of women and men.” It also places on States—as primary duty-bearer—the responsibility of respecting, protecting, promoting and fulfilling the human rights of women and men.

Despite this and subsequent treaties and international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), women continue to be subjected to gender-based discrimination in all spheres. For instance:

One in four (26%) ever-married women aged 15 to 49 has experienced physical, sexual or emotional violence by their husband or partner. (NDHS, 2017)

The labor force participation of Filipino women (i.e., the percentage of women who have or are looking for work) is 51.4%. In contrast, labor force participation of Filipino men is at 76.9%. (WEF, 2018)

Despite the passage of the Magna Carta of Women in 2009, which mandates, among others, the review and repeal or amendment of laws that are discriminatory against women within three years from its passage, there are still laws that perpetuate gender inequality. These include the Revised Penal Code provisions on concubinage and adultery, which impose unequal penalty and standards of fidelity on men and women.

Legislators who have cultivated a gender perspective should be able to recognize that inequalities—especially those that are based on or intersect with gender—abound in the society. Moreover, they should be able to appreciate that, as state actors, it is their duty to close these gaps through legislation so that both women and men can equally exercise their fundamental human rights.

Gender Issues

In essence, a “gender issue” is a problem or concern that arises out of the unequal position of women and men. Society dictates gender roles and imposes gender expectations on women and men. These gender norms result in women being limited in terms of their opportunities and activities. This restriction undermines their human rights, limits their growth, and curtails their potential to meaningfully contribute to and benefit from national development.

Gender issues or gender-based discrimination are manifested in different ways. These include (NCRFW, 2003):

- **Multiple burden or double day**, or the condition in which women perform several tasks and responsibilities despite their limited time and energy. This multiple burden refers to doing unpaid work in the home, paid work as a member of the workforce, and volunteer work in the community.
- **Marginalization**, where women’s participation in development is limited to traditional programs and projects, especially those related to maternal and child care, day care centers and nutrition. It results in failure to recognize women’s concerns in other areas, particularly within the economic sectors. Hence, women are unable to develop their full potential.
- **Subordination**, or the secondary status of women in society. Because of this, women have less access to and control over development resources and benefits.
- **Gender stereotyping**, or the tendency to assign fixed, unquestioned and unexamined beliefs and perceptions about women and men.
- **Gender-based violence**, whether threatened or actual, perpetrated on women simply because they are women. It includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, rape, incest, pornography, battering, trafficking, and abuse whether psychological, verbal or economic. These acts of violence reinforce male dominance over women.
- Obstacles to personal development that arise from gender bias and have a direct negative impact on a person’s sense of self-worth.

Gender Equality

“Gender equality” refers to the principle asserting the equality of men and women and their right to enjoy equal conditions, realizing their full human potentials to contribute to and benefit from the results of development, and with the State recognizing that all human beings are equal in dignity and rights. (Magna Carta of Women, 2009, Section 4f.)

Gender equality does not mean that women and men become the same. It only means access to opportunities and life changes should neither be dependent on, nor be constrained by, a person’s





sex. Because women have occupied a position subordinate to men, achieving gender equality requires empowering women to ensure that decision-making at private and public levels, and access to resources are no longer weighted in men's favor. This should lead to both women and men fully participating as equal partners in productive and reproductive life. (UNFPA, 2005)

Gender Equality as a Key Factor in Development

Gender equality is a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty in a country. For one, because of the care work assigned by society to women, they contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities, and they improve prospects for the next generation.⁷

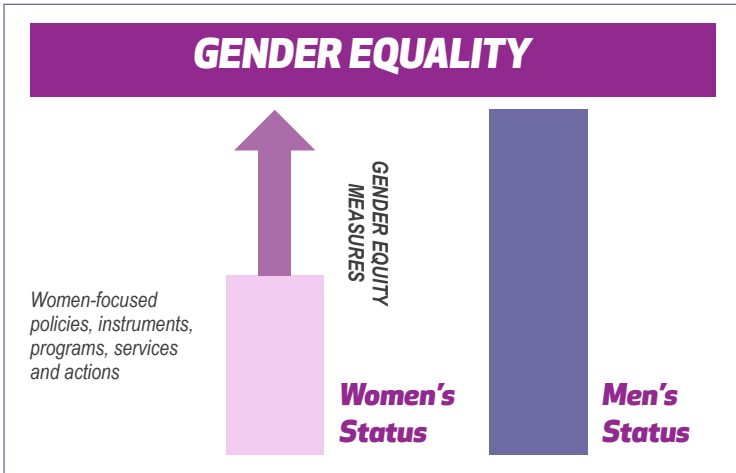
But the potential of women to contribute to national development goes beyond care work. A 2015 McKinsey report found that narrowing the global gender gap in work could double the contribution of women to the growth of global gross domestic product (GDP) between 2014 and 2025. The report presented two scenarios, both showing the importance of gender equality to global economic development. First, if all economies matched the level of improvement (in terms of closing the gender gap in work) of the best in their region, the result would be an additional \$12 trillion in global GDP in the same period. Second, if all economies are able to transform so that all women and men identically participate in the economy, this could add up to \$28 trillion in global GDP, resulting in the eradication of global poverty.

The report also said that gender equality at work can only be possible if and when gender equality in society is sufficiently addressed. This underscores the importance of putting serious effort in empowering women in order to achieve gender equality--a key for progress in society.

Gender Equity

If gender equality is the goal, “gender equity” is the mechanism to address the disadvantaged position of women in society by providing preferential treatment and affirmative action in the form of policies, instruments, programs, services and actions.

One might ask, is this “preferential treatment” not considered discriminatory against men? The Magna Carta of Women (2009) provides that these special measures are merely temporary and are meant to be discontinued when the objectives (i.e., equality of opportunity and treatment) have been achieved. Because they are merely aimed at accelerating the *de facto* equality between women and men, they shall not be considered discriminatory.



In other words, gender equity is akin to the concept of social justice, which enjoins the state to provide more interventions that are targeted to the marginalized so that they may benefit more equally from the resources of the state. Gender equity requires putting in place women-focused policies, enabling mechanisms, programs, services, actions and interventions to “compensate for women’s historical and social disadvantages that prevent women and men from otherwise operating on a level playing field” (UNFPA, 2005)

Let’s take the context of rescue and evacuation during times of disaster. The practice of giving the same set of relief goods to women and men may be “fair,” but not equitable. Gender equity dictates that teenage and adult female evacuees should also be given hygiene kits with sanitary napkins, while new mothers should receive milk, vaccines, and other provisions for their infants’ needs, in addition to the items distributed to all.

Gender equity requires taking that extra step to ensure that men and women, in consideration of their unique positions (e.g., age, disability, ethnicity and culture, etc.) receive the right proportion and types of goods, services, and facilities that meet their differentiated needs, capacities and experiences.

Gender Mainstreaming

The Magna Carta of Women (2009) has identified gender mainstreaming to be the strategy for achieving gender equality. Gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing and taking into account the impact on women and men of any planned action—including legislation, policies or programs—at all levels and in all spheres. It means placing gender issues at the center of broad policy and programme decisions, institutional structures and resource allocation.

Mainstreaming gender requires attention to two basic considerations. First, gender injustice has many dimensions, including the cultural and structural. Second, since gender injustice is a complex problem, gender mainstreaming requires mapping out and prioritizing important intervention areas.

There is no set formula or blueprint for gender mainstreaming that is applicable across all possible contexts. However, what is common to mainstreaming in whatever sector or for whatever development issue is that the problem of gender equality is recognized and brought into the “mainstream” of activities rather than dealt with as an “add-on.”

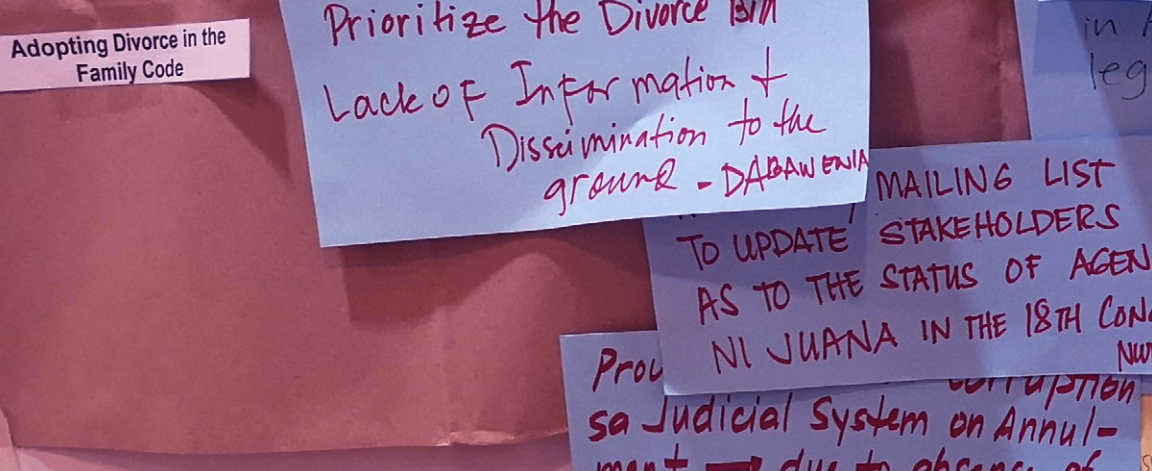
Gender mainstreaming starts with an assessment of how and why gender differences and inequalities are relevant to the subject under discussion. From there, it proceeds to identifying opportunities to narrow these inequalities, and deciding on the approach to be taken. (UNDP, 2008)

Policy Landscape

The focus on gender equality finds basis in several national mandates and international commitments.

National Mandates

- **Article II, Section 14 of the 1987 Constitution** explicitly recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and mandates the State to ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men.
- **Republic Act No. 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992** promotes the integration of women as full and equal partners of men in development and nation building.
- **General Appropriations Act of 1995** introduced a GAD budget provision requiring all government agencies, departments, bureaus, schools as well as LGUs to allocate at least five percent (5%) of their total annual budget for gender-responsive programs, projects and activities.
- **Philippine Plan for Gender-Responsive Development 1995-2025** is the thirty-year plan that carries the country's long-term vision of women's empowerment and gender equality. It mandates every government administration to develop time-bound framework plans for women.
- **Republic Act No. 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women (MCW) of 2009** seeks to eliminate discrimination against women by recognizing, protecting, fulfilling and promoting the rights of Filipino women, especially those in the marginalized sectors. It reiterates the above-quoted Constitutional policy and stresses the concept of substantive equality.

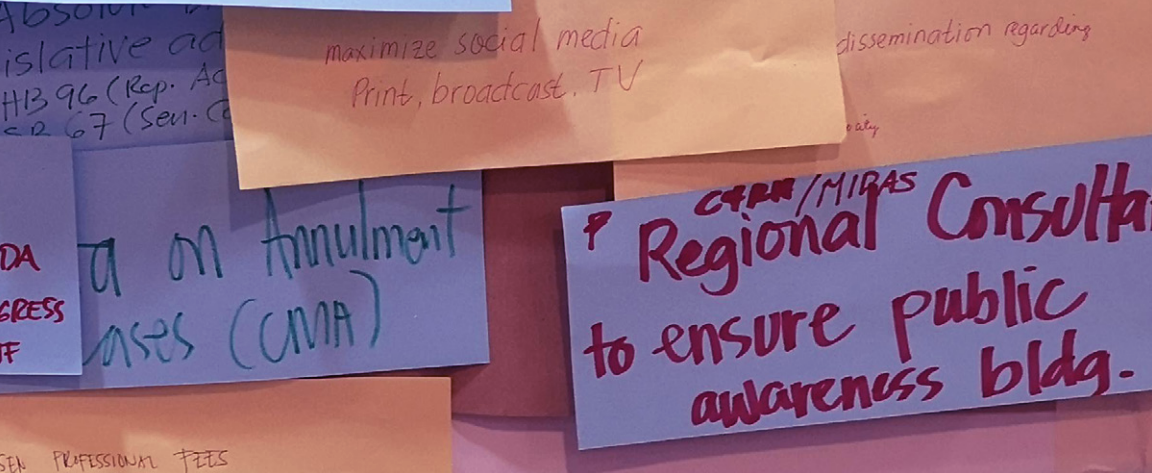


International Mandates

- **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)** is a UN human rights treaty that affirms the rights of women. As a signatory thereof, the Philippines committed to take measures against all forms of discrimination and exploitation of women. The CEDAW also defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination.
- **Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)** was the resulting document of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China, in 1995, adopted in consensus by the UN. During this Conference, participating governments and the UN agreed to promote gender mainstreaming as a strategy to ensure that a gender perspective is reflected in all policies and programmes at the national, regional and international levels. The BPfA represents the international community's commitment towards the promotion of women's welfare.
- **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)**, officially known as "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development," is a set of 17 aspirational "Global Goals" with 169 targets. SDG 5 is focused on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. In addition, some of the targets of the other goals are also informed by gender equality as a cross-cutting goal.

Other International Commitments

- Convention on the Political Rights of Women
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
- Commission on the Status of Women
- ASEAN Committee on Women
- ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children
- International Labor Organization
- United Nations Security Council Resolutions
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- Women in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation



Gender Mainstreaming as an Imperative Action to Uplift the Actual Status of Filipino Women

Mainstreaming gender equality in the legislative process is expected to contribute to the effective implementation and oversight of legislation, and give rise to policies that address the needs and interests of both men and women. There is an urgent call for government—including its legislative branch—to mainstream gender in their respective mandates, not only to fulfil political duties and commitments, but also to uplift the situation of Filipino women.

The Philippines is known worldwide for its massive efforts and progressive policies on gender equality and women's empowerment.¹ Yet, various forms of gender-based violence, discrimination and injustice remain prevalent and are felt by women, especially those from the marginalized and vulnerable groups. For example:

- The incidence of gender-based violence remains high;
- Disparities still exist between women and men in terms of labor force participation despite the higher functional literacy rate of women;
- Teenage pregnancy is increasing at an alarming rate, especially in rural areas, particularly in the Cordillera Region (CAR);
- While women and girls from the National Capital Region and other urban areas have equal access to education, many of those from rural areas, including regions in Mindanao, are lagging behind;
- Political participation of women remains weak with a ratio of 20:80 (or 25%) women vis-à-vis men holding ministerial positions in the government.

Thus, while the State's initiative to promote gender equality and women's empowerment is laudable, a lot more needs to be done in order to achieve substantive equality for women and men.

¹ In the 2018 Global Gender Gap Index of the World Economic Forum, the Philippines placed seventh (8th) in overall ranking. It is the only country in Asia to have consistently placed in the top 10 since 2006.

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a person's hands writing in a notebook. The person is holding a blue pen and writing on a white page. A black smartphone is resting on the notebook. The background is out of focus, showing a person wearing a blue plaid shirt. The lighting is warm and soft.

**With the power that it wields,
the institution can create
laws that could transform
social structures and cultural
norms that perpetuate
gender injustice.**



II.

GENDER

MAINSTREAMING
AND THE LEGISLATURE

Role of Legislature in Gender Mainstreaming

The Philippine Congress plays a vital role in shifting society's perspective on human rights, social justice and equality. With the power that it wields, the institution can create laws that could transform social structures and cultural norms that perpetuate gender injustice. Within the legislative process, women's experiences can be articulated, and societal imbalances and inequalities corrected.

It is also worth remembering that legislators are elected to their positions to represent their constituencies. The representative nature of Congress makes its members accountable to the people, and enjoins them to respond to their needs and interests through the legislative measures that they enact. From a gender perspective, this also means legislators should guarantee that the diverse needs of their constituencies are well represented and addressed in their legislative work.

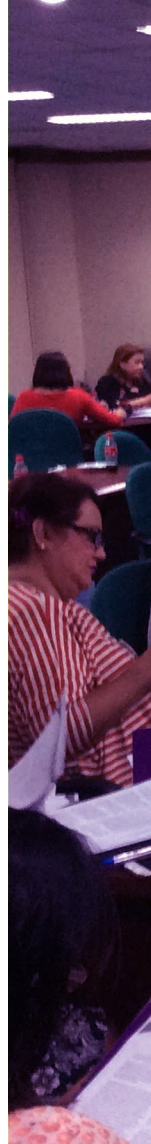
Given its defined legislative functions, how can Congress go about mainstreaming gender? The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in its publication, "Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: Towards Parliaments That Respond to the Needs and Interests of Both Men and Women in Their Structures, Operations, Methods and Work," (2011) suggests having the legislative body assume the responsibility of mainstreaming gender in its work processes, outputs and functions such as legislating, overseeing and representing.

What are some of the interventions that members of the legislative branch can start with?

- Consult with a broad range of local and national groups, including women's organizations, NGOs, unions and the academe to flesh out and further understand gender issues;
- Initiate and support bills intended to promote gender equality, such as those found in the Women's Priority Legislative Agenda;
- Conduct gender analysis of existing laws and bills filed;
- Elevate the gender discourse within its halls by raising questions about the effect of proposed laws on men and women during the plenary sessions;
- During budget defense season, look into whether the budget allocation and appropriation of agencies is equitable for men and women; and,
- Overall, advocate for gender-responsive legislation.

In summary, there are two major areas of opportunities where legislators can advance gender equality. First, using their lawmaking power, members of the Congress have the authority and responsibility to enact transformative laws and prioritize legislative measures that address prevailing gender issues. After all, as public servants, legislators need to ensure that women constituents enjoy their rights without fear of discrimination and achieve their full potential in the process.

Second, in carrying out their oversight function, legislators can also scrutinize agencies on program effectiveness and judicious spending in relation to gender equality goals. Similarly, legislators can also monitor the implementation of GAD-related laws and policies, regional and international instruments promoting gender equality and the elimination of discrimination. To effectively perform this oversight role, lawmakers need to be aware of the national, regional and international frameworks on gender.





Towards Gender-Responsive Legislation

Laws are instruments recognized and used to govern and regulate the affairs of society. To make sure that the legislature approach lawmaking with a gender perspective, it needs to develop an adequate legal framework for gender equality. Such framework should cover a broad range of non-discrimination measures vital to achieving progress for men and women. In addition, developing plans of action with specific concrete measures would also help the body in identifying the gaps in their legislation and overall policy objectives.

Levels of Gender Mainstreaming in Legislation

Developing a gender perspective is a process that takes time and practice. To guide lawmakers in their journey towards gender-responsive legislation, here are the levels of gender mainstreaming in lawmaking:

- **Gender-discriminatory.** This is exemplified by laws that blatantly exclude or restrict women's access to certain services, privileges and opportunities, merely on account of their sex. As a consequence, these laws impair or nullify the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Example:

Inequality of Women and Men in Marriage and Family Relations

Articles 14², 96³, 124⁴ and 225⁵ of the Family Code give preference to the decision of the husband/father over that of the wife/mother in case of disagreements on domestic matters such as parental consent to marry, the administration of the absolute and conjugal partnership properties, legal guardianship of common children, and the

² Art. 14. In case either or both of the contracting parties, not having been emancipated by a previous marriage, are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, they shall, in addition to the requirements of the preceding articles, exhibit to the local civil registrar, the consent to their marriage of their father, mother, surviving parent or guardian, or persons having legal charge of them, in the order mentioned. Such consent shall be manifested in writing by the interested party, who personally appears before the proper local civil registrar, or in the form of an affidavit made in the presence of two witnesses and attested before any official authorized by law to administer oaths. The personal manifestation shall be recorded in both applications for marriage license, and the affidavit, if one is executed instead, shall be attached to said applications.

³ Art. 96. The administration and enjoyment of the community property shall belong to both spouses jointly. In case of disagreement, the husband's decision shall prevail, subject to recourse to the court by the wife for proper remedy, which must be availed of within five years from the date of the contract implementing such decision.

In the event that one spouse is incapacitated or otherwise unable to participate in the administration of the common properties, the other spouse may assume sole powers of administration. These powers do not include disposition or encumbrance without authority of the court or the written consent of the other spouse. In the absence of such authority or consent, the disposition or encumbrance shall be void. However, the transaction shall be construed as a continuing offer on the part of the consenting spouse and the third person, and may be perfected as a binding contract upon the acceptance by the other spouse or authorization by the court before the offer is withdrawn by either or both offerors.

⁴ Art. 124. The administration and enjoyment of the conjugal partnership shall belong to both spouses jointly. In case of disagreement, the husband's decision shall prevail, subject to recourse to the court by the wife for proper remedy, which must be availed of within five years from the date of the contract implementing such decision.

In the event that one spouse is incapacitated or otherwise unable to participate in the administration of the conjugal properties, the other spouse may assume sole powers of administration. These powers do not include disposition or encumbrance without authority of the court or the written consent of the other spouse. In the absence of such authority or consent, the disposition or encumbrance shall be void. However, the transaction shall be construed as a continuing offer on the part of the consenting spouse and the third person, and may be perfected as a binding contract upon the acceptance by the other spouse or authorization by the court before the offer is withdrawn by either or both offerors.

⁵ Art. 225. The father and the mother shall jointly exercise legal guardianship over the property of the unemancipated common child without the necessity of a court appointment. In case of disagreement, the father's decision shall prevail, unless there is a judicial order to the contrary.

Where the market value of the property or the annual income of the child exceeds P50,000, the parent concerned shall be required to furnish a bond in such amount as the court may determine, but not less than ten per centum (10%) of the value of the property or annual income, to guarantee the performance of the obligations prescribed for general guardians.

A verified petition for approval of the bond shall be filed in the proper court of the place where the child resides, or, if the child resides in a foreign country, in the proper court of the place where the property or any part thereof is situated.

The petition shall be docketed as a summary special proceeding in which all incidents and issues regarding the performance of the obligations referred to in the second paragraph of this Article shall be heard and resolved.

The ordinary rules on guardianship shall be merely suppletory except when the child is under substitute parental authority, or the guardian is a stranger, or a parent has remarried, in which case the ordinary rules on guardianship shall apply.



administration of the children's properties. Such distinction has no basis other than the sex of the subject. These provisions automatically give the husband/father the power to decide and completely divest the wife/mother of any part in the decision-making process unless she resorts to judicial action. This is discriminatory to women because it blindly presumes that "the man of the house" always knows what is best for the family while the woman is unable to make a sound judgment.

- **Gender-neutral laws** are those that are not specifically aimed at either women or men and are assumed to affect both sexes equally. However, they may actually preserve existing gender inequalities, particularly those which women and men from disadvantaged groups are subjected to. Gender-neutral policies do not necessarily promote substantive gender equality. They are also referred to as "gender-blind." Gender-blind projects, programmes, policies and attitudes do not take into account the different roles and diverse needs of men and women. They therefore maintain the status quo and does not help transform the unequal structure of gender relations. (EIGE, n.d.)

Example:

Laws which define political parties and provide requirements for their registration (Batas Pambansa Bilang 881 or the Omnibus Election Code, as amended and Republic Act No. 7941 or the Party-List System Act) are not gender-specific because their provisions apply to all. While being gender-neutral, these laws also fail to recognize the historically low level of women's political participation. According to Comelec data on the 2016 National and Local Elections turnout, despite the larger share of registered voters, women made up only 19.36% of the candidates and 21.45% of those elected.

- **Gender-sensitive** laws recognize and acknowledge the differences in roles, needs, and perspectives of women and men, the possible asymmetries in power imbalances in their relationship, and the possibility that actions or interventions will have different effects on, and results for, women and men based on their gender. However, gender-sensitive laws do not actively seek to address these issues.

Example:

Protection or Restriction?

Articles 130⁶ and 131⁷ of the Labor Code (1974), as amended, prohibited women from working at night. A review of the provision showed that while these provisions intended to protect women from violence and other hazards, it limited their mobility, failed to consider their economic burdens, and restricted their labor force participation in the context of

⁶ Art. 130. Nightwork prohibition. No woman, regardless of age, shall be employed or permitted or suffered to work, with or without compensation:

1. In any industrial undertaking or branch thereof between ten o'clock at night and six o'clock in the morning of the following day; or
2. In any commercial or non-industrial undertaking or branch thereof, other than agricultural, between midnight and six o'clock in the morning of the following day; or
3. In any agricultural undertaking at nighttime unless she is given a period of rest of not less than nine (9) consecutive hours.

⁷ Art. 131. Exceptions. The prohibitions prescribed by the preceding Article shall not apply in any of the following cases:

1. In cases of actual or impending emergencies caused by serious accident, fire, flood, typhoon, earthquake, epidemic or other disasters or calamity, to prevent loss of life or property, or in cases of force majeure or imminent danger to public safety;
2. In case of urgent work to be performed on machineries, equipment or installation, to avoid serious loss which the employer would otherwise suffer;
3. Where the work is necessary to prevent serious loss of perishable goods;
4. Where the woman employee holds a responsible position of managerial or technical nature, or where the woman employee has been engaged to provide health and welfare services;
5. Where the nature of the work requires the manual skill and dexterity of women workers and the same cannot be performed with equal efficiency by male workers;
6. Where the women employees are immediate members of the family operating the establishment or undertaking; and
7. Under other analogous cases exempted by the Secretary of Labor and Employment in appropriate regulations.

the rising opportunities for night work in the business process outsourcing industry. Most importantly, these provisions also did not address the actual dangers that threaten women in unsafe workplaces and streets.

To address the issue of exposure to night-work-related hazards, the 15th Congress enacted Republic Act No. 10151 (2011), which repealed the said provisions and established labor standards for night work (e.g. provision of resting quarters, access to transportation to and from the work premises), thereby statutorily requiring employers to provide a secure, safe and healthy working conditions for both male and female workers.

The law also required employers to take appropriate measures to ensure that an alternative to night work is available to pregnant workers before and after childbirth, for at least sixteen (16) weeks. Instead of restricting working women's mobility for their own safety, Republic Act No. 10151 targeted factors that increase their exposure to night-work-related hazards and guaranteed equal opportunities for women's participation in work at the same time.

- **Gender-responsive laws** substantively address gender issues identified through the gender analysis of sex-disaggregated data and/or gender-related information.

Example:

The Anti-VAWC Law: A Landmark Legislation for Women's Rights

Republic Act No. 9262 or the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children (VAWC) Act of 2004 recognized the rights of women to be protected against domestic abuse by denominating such acts as public offenses. In effect, this shifted the culturally influenced legal framework that trivialized domestic abuses as mere spats or private affairs. Through the law, the issue of VAWC became a matter of public interest, deserving of State attention and government intervention.

The application of the current law solely to women and their children was affirmed by the Supreme Court in *Garcia vs. Drilon* (G.R. No. 179267, June 25, 2013). In its ruling, the Court explained: "The unequal power relationship between women and men; the fact that women are more likely than men to be victims of violence; and the widespread gender bias and prejudice against women all make for real differences justifying the classification under the law."

- **Gender-transformative laws** are those that question and seek to change existing social and cultural structures that contribute to perpetuating gender inequalities. Beyond addressing the differential needs and priorities of women and men, these laws target historical roots of the problem and aim to achieve more drastic and sustainable results towards women's empowerment and gender equality.

Example:

Expanded Maternity Leave Act

Section 6 of Republic Act No. 11210 provides the female worker who is entitled to maternity leave to allocate up to seven (7) days of her 105-day leave to her spouse or partner. While the duration is short, it can nevertheless potentially transform the gender division of labor in the household by giving men time to do care work, especially while the women are indisposed.



The practice of asking questions will help refine the objectives and provisions of bills of general application, as well as proposed amendments to existing laws.



III.

PRACTICAL **TOOLS**

Guide Questions in Developing Gender-Responsive Legislation

The following questions will guide lawmakers in developing legislative proposals that specifically respond to the gendered needs of women and men. The practice of asking these questions will also help refine the objectives and provisions of bills of general application, as well as proposed amendments to existing laws.

For Women-Specific Bills

- What gender-based assumptions underlie the definition of the problem? Does the measure assume certain stereotypes about women and men with respect to capacities, roles, rights, etc.?
- What are its assumptions about women's experiences and/or situation? Are they valid for all women? Or are they true only for some women or groups of women?
- Does the bill contribute to the enhancement of women's rights? If yes, in what way? Does it uplift the status of women? In what way?
- Does the bill address practical or strategic gender needs of women, or both? In what way?
- Has the bill undergone consultation with the affected sector (if the bill is sector-specific)? Who were consulted? Were their inputs taken into consideration? How or in what manner were their inputs integrated into the bill?
- Does the bill promote gender equality and assist in transforming gender relations? In what way?
- Does the bill take cognizance of and adhere to international instruments on human rights such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and the CEDAW?
- Are resources, materials and mechanisms available for the implementation of the bill once passed?



Practical Gender Needs and Strategic Gender Interests

In the Gender Planning Framework developed by Caroline Moser (1993), a distinction was made between women's practical gender needs and strategic gender interests. The distinction can help legislators aim towards empowering women to become agents of their own development.

Practical gender needs (PGNs)

These are needs that women identify in their socially accepted roles in society.

PGNs do not challenge, although they arise out of, gender divisions of labor and women's subordinate position in society.

PGNs are a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context. They are practical in nature and often relate to inadequacies in living conditions such as water provision, health care and employment.

Examples:

Food, water, shelter, access to health services, employment, livelihood

Note that these needs pertain to basic requirements that do not address women's subordinate position but only help them perform their gender roles better.

Strategic gender interests (SGIs)

These are needs that women identify because of their subordinate position in society.

They vary according to particular contexts, related to gender divisions of labor, power and control, and may include issue such as legal rights, domestic violence, equal wages, and women's control over their bodies.

Meeting SGIs helps women to achieve greater equality and change existing roles, thereby challenging women's subordinate position.

Examples:

Support for housework, legal right (e.g., property ownership and control, practice of profession, entering into contracts), decision making within the household, equal wages, legal redress for domestic violence, control over one's own body

Note that these pertain to needs which, when met, can help women improve their social position and achieve their full potential.

For General Bills

- Does the bill have underlying assumptions about women and men in terms of their conditions, capacity, etc.? Are those assumptions valid or are they gender-biased?
- Will the proposed law equally benefit women and men? In what ways? If not, what provisions can be included to ensure that women benefit as men do?
- Will it have a negative impact on people? On women, specifically? On other marginalized sectors of the society? If yes, what measures can be integrated in the proposed law to minimize the potential differential negative impact of the proposal on women and other sectors?
- What provisions can be integrated into the general bill to promote women's empowerment and enjoyment of their rights? What provisions can be integrated to eliminate gender-based discrimination, if any?
- Is the language used gender-sensitive or gender-fair? Does it subsume "women" by using the generic masculine nouns and pronouns? (Please refer to the "Notes on the Use of Gender-Fair Language" that follows.)



Notes on the Use Gender-Fair Language

The pointers below are adapted from Memorandum Circular No. 2014-06: Promoting the Use of Gender-Sensitive Language in the Drafting and Review of Legislative Measures, issued by the PCW.

1. Eliminate the generic use of “he,” “his,” or “him,” unless the subject is obviously male. Consider the following alternatives instead:

a. Using plural nouns

SEXIST: The lawyer uses his brief to guide him.

GENDER-FAIR: The lawyers use their briefs to guide them.

b. Deleting the generic male pronoun altogether and rewording as necessary

SEXIST: The architect uses his blueprint to guide him.

GENDER-FAIR: The architect uses a blueprint as a guide.

c. Substituting articles (“a,” “an,” “the”) for “his,” or using “who” instead of “he”

SEXIST: The writer should know his readers well.

GENDER-FAIR: The writer should know the readers well.

d. Using “one,” “we,” or “you”

SEXIST: As one grows older, he becomes more reflective.

GENDER-FAIR: As one grows older, one becomes more reflective.

e. Using the passive voice

SEXIST: The manager must submit his proposal today.

GENDER-FAIR: The proposal must be submitted by the manager today.



2. Eliminate the generic use of “man.” Instead, use “people,” “person/s,” “human/s,” “human being/s,” “humankind,” “humanity,” and “human race.”

SEXIST: “ordinary man,” “mankind,” “the brotherhood of man”

GENDER-FAIR: “ordinary people,” “humanity,” “the human family”

3. Eliminate sexism in symbolic representations of gender in words, sentences, and texts by:

- a. Taking the context of the word, analyzing its meaning, and eliminating sexism in the concept

SEXIST: “feelings of brotherhood,” “feelings of fraternity”

GENDER-FAIR: “feelings of kinship,” “solidarity”

SEXIST: “founding fathers”

GENDER-FAIR: “founders,” “founding leaders”

SEXIST: “the Father of Relativity Theory”

GENDER-FAIR: “the Founder of Relativity Theory,” “the Initiator of Relativity Theory”

- b. Finding precise words to delineate the thing itself from supposedly sex-linked characteristics

SEXIST: Titanic was a great ship, but she now rests at the bottom of the sea.

GENDER-FAIR: Titanic was a great ship, but it now rests at the bottom of the sea.

SEXIST: Don't let Mother Nature rip you off! She's out to kill your car's new finish...Stop her...

GENDER-FAIR: Don't let Nature rip you off! It's out to kill your car's finish... Stop it...

Signing Ceremony of the
Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)
of the
Safe Spaces Act
(Republic Act 11313)

28 October 2019
Ruby B Hall, Crowne Plaza Manila Galleria
Ortigas Avenue, Quezon City



4. Eliminate sexual stereotyping of roles by:

- a. Using the gender-neutral term when referring to profession or employment

SEXIST: salesman, stewardess

GENDER-FAIR: sales agent, flight attendant

- b. Using gender-fair terms in lexical terms

SEXIST: sportsmanship

GENDER-FAIR: highest ideals of fair play

- c. Treating men and women in a parallel manner

SEXIST: I now pronounce you man and wife.

GENDER-FAIR: I now pronounce you husband and wife.

- d. Avoiding language that reinforces stereotyping images

SEXIST: "a man's job," "the director's girl Friday"

GENDER-FAIR: "a big job," "the director's assistant"

- e. Avoiding language that brings unnecessary attention to the sex role of men and women

SEXIST: "working mothers," "spinsters," "old maids"

GENDER-FAIR: "wage-earning mothers," "unmarried women"

SEXIST: "busboys," "chauvinist pigs"

GENDER-FAIR: "waiters' assistants," "male chauvinists"

5. Eliminate sexism when addressing persons formally by:

- a. Using "Ms." instead of "Mrs."

SEXIST: Mrs. dela Cruz

GENDER-FAIR: Ms. dela Cruz

- b. Using a married woman's first name instead of her husband's

SEXIST: "Mrs. Juan dela Cruz"

GENDER-FAIR: "Ms. Maria Santos-dela Cruz"

- c. Using the corresponding titles for females

SEXIST: Dra. Concepcion Reyes

GENDER-FAIR: Dr. Concepcion Reyes

- d. Using the title of the job or group in letters to unknown persons

SEXIST: "Dear Sir"

GENDER-FAIR: "Dear Editor," "Dear Credit Manager"



Transforming the legislative branch into a gender-responsive institution requires the concerted effort of its members, the guidance of policy-coordinating bodies and the support and affirmation of constituents, especially the women.



IV.

MOVING FORWARD

Photo by Tanushree Rao on Unsplash



Institutional Capacity

Transforming the legislative branch into a gender-responsive institution requires the concerted effort of its members, the guidance of policy-coordinating bodies such as the PCW, and the support and affirmation of constituents, especially the women.

As Congress moves to intensify gender mainstreaming work in lawmaking, it will need to put resources into building its institutional capacity, with focus on the following:

- **Advocacy and knowledge sharing.** Gender mainstreaming in legislative work requires knowledge and expertise building for several reasons. First, the concept of gender mainstreaming itself is susceptible to various interpretations. Second, based on observations of other parliaments, while some legislative bodies are well-versed on the concepts of gender, gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive parliament, others struggle with relating gender to legislative work (i.e., its technical, administrative and lawmaking functions). It may also be unclear how a legislative body can monitor gender issues through its oversight functions.
- **Institutional strengthening.** Legislators can be assured of sustained support for gender advocacy within Congress if the permanent technical staff are harnessed. Capability-building activities (e.g., gender sensitivity training, orientation on GAD, gender-fair language, and gender analysis, training on gender-responsive policy development) may also be sponsored to broaden their knowledge on gender concepts, issues and methodologies. Oftentimes, changes in organizational culture, policies and structures (e.g., organizational policies affecting



women personnel) may be necessary to strengthen the institution's commitment to gender equality principles.

- **Political commitment.** The achievement of gender equality is embodied in the 1987 Philippine Constitution as well as in various laws and policies. Apart from these, the Philippines has ratified numerous international instruments that solicit global commitment for concerted and sustained action to achieve gender equality. Thus, the government must undertake gender mainstreaming as a political duty anchored on both national and international mandates.
- **Networking.** Legislators may link with the PCW and other women's organizations in their policy advocacy and gender mainstreaming efforts. These organizations have rich literature on gender and development and a strong mass-based network that can support lawmakers' initiatives on gender mainstreaming.

Did you know?

There is a growing trend in support of introducing gender equality legislation in parliaments worldwide, such as those of Armenia, Belgium, Georgia, Indonesia, Peru, Vietnam, and Spain.

In particular, Belgium's Gender Mainstreaming Act of 2007 requires new policies to set gender equality objectives and be subjected to a "gender test." Other countries like Peru have established guidelines for its parliamentarians in advancing gender equality concerns.

Source: Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), (2011).



Some laws that include newer policies intended to protect women but which result in subjecting them to further discrimination, and those that were enacted decades ago and need to be updated to conform to new standards set by international conventions and treaties need to be revisited.



V.

SETTING
LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES

Despite leaps in promoting gender equality, some laws that create, reinforce and/or maintain unequal gender relations and biases remain in effect. These laws systematically violate and withhold the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women on account solely of gender. These include newer policies intended to protect women but which result in subjecting them to further discrimination; and those that were enacted decades ago and need to be updated to conform to new standards set by international conventions and treaties that the Philippines has signed and ratified. Some of these laws that need to be revisited are listed below.

Articles 14, 96, 124, 211 and 225 of the Family Code

These provisions in the Family Code give more weight to the decision of the husband/father than that of the wife/mother on matters relating to family relations and other domestic affairs (i.e. on parental consent to marry [Art. 14], in the administration of conjugal properties [Arts. 96 and 124] and in the legal guardianship of common children and administration of the children's properties [Arts. 211 and 225]). The proposed amendment seeks to equalize the weight of the decision of husband/father and wife/mother.

Article 247 of the Revised Penal Code on Death or Physical Injuries Under

The current law exempts a spouse/parent who inflicts serious harm or death upon the other spouse or minor daughter caught having sexual intercourse with another person. This provision must be repealed because it is in clear contravention of a person's right to life and is inconsistent with the principle that upholds the best interest of the child—particularly of a girl child.

Articles 333 and 334 of the Revised Penal Code on Adultery and Concubinage

The current laws on adultery and concubinage are discriminatory against women as they impose: (1) a higher standard of fidelity on wives than husbands; and (2) harsher penalties on offending wives than offending husbands. Furthermore, consensual sexual activities done in private is covered by the concept of privacy as provided in the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights.

Said provisions need to be amended. This is without prejudice to the rights of aggrieved spouses to avail of other remedies under our civil laws and Republic Act No. 9262.

Articles 202 and 341 of the Revised Penal Code on Prostitution and White Slave Trade, respectively

These Revised Penal Code provisions not only sanction prostituted women exclusively, they also fail to recognize that prostitution, a form of sexual exploitation and violence against women and girls, is a human rights violation. It is an exploitative system that commodifies, objectifies and dehumanizes women, men and children who are being sold within it. An Anti-Prostitution measure is required to target the demand side of prostitution by shifting the criminal liability from the prostituted person to the person who induces, persuades, entices, compels, kidnaps, recruits, transports, organizes travel tours, uses information technology, advertises, for the purpose of exploiting a person/persons for prostitution, or derives profit or advantage from procuring, transporting, harboring and prostituting any person.

Republic Act No. 8353 or the Anti-Rape Law of 1997

Current legislation on the issue of rape requires the use of force, threat, intimidation, fraudulent machination or grave abuse of authority by the offender. This requirement has given rise to inconsistent rulings on the absence or presence of rape, usually based on the perception of the attacker rather than the victim. The proposed amendment to the Anti-Rape Law seeks to redefine acts of rape by highlighting the essential element of lack of consent to avoid these inconsistencies. Also, the statutory age of consent is presently 12 years. This presupposes that girls as young as 12 years and one day old are able to give their free and informed consent to sexual advances. Instead of protecting them, the law leaves them vulnerable to sexual predators, especially those who are much older than them and who may take advantage of their impressionability. Finally, the present law provides for the forgiveness clause, which extinguishes the criminal action by the subsequent marriage of the offended party and the offender. This allows offenders to pressure rape survivors to compromise and defeats the very purpose of reclassifying rape from a private to a public crime.

It is proposed that the requirement for sexual assault to be committed by force, as well as the requirement of proof of penetration, should also be removed. Amendment is also sought to repeal the forgiveness clause and increase the age of statutory rape from under 12 years old to at least under 16 years old.

National consultations with stakeholders have also given rise to a call for enactment of amendatory as well as new laws that will effectively respond to emerging women's/gender issues and gender concerns. These proposals include:

Enactment of Women's Political Participation and Representation Act

This legislative measure proposes the adoption of gender quotas; creation of a women's campaign fund for aspiring women candidates, especially those belonging to the marginalized sectors; training and support for women's gender-responsive and transformational leadership; and promotion of a gender-responsive voter's education.

Enactment of a Divorce Law

This legislative measure seeks to permit divorce and allow men and women to remarry thereafter. It also grants women and men the same rights to administer property during marriage and equal rights to property upon separation.

Enactment of the Anti-Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)

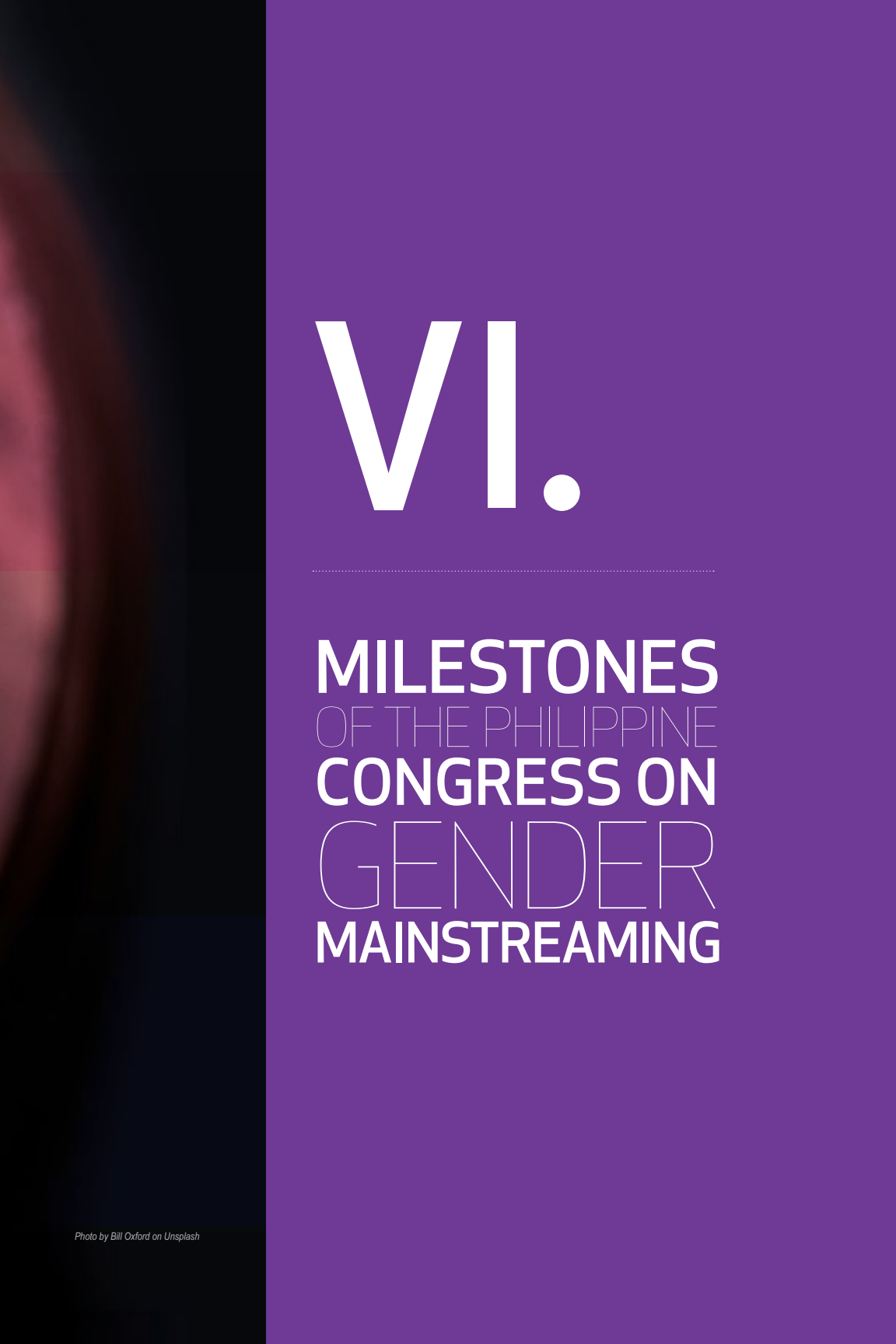
This proposed legislation prohibits violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. It addresses violence and discriminatory policies and practices directed towards lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgender persons in schools, workplaces, commercial establishments, public service, and law enforcement agencies.

Upholding the Rights of Women in the Informal Economy: Providing Measures for the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy

This proposition advocates for the adequate protection and empowerment of workers in the informal economy, particularly the women and marginalized groups, through the enactment of a law on the transitioning of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, in line with ILO Recommendation 204.

A close-up, low-angle shot of several wooden gavel heads, likely from a courtroom. The gavel heads are arranged diagonally, with the one in the foreground being the most prominent. The wood has a warm, reddish-brown tone and a visible grain. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights and deep shadows, creating a sense of authority and tradition.

**Throughout the years,
the Congress has enacted
several laws that promote
women's empowerment
and gender equality.**



VI.

MILESTONES OF THE PHILIPPINE CONGRESS ON GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Throughout the years, the Congress has enacted several laws that promote women's empowerment and gender equality. Among the landmark statutes that it has passed are the Magna Carta of Women of 2009, the Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012, the Expanded Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2012, and the Anti-Mail Order Spouse Act of 2016.

It has also managed to repeal provisions in our existing laws which are discriminatory to women. For example, the night work prohibition for women under the Labor Code, as well as the crime of premature marriage under the Revised Penal Code, have both been repealed.

The UN CEDAW recognized the efforts of the Philippines' legislative department during the recently concluded Constructive Dialogue and as reflected in its Concluding Observations based on the combined 7th and 8th Country Reports.

This notwithstanding, it is hoped that the Philippine Congress, through the joint efforts and initiatives of the Upper and Lower Houses, will intensify its advocacy to push for substantive equality between men and women, and accelerate the passage of more laws that will serve as a vehicle towards the achievement of such goal.

Below are some of the recent laws enacted in pursuit of women's empowerment and gender equality.

- Republic Act 11313: Safe Spaces Act (April 17, 2019)
- Republic Act No. 11210: 105-Day Expanded Maternity Leave Law (March 11, 2019)
- Republic Act No. 10906: Anti-Mail Order Spouse Act (July 21, 2016)
- Republic Act No. 10655: An Act Repealing the Crime of Premature Marriage under the Revised Penal Code (March 13, 2015)
- Republic Act No. 10398: An Act Declaring November Twenty-Five of Every Year as National Consciousness Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children (March 19, 2013)
- Republic Act No. 10361: Domestic Workers Act or Batas Kasambahay (January 18, 2013)
- Republic Act No. 10354: The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Act of 2012 (December 21, 2012)
- Republic Act No. 10174: An Act Establishing the People's Survival Fund to Provide Long-Term Finance Streams to Enable the Government to Effectively Address the Problem of Climate Change (August 16, 2012)
- Republic Act No. 10151: An Act Allowing the Employment of Night Workers (repealing the prohibition of night work for women under the Labor Code) (June 21, 2011)
- Republic Act No. 10121: Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010 (May 27, 2010)
- Republic Act No. 9710: Magna Carta of Women (August 14, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9995: Anti-Photo and Video Voyeurism Act of 2009 (November 17, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9775: Anti-Child Pornography Act of 2009 (November 17, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9729: Climate Change Act of 2009 (October 23, 2009)
- Republic Act No. 9501: Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (May 23, 2008)
- Republic Act No. 9262: Anti-Violence Against Women and their Children Act of 2004 (March 8, 2004)
- Republic Act No. 9208 (May 26, 2003), as amended by Republic Act No. 10364 (February 6, 2013): Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2003
- Republic Act No. 9178: Barangay Micro Business Enterprises Act of 2002 (November 13, 2002)
- Republic Act No. 8972: Solo Parent's Welfare Act (November 7, 2000)
- Republic Act No. 8505: Rape Victim Assistance and Protection Act (February 13, 1998)
- Republic Act No. 8504: Philippine AIDS Prevention and Control Act of 1998 (February 13, 1998)
- Republic Act No. 8353: Anti-Rape Law of 1997 (September 30, 1997)
- Republic Act No. 7877: Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995 (February 14, 1995)
- Republic Act No. 8042 (June 7, 1995), as amended by Republic Act No. 10022 (March 10, 2010): Migrant Workers and Overseas Filipinos Act of 1995



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SECOND EDITION 2021

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