

Most parties have promoted 30% women candidates in the 2020 election

August 14, 2020

Most parties which are running in the 2020 general election increased the number of women candidates to approximately 30%.

The list of candidates was announced by the respective parties earlier this month. According to those lists, most parties have prioritized women candidates, as compared to the 2015 election; some parties have planned to include women, representing more than 30% of the total number of candidates.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) party, will field 20% of the women candidates in the upcoming 2020 election; while 13% of women candidates competed in the previous general election. An official in the NLD party told the media that the women candidates who won in 2015 will be competing, and also some new candidates are will compete.

The Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP) will field 30% of the women candidates. The new parties, the People's Party, chaired by 88 Generation Student Leader U Ko Ko Gyi, will nominate 30% of women candidates; and the People's Pioneer Party (PPP), chaired by the woman MP, Daw Thet Thet Khaing, will have a majority of women candidates.

The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD), a major party in Shan State, will compete with 37% of women candidates. The Kayan National Party (KNP), prioritizing women and youth, will compete with up to 50% of women candidates; the Mon Unity Party (MUP) and the National Democratic Force (NDF) also told the media that they have a policy mandating 30% women's participation in their candidate list.

Women's organizations welcomed the preference for women candidates in the 2020 election. They pointed out that women candidates should be given priority and also provided with the necessary support.

Daw Aye Lei Tun, Senior Program Manager (Gender and Livelihood) from Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) said "Thanks all the parties for bringing in more women candidates in the upcoming 2020 elections. Based on the results of our research findings, women's organizations have been advocating to promote the number of women parliamentary candidates up to 30% for a long time. I think the political parties have seriously considered our recommendations. It is not just a matter of political parties that need to give more opportunities to women to compete in the election. But also, civil society organizations and other international organizations need to support women to become competent and capable representatives. And we must continue to raise public awareness so that the community would give

more recognition to and accept the capabilities of women."

EMReF published the report "Party Building and Candidate Selection – Intraparty Politics and Promoting Gender Equality in Myanmar" on April 19, 2020, which explored the needs that political parties in Myanmar should consider to promote women's political participation. Based on the research findings, the report provides eight recommendations for political parties that must be taken into account for more women's participation in politics. These recommendations also pointed out how parties need to support women candidates during the election campaign. Strategies to support women include: provide financial support to women candidates; improve security and provide women candidates a party aide during campaigns in rural areas; provide training to potential women candidates on practical campaign and parliamentary skills; provide training classes and establish best practices for candidates' online activity; and target party resources towards constituencies that the party has a good chance of winning. This study has been a part of a three-year project funded by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The full research paper can be downloaded from the EMReF website (www.emref.org).

According to the data released by the Union Election Commission (UEC) on August 14, 2020, there are 94 registered political parties in Myanmar. There are 1,171 competitive seats in the Union and State/Region Parliaments. The UEC announced that 37 million citizens are eligible to vote in the 2020 general election, of which more than 17 million are men, and more than 19 million are women.

In the 2015 general election, 6,083 candidates total competed, including 800 women candidates.

Shwe Lay



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Photo: Myanmar State Counsellor Office facebook

17% women participated in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Fourth Session

August 22, 2020

It was noted that 17% women participated in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Fourth Session, which was held from 19 to 21 August, 2020.

During this conference, the participation of female representatives was listed as one woman representative out of five chairpersons; two women out of the three agents; one being

involved in one of the three sections of Articles 3 of the Union Treaty; two out of the five advocates; in signing the third part of the Union treaty, one woman out of the five signatories from the five groups; two out of the six signatories to the third part of the Union Treaty. This information was released by the Alliance for Gender Inclusion in the Peace Process (AGIPP) on their facebook page.

AGIPP expressed a warm welcome

of women's participation in all aspects of the program which was recognized and emphasized in the Union Peace Conference – 21st Century Panglong Fourth Session. AGIPP strongly advocated for the inclusion of women in the peace process, not only in terms of numbers, but also in terms of women's meaningful participation and advancement of gender equality.

Source: https://www.facebook.com/AGIPP_Myanmar/posts/2867844166825173?_tn_=K-R

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What do women's organizations think about the Prevention of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) draft bill?

August 12, 2020

The Women's League of Burma (WLB) hosted an online discussion forum on the Prevention of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) draft law on 30 July. The views of panelists in the discussion regarding the PoVAW draft law are outlined below. The Prevention of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) draft law was publicized in government newspapers on January 25, 2020.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/DVBTVNews/videos/2725001127777654/>

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Photo: <https://www.facebook.com/DVBTVNews/videos/2725001127777654/>



Naw Hser Hser
General Secretary,
Women's League of Burma (WLB)

The PoVAW bill does not include the feelings or needs of women in conflict areas

We are glad to have this PoVAW law. However, Myanmar is an ethnically diverse country and ethnic groups have different stratum and different feelings. In 2013, there were more than 100 cases of ethnic women being raped as a weapon of war during armed conflict. We also know that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been signed in Myanmar. It is also a country that must abide by other human rights declarations. In 2018, an agreement was signed to end sexual violence in conflict. It would be great if it were thinking incorporated into the PoVAW law. When looking at it, many gaps were found in the law, but clear discrimination against ethnic minorities was evident. The perspectives of minorities were excluded, and the suffering of women in armed conflicts were ignored.



Daw May Sabe Phyu
Director,
Gender Equality Network (GEN)
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We did not easily pass a law to prevent the Prevention of Violence Against Women (PoVAW) law. Since 2013, we started our step by step advocacy process to encourage Parliament, political parties, and government officials to understand that a law was needed that could effectively prevent all forms of violence against women. In December 2014, we received a draft that we considered as a complete version when submitted by the UN Gender group and our women's organizations. According to the draft, it included 19 chapters and 217 articles. However, when we looked at the draft which was published in the newspaper in January 2020, it included only 12 chapters and 72 articles. What I want to say is that in December 2014, the United Nations groups and our women's groups wanted to talk about how much our demands have been reduced and abridged.

We are waiting for the day when the draft law will be passed

The law was first drafted in 2013, now half of 2020 has passed. For more than seven years, women who have suffered from various forms of violence have been waiting for the day when the draft law will be passed. Under the term of the previous government, it was not submitted to the Parliament for approval due to various reasons. But we have waited with many hopes for the draft law to be passed under the civilian government, elected by the people. The term of this government will end soon. Now the upcoming election is approaching; we have no hope. So our women's groups are sad about that and disappointed. However, we do not want to pass a law without including the points which our women's groups raised. Finally, there are ten points that our women's groups have added together in that draft law. I wish that these points would have been discussed and added into the draft law during the last Parliament session of this term, or would be discussed immediately at the beginning of the next term of government and Parliament.



Daw Yee Mon
Lecture on Law and Clinical Instructor (Harvard Law School)

Myanmar is the only country in Asia which lacks a law to protect women's rights

Compared to neighboring countries, Myanmar is the only country in Asia which lacks a law to protect women's rights. In our neighboring countries, the issues of women's rights violations have been carefully considered and included in the law. If Myanmar has true democracy, equality, human rights, and rule of law, then laws like PoVAW must comply with international standards, and include the voices of women.

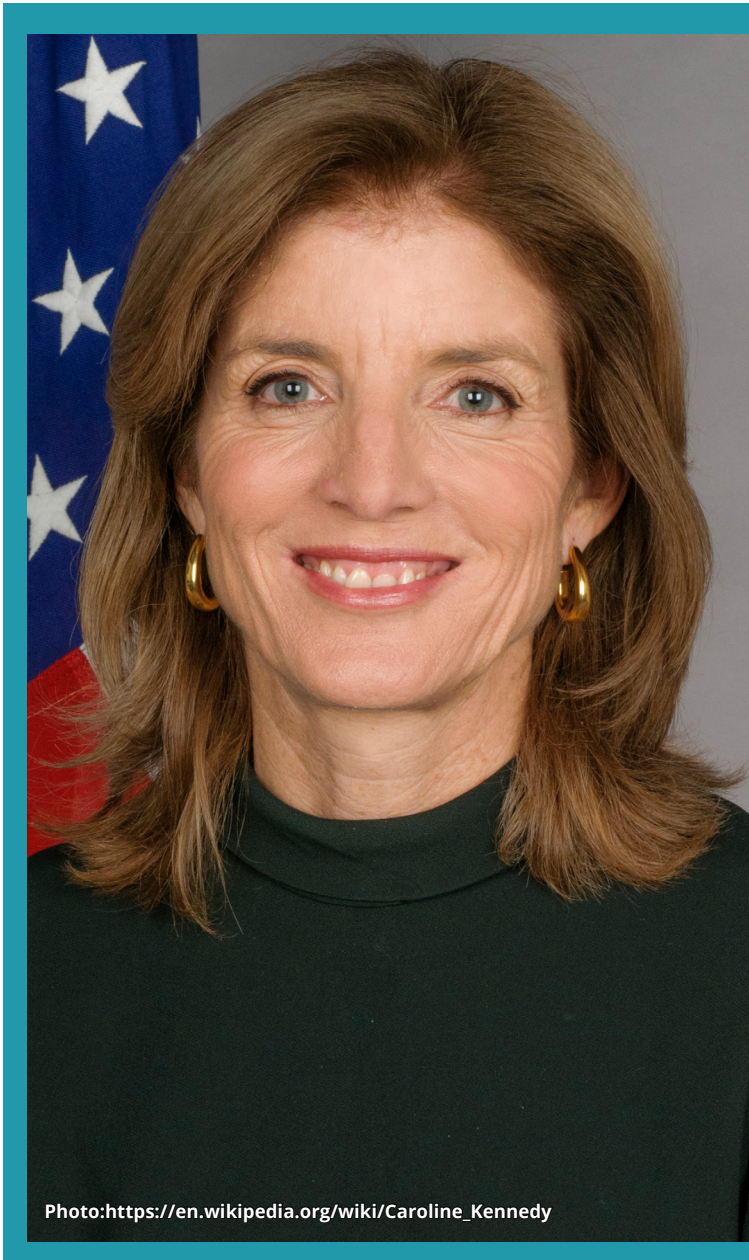


Photo: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caroline_Kennedy

World Famous Quotes

“Growing up in politics I know that women decide all elections because we do all the work.”

..... Caroline Kennedy (American Author, Attorney and Diplomat)



Lway Poe Labar

Policy Board member (Women's League of Burma-WLB) & Joint General Secretary (2) at Ta'ang Women's Organization (TWO)

Gaps in the draft law

The draft law aims to protect women from all forms of violence in Myanmar. Many of the definitions included in the articles of the law need to be amended and additional explanations are required. Since it is a law for women, the WLB recommends that Beijing Decision 1325, which recognizes women's peace and security resolutions, be incorporated into the draft law. There are many factors which are not considered in the definitions of types of violence. If the definition of sexual violence is taken from criminal law, then it would still be incomplete. More additions are needed and the draft law also does not mention about armed-conflict. The definitions of violence should include violence happening in armed-conflict zones. If not, what will be done if violence is committed in conflict zones; what will be done? How will the victims be treated? The draft does not specify how the perpetrators will be prosecuted. We recommend that such definitions be added to the draft law.