

Leadership, Representation and Gender Justice

Women's Human Rights Organizations Reflect on a Women's National Legislative Agenda

Background

This paper takes off from the sharing and insights from two discussion spaces for women's human rights organizations convened by SARILAYA Inc. and UN Women in December 2019 and January 2020, respectively. The SARILAYA women's caucus aimed to bring together women's human rights organizations across sectors to a discussion on common frameworks and effective strategies to engage Congress and other policy-making bodies at the local level, and advance women's political agenda. The view is dual: advocacy and lobbying can and should happen at the national *and* local levels of legislation. SARILAYA also recognized the critical importance of political work and lobbying outside of formal legislative bodies – and indeed, there is an urgent call to engage grassroots women to be more visible in the public political sphere. The initiative was supported by the CHR-GEWHRC, with a view that a national women's legislative agenda for the 18th Congress can be drafted as part of the activity's outputs. The UN Women "conversation", on the other hand, had a more fluid program as it is part of a scoping activity for framing women's economic empowerment, whether these are women within the formal or informal economy, engaged paid or unpaid work. As with the SARILAYA caucus, the exchanges also highlighted the role, potentials and challenges of legislative advocacy as a strategy in fulfilling women's human rights in the country.

It should be mentioned at this point, that the paper diverges from its original concept and purpose. From a technical report describing the current national situation of women, and from there, culling out priority legislative measures to advance women's human rights, it has emerged from the two discussion spaces as a paper consolidating its key ideas and reflecting on these in relation to legislative advocacy and lobbying, women's empowerment, and the women's movement.

The paper is divided into three sections which frames the different thoughts of women's organizations and feminists who participated in the SARILAYA and UN Women activities: analyzing the Filipino women's situation, women and legislative advocacy, and drafting a national women's agenda. The main takeaway is the "back-to-(feminist) basics" call to the women's movement: critical self-examination of its foundations, grounding on women's realities, and building women's collectives. Without these, ideas such as empowerment, equality, and gender justice are vulnerable to hollowness, and cooptation by the patriarchal status quo. This is especially true when women engage in the numbers game that is politics and legislative lobby work. There is also the observation that the political legislative space has also contributed to the fragmentation of women when it isolates "women's issues" from so-called "bigger and more important" national issues.

Analyzing the Filipino Women's Situation

An analysis of women's human issues in the country is the natural starting point in crafting a national women's legislative agenda. Statistics is pivotal in the process to establish "facts" and support claims of empowerment or disempowerment, and herein lies the contradiction between numbers and experiences of women in relation to gender equality – and even the numbers on gender equality are debated. The Philippines is regarded as one of the most advanced countries in terms of gender equality in Asia, if not in the world. Until 2019, the Philippines is consistently in the top 10 gender equal countries according to the Gender Gap Index since the World Economic Forum established this index in 2006. The Gender Gap Index measures the extent women are equal to men in four key areas: health, education, employment and income, political participation.¹ The country is also under Group 1 in the UNDP Gender Development Index, meaning there is minimal disparity between women and men in relation to national human development indicators (life expectancy, literacy and labor force participation). Thus, the argument that the State is already fulfilling its women's human rights obligations.

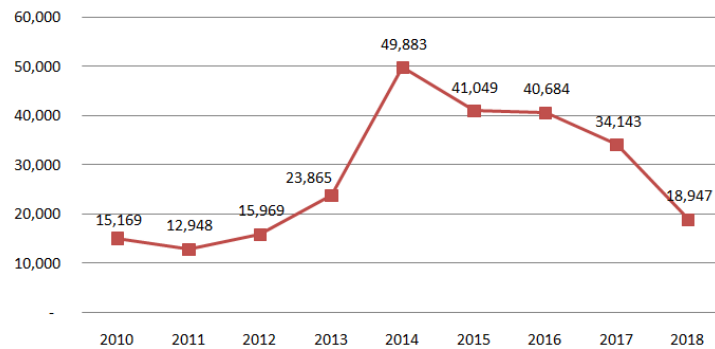
On the other hand, women's organizations have pointed out the limitations of taking statistics as the primary indicator of the status of women in the country. First, it is constrained by the status quo's definition of gender equality (generally oriented to a "females versus males" perspective, as evidenced by sex-disaggregated data) and within selected parameters. Specifically on the latter, there is much more gender data being tracked from the local levels and consolidated at the national government offices, but these are not made readily available to the public or utilized in reports.² The theme "women's access to justice", for instance, is largely unexplored in national statistics – how should this be operationalized, what quantitative data available can be used to measure this, and what else needs to be tracked to monitor fulfillment of gender equality in this regard.

Second, quantitative data by itself presents a limited picture of the status of women in Filipino society when it is de-contextualized from qualitative data which can provide clearer answers why a particular statistic indicates women's empowerment or disempowerment. The statistics on VAW cases in the country is an example i.e., how should one interpret the increase, or decrease, of the number of VAW cases recorded by the PNP? On the one hand, it can be taken to mean that more women are aware of their rights thus, are reporting now violence; on the other, it means that laws against VAW has made minimal impact in changing the mindset of perpetrators (very often males) and communities about women's place in their families and society.

¹ Pertinent to note that in four areas examined by the Gender Gap Index, the Philippines scored lowest in political participation, which looked into the proportion of women represented in formal decision making bodies, relative to men.

² "Parreno, N.E. and Mesina, M.R.G. (2019) "Making Data Work for Women's Human Rights: A Proposed Framework for the CHR Observatory on Gender-Based Violence", a report submitted to the Commission on Human Rights – Gender Equality and Women's Human Rights Center.

**Number of VAW Cases as reported to PNP
(2010-2018)**



Source: Philippine Statistical Authority, "Fact Sheet on Women and Men in the Philippines" from years 2010 to 2018³

Third, even using only available sex-disaggregated quantitative data, women's human rights advocates also cite the power of macro level numbers to level off the experience of different groups of women of gender (in)equality, as well the disparities of power arising among them to assert their rights. An understanding of the intersectionality of women's identities makes it no longer acceptable to talk about women's human rights in a unified or singular sense: women are not just their bodies and reproductive organs as represented by the statistical variable "female", but they also have social identities – claimed or imposed on them by society – which locates them and determines their power relations with other people, including with their fellow women, and their environment.

A national situationer which is based largely on gender (i.e. women in relation to men) statistics is form of de-contextualization because it puts illusory boundaries on what are "women's (human rights) issues". That is, there is a popular idea even among social activists that women's issues are only those which overtly singles out, excludes or restricts women on the basis of their sex, whereas an intersectional approach recognizes that women's issues include all forms of human rights violations that degrade the dignity and humanity of women. Discrimination and violence directed at women because they are women and are seen as secondary human beings is a woman's issue; rising prices of basic goods and services due to taxes, inflation and deregulation are women's daily economic issues; uncompensated overtime work, below minimum wages, trade union busting are women's workers issues; land conversion, flooding of imported agricultural products in the market are women farmers' issues; encroachment into ancestral domains through government approval of mining industries or militarization are IP women's issues; the drug war and extra-judicial killings, "red-tagging", fake news trolling, and shrinking spaces for dissent are women's human rights defenders' issues.⁴

³ Retrieved from <https://psa.gov.ph/gender-stat/wmf> on 03 January 2020

⁴ These are some of the women's human rights issues presented as part of a Filipino women's situationer in the SARILAYA women's caucus. Leading the discussions are resource persons Atty. Virginia Lacsa Suarez of Kaisa Ka ("Kalagayan ng Kababaihang Pilipino sa Gitna ng Tiranikong Administrasyon"), Djoannalyn

This leads to the point of power relations being the central idea of gender equality and, consequentially, gender justice: gender equality is about women's having equal power in all her relationships – with her family, partner, community, environment – and thus, gender justice is when the existing power imbalance is addressed. Simply put, it is about women's self-determination: when all women are able to define for herself the life she lives, and assert and exercise her human rights without fear of violence or reprisal, then it can be said that women are empowered, and there is gender equality.

Power is also a central concept to politics and political participation: who decides what? which issues are put on the table and which are set aside or never get to the table at all? whose voices are loudest at the table, and whose interests are given more weight in the final instance? In the formal public decision-making spheres, women have very limited power, whether one looks at it in terms of number of women in electoral posts, the bills filed addressing women-specific issues, or the extent gender equality outcomes are considered in legislative discussions in general.

Bills filed in the House of Representatives under its Women and Gender Equality Committee, and Population and Family Relations Committee

Subject / Theme	Number of bills filed	Percentage
Related to anti-discrimination on the basis of SOGIE	18	27.27
Family Code revisions (property relations, decision-making, etc)	8	12.12
Amendments to R.A. 9262 (inclusion of e-VAWC, etc.)	7	10.61
Divorce; recognition of church annulment	5	7.58
Teen pregnancy	5	7.58
Support to families (resource center, incentive for 2 children, anti-divorce)	5	7.58
Women deprived of liberty (rights, support programs, etc)	2	3.03
Strengthening RA 8505 (Rape Victims Assistance Act)	2	3.03
Maternity support for low income mothers (financial, subsidy, etc.)	2	3.03
Conditional cash grant to low income, stay-at-home mothers	2	3.03
Compensation for comfort women	2	3.03
Recognition of civil unions	2	3.03
Strengthening anti-abortion law	2	3.03
Capital assistance and loans to women entrepreneurs	1	1.52
Sexual representation of women in ads and media	1	1.52
Gender quota in elective positions	1	1.52
Establishment of a National Women's Museum	1	1.52
Total	67	100

Source: <http://www.congress.gov.ph/committees/> (as of 23 January 2020)

Barnachea Janier of I-Defend (“Shrinking Space #HumanRights”), and Judy Pasimio of Lilak (“Sharing on Community Lobbying and Advocacy”)

Women's Economic Empowerment and Political Participation

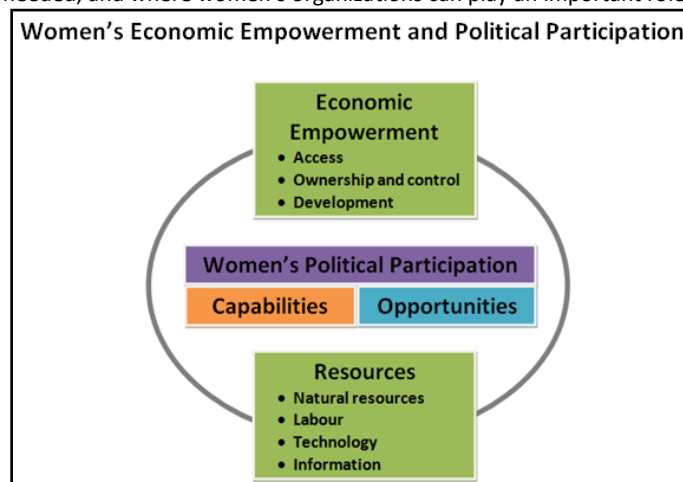
Women's economic empowerment has long been an arena of gender equality struggles and discourse; this is not surprising given its immediate relation to concerns women face on a daily basis: income generation, purchase of needed goods and services, continued access to resources, and material security throughout one's lifetime.

Below is a work-in-progress diagram of how women's economic empowerment is founded on the extent of their power (determination) over resources available that they can use to develop themselves, their families, communities and environment.⁵ Resources are broadly categorized into four: natural resources (e.g. land, water, forests, minerals underground); women's labor which is a convergence of her physical attributes, physiological and mental health, and education and training, among others; relevant and scientific information; and technology, including digital technologies.

Economic empowerment refers to women's progress from simply users of what is available (access), to owners of resources (ownership and control), and lastly, active agents in defining how these resources are to be enhanced, shared and sustained (development). Women's political participation is crucial element in the movement across levels. It entails engaging and claiming a space in traditional political power structures, at the same time, and redefining the political institution itself which is an apparatus of State patriarchy.

This is not an easy challenge, given the multiple burden of women in society and the layers of discrimination they face, stemming from intersecting identities. While the patriarchal State may be willing to concede to gender equality provisions, it will be in their own terms, and often through isolating "women's issues" from the bigger picture of human rights violations which impact women, for instance, the government's willingness to decriminalize prostitution but without corresponding measures to increase women's capabilities and opportunities for income, employment or livelihood so they will no longer consider prostitution as an option. Asserting ownership and control of natural resources is another blind sport in the government's approach to women's economic empowerment: the State may be open to changing administrative policies that excludes women's names in land ownership, but will be aggressive in blocking women's lobby against infrastructure projects that will negatively impact the already little natural resources women and their families own, control or from where they draw their means of living.

From the UN Women conversation with women's organizations, increasing women's capacities for collective leadership (in contrast to the traditional individual-centered, personality-based leadership) and organizing is a critical foundation for their political participation; removal of barriers to women's leadership – including, threats to community organizing and the shrinking space for dissent – and opening opportunities for them to assert this power from the community to national and international levels are also needed, and where women's organizations can play an important role.



⁵ The ideas underlying the diagram are strongly influenced by the Women's Empowerment Framework of Sarah Longwe (1998), although consolidating her five levels (welfare, access, awareness, participation, and control) to three, and identifying "development of resources" as the final level. To some extent, it is also influenced by Martha Nussbaum's Capabilities Approach (2011).

Women and Legislative Advocacy

Although the SARILAYA and UN Women activities were independent of each other, a common thread was the need for clearer articulations and framing of concepts of “women’s empowerment” and “gender equality” in the women’s movement, vis-à-vis the current socio-cultural and political landscape, even before it begins to craft a national women’s political and legislative agenda. Crafting a national legislative agenda is a challenging task given the complex interconnection of issues and factors that maintain women’s marginalized and subordinate position in Philippine society. The challenge seem to lie in the reductionist character of the endeavour: which issues should be prioritized for Congressional lobbying, and what should be the basis of this prioritization? The diversity of women’s gender identities, political leanings, and analyses of their reality and how to achieve gender equality makes the prioritization approach to legislative advocacy an almost impossible task without risking the fragmentation of women’s voices.

Another layer to the challenges in using legislative advocacy, is how the very ideas of women’s empowerment and gender equality, can be compromised, if not derailed in the long run, to accommodate conceptualizations more palatable to the status quo, in order for a bill to find “champions” in Congress, and hopefully, enacted. The experience in lobbying for a law against abuse of women in intimate relationships is a case to point. The then bill drew reactions ranging from full support to outright hostility, both sides invoking the concept of gender equality: while feminists argued for substantive equality and addressing patriarchal power relations between women and men (where the former is at an disadvantage), other groups invoked equal or same protection for all who are victimized by intimate partner violence i.e., what about the men? A middle ground was eventually found in the inclusion of children and the change of the bill’s title from “anti-abuse of women in intimate relationships” to “anti-violence against women and their children”.⁶

At the operational level, women’s victories secured through law such as gender mainstreaming, gender and development (GAD) budget, and gender quotas have also been diluted through their piece-meal, short-sighted implementation, that their potential as channels for gender equality are reduced to mere legal compliance, if these were not re-interpreted by State institutions and actors to be “optional”, at that.

Nevertheless, the legal and legislative sphere remain to be a strategic arena for realizing women’s human rights. The post-Martial Law years saw the flourishing of women and feminist organizations engaged in welfare, education and organizing work across various sectors – and transforming women’s political, socio-cultural and economic landscape through policy and the law were crucial to secure the continuity of the work and to strengthen its outcomes. The 1987 Philippine Constitution is explicit on the role of women in nation-building, (Article II, Section 14), its prioritization of their health needs (Article

⁶ From Princess Nemenzo’s, presentation, “Women’s Legislative Lobbying: The SIBOL Experience”, at the Leadership, Representation and Gender Justice: A Caucus on Women’s Legislative and Political Agenda for the 18th Congress, Quezon City, 02-03 December 2019.

XIII, Section 11) and the promotion of women's rights and welfare in productive work (Article XIII, Section 14).

Legislative and legal actions pushed forward a more progressive stance on various forms of gender-based discrimination that barred women's full participation in the public sphere, particularly, violence against women. Notable in this regard are the laws against sexual harassment (R.A. 7877), rape (R.A. 8353 and 8505), human trafficking (R.A. 9208), abuse of women in intimate relationships (R.A. 9262), and cyber crime which includes violence against women through digital means (R.A. 10175). The Reproductive Health Law (R.A. 10354) also offered protection of women's sexual rights through widening their access to reproductive and sexual health information, services and products, and establishing penalties for violations thereof. The Women in Nation-Building Act (R.A. 7192) paved the way for the annual enactment of a GAD Budget in all government agencies, as well as gender mainstreaming as an approach to achieving gender equality. There are also Local Government Code (R.A. 7160) and the Party List Act (R.A. 7941) which specified women as a marginalized sector that should be represented in local development councils, and in Congress, respectively.

These laws are in addition to the other national laws which have specific provisions for women's empowerment and protection of their human rights, such as the Migrant Workers Act (R.A. 8042) and Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (R.A. 8371).

A landmark legislation in the country is the Magna Carta of Women which was enacted in 2009. It is a comprehensive law which lays down the State policy on gender equality and women's human rights. Sections 2 (Declaration of Policy), 3 (Principles of Human Rights of Women), and 4 (Definition of Terms) are clearly imbued with human rights language, and adopts from the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) ideas such as discrimination on the basis of sex and other identities, substantive equality, affirmative action and establishment of temporary special measures, among others. The Magna Carta also emphasized the rights of marginalized groups of women under the following themes (Chapter V, Section 20-29): food security; housing; decent work; livelihood, credit, capital and technology; education and training; participation and representation; information; social protection; cultural identity and integrity; and peace and development.⁷

Legislation on gender equality has gained ground in recent years. Some of the notable laws enacted in the current administration included the Expanded Maternity Leave Law (R.A. 11210), and the Safe Streets and Public Spaces Act (R.A. 11313) in 2019. The Responsible Parenthood and Reproductive Health Law (or more popularly called the RH Law) also stood on firmer ground with Executive Order No. 12 s.2017, which ordered the full implementation of the said policy to meet the needs of Filipino families for modern family

⁷ Amparo Miciano / PKKK presentation, "Muling Pagbisita sa mga Karapatan ng Kababaihan sa Ika-10 na Taon ng Magna Carta of Women", at the Leadership, Representation and Gender Justice: A Caucus on Women's Legislative and Political Agenda for the 18th Congress, Quezon City, 02-03 December 2019.

planning. Another development was Duterte's expressed support for an Anti-Discrimination Law for people of diverse SOGIE (sexual orientation and gender identity and expression), although he did not certify it as one of the urgent bills for the 18th Congress (Corrales, September 2019).

However, similar to earlier victories, it was observed that these milestones were achieved not so much because of strong support of legislators and the executive branch of the government, but through the relentless lobbying of women's groups and allies, within and outside the halls of Congress. There is no doubt that the women's political agenda of gender equality and justice is left behind in the largely male-dominated Philippine Congress. Of the present Congress, its stated priority bills include increasing the salaries of government employees, creation of a Department of Overseas Filipinos, the postponement of the barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections from 2020 to 2023, and the provision of free legal assistance to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Cepeda, September 2019). Add to these are presidential pronouncements regarding issues his administration will actively pursue: the continuation of the War on Drugs, corruption in the government, and the reinstatement of the Death Penalty.

Women have much at stake in ensuring that not only their gender-specific issues are addressed in Congress, but also that the laws enacted in the country are cognizant of how gender intersects with other identities, and permeates issues otherwise not specifying women. Drawing on its experience with legislative lobbying, gender-specific bills have been either trivialized and excluded in Congress in favor of "more important issues that affect everyone", or have been marginalized to refer only "women's issues". Similarly, advocates are also hard-pressed to push a gendered perspective for serious consideration in the deliberation of issues where women are invisible or underrepresented in the popular narrative. This is especially true with regard issues where the imagery or representation is mostly male: agriculture and fisheries, peace, criminality, and national territorial disputes, to name a few. Another layer to the struggle is the low number of gender champions in Congress. This is beyond body counting according to one's sex and gender identity, as one cannot always assume that women or transwomen will support progressive gender equality bills, or assert a gendered perspective on the social issues addressed by various proposed legislation. It continues to be an uphill struggle for women to push their agenda in this formal decision-making channel.

A more promising arena seems to be the local level, where progressive ordinances and direct programs targeting gender equality can also be realized in the meantime that a national policy is absent. Historically, too, some gender-responsive actions have been initiated in LGUs due to the presence of strong advocacy, and gender champions at the community level. Examples of these are local Gender and Development Codes even before there was the Magna Carta of Women in 2009; the establishment of police and barangay women's desks for VAW cases, prior to R.A. 8551 in 1998 and R.A. 9262 in 2004, respectively;⁸ the expansion of the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law implementation to general

⁸ See for instance *Action Against VAW* (Arugaan ng Kalakasan, 1996) which documented the Arugaan ng Kalakasan experience in establishing police women's desks in Quezon City. The Women's Legal Bureau

public spaces (e.g. the “Magastos ang Mambastos sa QC” ordinance) prior to the Safe Cities Act of 2019; and the Anti-Discrimination on the basis of SOGIE ordinances which are in effect in the meantime that there is no national law on this.⁹ Barangays can also be influenced to pass gender equality ordinances.

A distinct value of working at this level is the immediate reach of women who will directly benefit from a gender-responsive local government unit. The devolution of social welfare and health services under the 1990 Local Government Code meant that local governments have a larger degree of autonomy than before in developing programs and interventions for their constituents, including localization of national policies. Women’s organizations and advocates were able to maximize this space through LGU partnerships as regards capacity building, provision of direct services, organizational development for gender mainstreaming, and as previously mentioned, enactment of ordinances institutionalizing mechanisms and budgets to address gender-based violence. The extent of successes in this arena, however, is varied across the country, and conditional to the local officials’ appreciation of gender equality in development – or more often than not, in relation to their personal beliefs as well as their political careers. Political dynasties, patronage politics, inter-clan dynamics are also some of the realities that advocates face head on when working at the local level.

The Women’s Priority Legislative Agenda for the 18th Congress
Philippine Commission on Women

1. Strengthening the Provisions of R.A. No. 8353: Amending the Anti-Rape Law
2. Repealing the Revised Penal Code provisions on Adultery and Concubinage
3. Ensuring Women’s Equal Rights in Marriage and Family Relations
4. Recognizing Sexual Abuse and Focusing on the Violence and Abusive Conduct as Grounds for Legal Separation
5. Enacting the Anti-Prostitution Law
6. Upholding the Right to Life and Security of Spouses and Daughters by Repealing Article 247 of the Revised Penal Code
7. Enacting a Women’s Political Participation and Representation Law
8. Enacting a Law Prohibiting Discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE)
9. Adopting Divorce in the Family Code
10. Enacting a Magna Carta of Workers in the Informal Economy

from <https://pcw.gov.ph/article/pcw-launches-priority-agenda-18th-congress>

research on “Engendering the Barangay Justice System” in 2004 also documented the VAW case management system of Bagong Silang, which by then already has a women’s desk.

⁹ As of May 2017, there are 19 LGUs with specific ordinances protecting LGBTIs from violence and discrimination, and promoting their human rights.⁴⁷ These are the LGUs of Agusan del Norte, Angeles City, Bacolod City, Baguio City, Batangas City, Batangas Province, Butuan, Candon (Ilocos Norte), Cavite City, Cebu City, Dagupan City, Davao City, Dinagat Islands, Mandaue City, Quezon City, and Vigan City (Ilocos Sur).

Prospects for a National Women's Legislative Agenda

These insights are not new, rather they are (re)presented here as anchors for critical discussions of women's human rights organizations on the role of legislative lobbying and advocacy in women's empowerment, specifically women's right to political participation. Women's political participation is a right, thus, universal, inherent and indivisible from other human rights such as the right to life, education employment and health; it is a requirement for women's full realization of their capabilities to shape their choices and environment. Women's political participation is ultimately about women's self-determination, not just having more women-specific laws or increasing women in electoral positions.

Thus, legislative agenda setting, engaging the legislative branch of the government, asserting gender quotas and developing gender champions among key policy makers, is only one subset of the bigger work of the women's movement as regards women's right to political participation; the greater portion of the work lies in ensuring that legislative victories actually translate into wider spaces for all women to participate in local and national development agenda setting. Another way of putting this is asking to what extent do these laws move women away from society's label of "victim" – which connotes weakness and requiring protection from the patriarchal State – to women whose agency should be affirmed. This is particularly true in assessing laws addressing gender-based violence.

In the present environment, where there are already good laws in place, and what seems to be the gap is in their operationalization and implementation, how much of women's resources should be directed to legislative lobbying? In the space provided by the SARILAYA caucus and UN Women conversation, women's groups highlighted the crucial role of education (reflection, back-to-basics) and feminist organizing to "re-imagine" a women's movement solidly grounded on the goal of women's empowerment, gender equality and gender justice, regardless of the identities, sector or issues they highlight in their work, and the strategies they choose to employ. In place of a women's legislative agenda, the discussion surfaced themes that cut across each organization's advocacies, and perhaps can be initial handles in examining proposed laws in Congress i.e., how are these themes integrated, defined and addressed in the bill? if not explicitly in the bill, what are the implications of the bill's possible enactment to women situations as defined under these themes? Overarching here is the earlier question of how do these bills contribute to expanding women's capacities and spaces for political participation, leading to their self-determination.

Gender-based violence against women

- Divorce as an option for women to take back control of their lives
- Removing barriers against women's reproductive and sexual health and rights, including that of girl children and adolescents: access to reproductive health information, products and services; non-discrimination on the basis of SOGIE; decriminalization of abortion

Women's economic empowerment and social protection

- Recognition and support for women's unpaid work, including in family income-generating activities, as well as for women's participation in the informal economy
- Food security and sovereignty, which interfaces with issue on women's ownership and control of natural resources, access to information and technology, and women's unpaid labor

Climate change and disasters

- Promoting sustainable development, especially in laws on natural resources utility and development
- Institutionalizing gender-sensitive and responsive intervention processes in times of disaster

Women and governance

- Increasing women's representation and direct participation in local and national development planning and decision-making; in electoral politics, mandating a gender quota for fielded candidates of political parties.
- Addressing corruption, nepotism and political dynasties in electoral politics
- Protection of current political space for critical engagement and dissent, from the community to national levels.

While the idea of legislative lobbying and advocacy is commonly associated with pushing for new laws, the women's groups agree that equally important are actions to amend or repeal existing laws, or block proposed ones, that directly or *de facto* undermine the fulfillment of gender equality, and shrink spaces for human rights protection and advocacy in general. The above listing forwards proposal for new laws (e.g. divorce, decriminalization of abortion, dismantling of political dynasties), as well as issues that may not need a separate law but vigilance is needed so that bills filed do not contradict the gains of the women's movement in this regard (e.g. access to reproductive and sexual health information, products and services; protection of existing spaces for critical engagement and dissent). Alongside this, is the review of the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of laws, and similar legal documents in the executive branch of the government (for instance, Executive Orders, Department Orders, policy directives, and local ordinances) which operationalize national legislation, and, in effect, weave them into the everyday lives of women.



Submitted by : Nancy Endrinal Parreño
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