



How to Make Political Participation in Myanmar More Gender-Equal

November 12, 2020

The 'Gender and Political Participation in Myanmar' report was launched by Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) in October. The briefing note summarizes the findings of the report and that briefing note includes: "Current Gender and Political Involvement in Myanmar; Why is gender important and how can gender equality be made more equitable?"

To increase gender equality in Myanmar politics, it provides detailed recommendations for political parties, the Myanmar government, local leaders, international donors, Myanmar civil society organisations, and international development organisations.



Political Parties

- Establish clear rules on how people are selected to fill key party gatekeeper positions and to stand as parliamentary candidates. Thoroughly publicise these rules to all party members.
- Establish a target of 30% female candidates in parliamentary elections. The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy substantially increased their percentage of female candidates between 2015 and 2020 by adopting such a target and working hard to achieve it. Other parties could emulate this model for future by-elections and national elections. Parties should also introduce targets for women's representation on their central executive committees (CECs), central committees (CCs), and township executive committees (TECs).
- Provide a small subsidy for women to self-nominate as candidates.
- Improve security and provide female candidates with a party aide during campaigns, especially in remote and/or conflict-affected areas.
- Provide trainings and establish best practices for candidates to campaign with social networks and develop an online presence. Particularly ensure that

women, ethnic minorities, and religious minority candidates have access to these trainings.

Government of Myanmar

- Restore voting rights to all people who were denied their rights in 2015, and facilitate the return to Myanmar of refugees currently living in camps in Bangladesh and Thailand.
- Introduce direct elections for the positions of ward and village tract administrators, with universal suffrage for all local residents aged 18 and above. Consider also introducing universal suffrage for elections for 100-household head and 10-household head positions.
- Expand the use of quotas mandating minimum levels of female representation from National Community Driven Development Project (NCDDP) to other committees at the township, ward, and village tract levels.
- Work to change cultural norms that largely exclude women from roles as security actors, including continuing to work to increase the number of female police officers.
- Provide convenient and high-quality childcare facilities for MPs and parliamentary staff in the Pyidaungsu and State/Region Hluttaws.
- Expand the provision of high quality pre-schools and kindergartens in villages and wards throughout Myanmar.
- Introduce elected township governments, and then assign significant decision-making and revenue-collection authority to this level of government.

Local Leaders

- Clearly inform local residents of when meetings will be held, and what will be discussed.
- Ensure that meeting attendees have a chance to speak and to respond to the information provided. Particular attention should be given to encouraging women, and especially young women, to speak.
- Ensure that ideas and feedback from public meetings are properly incorporated into local leaders' decision-making. One practical way to do so could be to add a compulsory agenda item for leaders' meetings on weighing ideas and feedback from public meetings.

International Donors, Myanmar Civil Society Organizations, and International Development Organizations

Provide funding for:

- Smaller parties to help them provide a small subsidy to women who self-nominate as candidates.
- Training classes for parties and candidates on how to utilise social media to develop an online presence and campaign effectively.

The newsletter is sponsored thanks to the Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar Initiative funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) which offers funding to researchers and institutions to find solutions for global development challenges, and Global Affairs Canada. Neither organization necessarily shares or endorses any of the views, people or events presented in this publication. Please contact shweshwe.kyinhlaingg@gmail.com for free subscription.

- Training classes for parties and candidates – and especially ethnic minority, religious minority and female candidates – on how to respond to disinformation, online hate and harassment during campaigns.
- Prioritisation of which parties and candidates to support should be influenced by both whether they have a realistic chance of winning parliamentary seats, and parties’ own financial resources (giving preference to parties that do not have large financial resources already).
- The extent to which the selection of members is democratic and systematic varies not just between parties, but also within them – for example the NLD can be characterized as having a democratic and systematic process for TEC and CC selection but not for their CEC selection. This highlights the need to pay careful attention to each party’s processes if working with parties to raise women’s participation – for example: If parties have township-level systematic processes

that follow instructions issued by the central party, which at least a large majority of townships consistently follow, there is high potential to work with the central party to issue rules, guidelines or targets for the township level. Such an approach is less likely to be effective absent such precedents.

If CEC and/or TEC selection processes are strongly influenced by certain individual party leaders, those leaders need to be convinced of the importance of promoting gender equality within party structures, including on the CEC and in TECs.

These publications can all be downloaded from the EMReF website (<https://emref.org/en/publications-reports>). This study has been a part of a three-year project funded by Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The research is part of the Knowledge for Democracy Myanmar (K4DM) program, which aims to promote the democratic transition in Myanmar.

Shwe Lay



17% of women were elected to Parliaments in the 2020 General Election

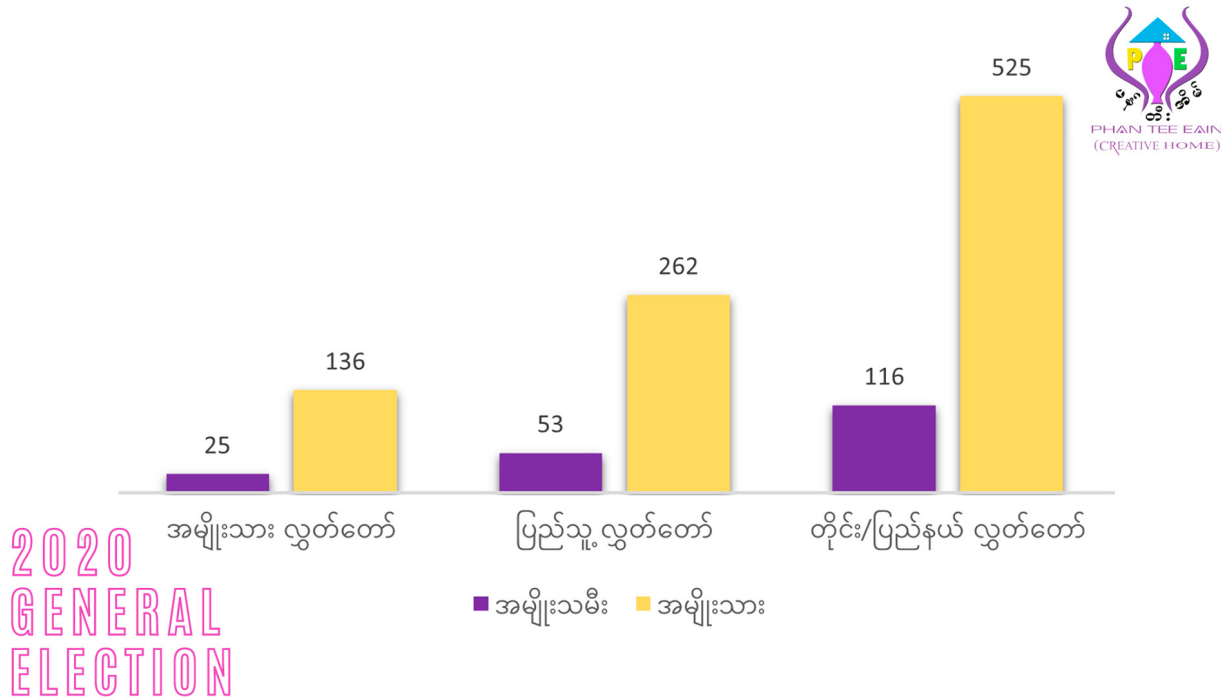


Photo : Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home)

November 16, 2020

According to the Union Election Commission's (UEC) announcement of the 2020 general election results, 17% of the total number of Hluttaw members and ethnic affairs ministers elected for each Hluttaw were women.

According to the UEC's election results, 26 women and 135 men were elected in a total of 161 constituencies in the Amyotha Hluttaw (7 constituencies where no election was held), with 15.53% of women and 84.47% of men. In the Pyithu Hluttaw, 53 women and 262 men were elected in a total of 315 constituencies (15 constituencies where no election was held), representing 16.82% of women and 83.17% of men. In the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, (including both the Amyotha Hluttaw and the Pyithu Hluttaw), 79 women and 397 men were elected, representing 16.6% of women and 83.4% of men.

In the 2020 election, 116 women were elected from a total of 641 constituencies in state and regional

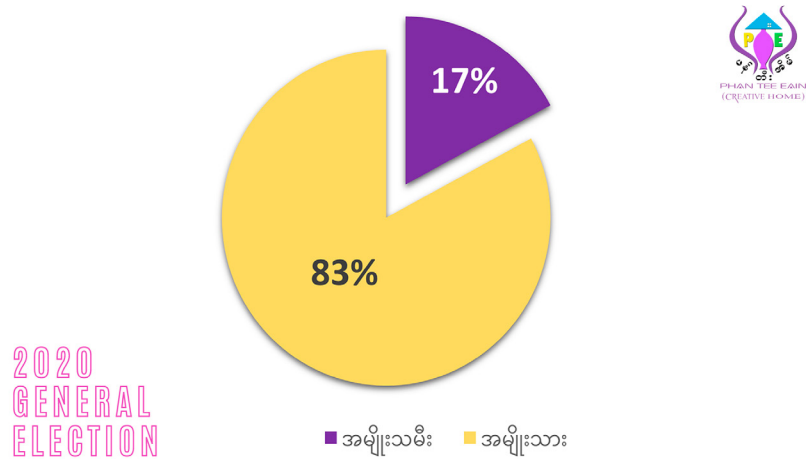


Photo : Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home)

Hluttaws, and that represents 18%. Women's representation in the 2015 election was 12.8%; then increased by almost 6% in the 2020 election. The highest level of female participation is the Yangon Hluttaw, at 30%. The Chin Hluttaw has the lowest level of female participation rate at 5%. The number of ethnic affairs ministers is not included in the calculation of

these percentages.

Of more than 6,400 candidates competing in the 2015 election, over 13% of candidates were women. There were approximately 7,000 candidates who ran in the 2020 general election, and over 15% were women.

Source: Election & Democracy, Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home)



Photo: Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement Facebook

National Mid-term Review on ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW) Action Plan

November 3, 2020

An online national-level workshop on the Mid-Term Review of the ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW) was held on October 22.

At the workshop, Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement said, "Because of this mid-term review, we will be able to identify the challenges, gaps, and strategies to collect data via a comprehensive review of the implementation of the ASEAN RPA on EVAW."

Union Minister stated that the ASEAN RPA on EVAW, which was approved in November 2015 during the ASEAN Summit, was implemented beginning in 2016. As the first five years of implementation of the ASEAN Action Plan is nearly complete, ASEAN Member States have to conduct a mid-term review of the Action Plan. The mid-term review has to be conducted in two phases: the first phase includes reviewing existing documents and data; the second phase is to hold national-level talks. The Ministry has also convened the ASEAN Committee on ACW and the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, as well as the

ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women (AMMW) which also serves as the focal point.

Myanmar will develop and implement a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (2013-2022) on violence against women, a drafted law for Protection from Violence Against Women (POVAW) bill; and organized the National Committee on Prevention and Response to Conflict-Related Sexual Violence. The Union Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement, also said that a 24 hour Help Line for women, Six One Stop Women Support Centres, cash assistance for legal affairs and livelihood assistance, and training for social affairs management sectors would be implemented as part of the strategic plan.

Then, Dr. San San Aye, Director-General of Social Welfare Department explained the objectives of the National-level workshop on the mid-term review of ASEAN RPA on EVAW. Ms. Katherine Belen, UN Women Regional Consultant, spoke about the five priority areas and eight action plans included in the ASEAN Regional Action Plan on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and group discussions were held.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/mswrrmyanmar/posts/1817897191693231>



Photo: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sanna_Marin#/media

World Famous Quotes

“I have never thought about my age or gender. I think of the reasons I got into politics and those things for which we have won the trust of the electorate.”

..... Sanna Marin (Prime Minister of Finland)

Working to ensure equal representation of women in the democratic transition process, including the peace process

October 7, 2020

Equal representation of women in the democratic transition process, including the peace process, was addressed by Dr. Win Myat Aye, Union Minister of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement Ministry in a video message at a high-level meeting to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), which was held on October 1, during the 75th UN General Assembly.

He highlighted the fact that in the Union Treaty agreement, which was agreed by all stakeholders involved in the peace process, there are several mandates which must be followed in order to implement non-discrimination on the basis of gender. These mandates include: to formulate policies for equality; to encourage at least 30% women's participation in all sectors; to develop and implement policies to prevent gender-based violence; and to work for gender equality including the empowerment of women. The Union Minister said Myanmar was working hard to promote gender equality and protect vulnerable groups working through laws and regulations from policy-making to implementation.



Photo : Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief, and Resettlement Facebook

Dr. Win Myat Aye added that the response was based on the principle that no one, including girls and vulnerable groups, should be left behind during the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic treatment plan was also implemented with gender-sensitive social protection programs; and he said Myanmar would continue to work for gender equality.

The high-level meeting was held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on

Women (FWCW), which was held in Beijing in 1995, and with the theme of promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls. At the opening ceremony, leaders from around the world delivered opening remarks via video messages and government ministers and officials in charge of women's affairs in each country delivered speeches.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/mswrrmyanmar/photos/a.855290534620573/1797831720366445/>