

WOMEN'S VOICE IN POLITICS AND DECISION-MAKING



The 2009 elections in Indonesia led to a significant increase in women's participation in politics (elected office) and decision-making with the help of affirmative action for candidacy and political party participation which was introduced in 2008. Women's representation in the Parliament (Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat, DPR) increased from 11% in 2004-2009 to 18% in 2009-2014 with similar increases across the provincial and district level DPR. Representation, however, has remained below the desired 30% and has remained inadequate in other critical areas of public service and decision-making roles. Significant disparities exist within political parties, across levels of government and between geographic regions, which constrains the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for women's empowerment. While Indonesia's Constitution and legal framework acknowledges the equal rights of women and demonstrates a commitment to improving governance, improvements to current laws/regulations and increased implementation and monitoring could more effectively address institutional and socio-cultural barriers and support women in elected and decision-making roles.

Current Status

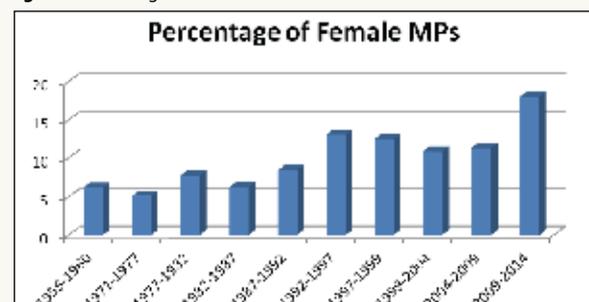
Women's representation in national elected roles remains disproportionate

It is generally accepted that the critical minority for representation is 30%; women need to make up 30% of an elected or decision-making body to adequately voice their concerns and opinions. This is reflected in the General Election Law 10/2008 that requires 30% women candidates running for the DPR at the national, provincial, and district level. The Government also commits to improving the quality of life and role of women in its 2004-2009 National Medium Term Development Plan (Chapter 12) and in its Long Term Plan for 2005-2025. Despite these commitments, women constitute only 18% of the 2009-2014 National Parliament and although the percentage of women in elected of-

fice has consistently grown from 8.8% in 1999 to 11% in 2004, this is a slow increase (Puskapol-UI, 2010).

Figure 1 shows the participation of women in the DPR since 1955 has increased slowly and inconsistently. Figure 2 ranks women's participation in the Southeast Asia region, revealing that Indonesia lags behind countries such as East Timor, Cambodia and Laos.

Figure 1: Percentage of Female DPR member 1955-2010.



Source: UNDP, 2010

Figure 2: Women's Representation in Southeast Asia in 2010, highest percentage representation to lowest.

Country	Seats in Lower/Single House	# Women	% Women
Timor Leste	64	19	29.20
Laos	115	29	25.2
Vietnam	493	127	25.8
Singapore	94	22	23.4
Philippines	229	49	21.4
Cambodia	123	26	21.10
Indonesia	560	101	18
Thailand	473	63	13.3
Malaysia	222	22	9.9

Source: Inter-parliamentary Union, 2010.

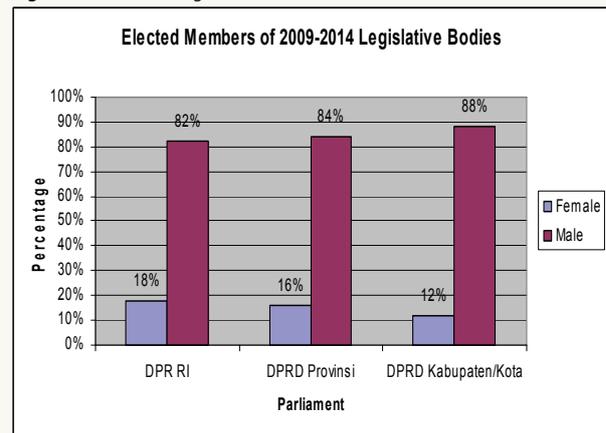
Women's representation in the House of Regional Representatives (*Dewan Perwakilan Daerah RI, DPD*) is higher than in the national DPR and increased from 22.6% in 2004 to 26.5% in 2009. This shows that voters do have confidence in women candidates to represent their interests in the DPD. Research is needed to determine why women have secured a higher level of representation in this legislative body. One possibility is that women running for the DPD do not need to be nominated by political parties and are independently elected. This suggests that women's representation in DPR is not simply a reflection of the level of women's interest in elected office but more critically an indicator of the continuing barriers for women seeking to enter politics. Such barriers include political party resistance, the Election Commission's lack of enforcement, and broader discrimination against women.

Women's representation in local elected bodies has increased slightly, with continuing geographical disparities

Figure 3 shows the percentage of women at different levels of government in the 2009-2014 term. At the provincial level, 26 out of 33 provinces increased the percentage of elected women from 2004. Women's representation on average across Provincial/Regional Representative Councils (*Dewan Perwakilan*

Rakyat Daerah, DPRD) increased from 8.8% to 16% in 2009. The representation of women at the district/local level is complicated by geographical disparities ranging from Maluku with 31% women elected to NTT with only 5.5% elected. Eight of the 461 district/municipality DPRD reached the 30% quota requirement or achieved a higher percentage of women than the national average of 12%. Notable were the districts of Gowa and Kota Tomohon where women hold over 40% of the seats in the DPRD (Puskapol-UI, 2010). The lack of data regarding district and provincial representation of women means that conclusions cannot be drawn about why these districts were more successful at electing women. Meanwhile, 20 district/municipality DPRDs have no elected women at all, including districts in the provinces of Aceh, NTT, NTB, Maluku, Maluku Utara, and Papua.

Figure 3: 2009-2014 Legislative Bodies



Source: Center for Political Study, University of Indonesia (Puskapol), 2010.

At the end of 2009, there was one woman governor among 33 elected governors (Banten) and one deputy governor (Central Java). Meanwhile, 2.2% of Vice Regents/Mayors and 3.9% of village head positions were held by women. Despite appeals from women's groups for affirmative action to encourage more women to run, direct local elections are not gender sensitive and have no legal provisions to encourage

the Regional General Election Commissions, political parties and other relevant bodies to promote women candidates (KapanLagi.com, 2007).

Political parties do not comply with the electoral gender quota and limit support of women by placing them in unwinnable districts and/or slots on the party list

In 2004, the few women candidates who were placed in the first and second slots on candidate lists were placed in districts/electorates where voters favored other parties. This situation is explained in Box 2 that describes the story of Noor Balqis during the 2009 campaign, when her political party changed her electoral district (Siregar, 2006). This issue of district/electorate placement by political parties needs to be further researched and regulated.

Over 80% of elected provincial and district female members and over 90% of national level female members were placed in the first three positions on the ballot paper or the party list of candidates. While these numbers indicate some political party compliance with affirmative action, they also reveal candidate ranking affects voter choice. In light of the district/electorate placement issue, holding the first slot on the party list does not guarantee a seat in the DPR. Unless political

parties are held accountable for the quota requirement and are monitored for their placement of women in both of these areas, the quota law will remain ineffective in se-

Box 2: Impact of placement

“At first, my party placed me in the first position in North Sumatra I electoral district. I come from this area. I know people there and they know me very well. But my party then moved me to North Sumatra III electoral district. I do not know people here and they do not know me either. I think that is why I could not be elected.”
Noor Balqis, only female member of the 1999-2004 DPR.

Source: Siregar, 2006

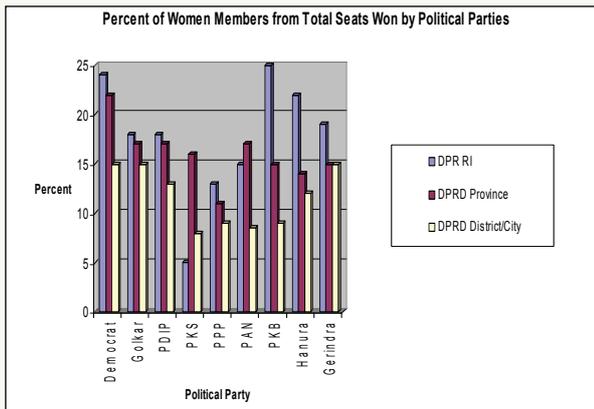
curing a minimum amount of women in elected legislative roles.

Political parties’ support of women candidates varied noticeably in the 2009 election across levels of government and within political parties

In 2009, among the nine parties that gained seats in the DPR, the Democrat Party (*Partai Demokrat*) contributed the highest percentage of women at 35% of the overall 18% elected. Gerindra and Hanura parties (new parties in the 2009 election) contributed the lowest at 4% (KPU data). At the provincial and district level, these political parties varied greatly in their support of women candidates. The Democratic Party had 25% women’s representation of the total women represented at the provincial level while the Prosperous and Justice Party (PKS) had 7%. The Golkar Party led with the highest representation of women at the district/city DPRD level with 20% women, while five of the top nine parties remained at or below 5% representation (Puskapol-UI, 2010). Support of women candidates within individual political parties varied from the DPR to the DPRD. For example, of the total seats that the PKB won in the election, 25% were assigned to women at the national level and only 9% at the district/city level. Figure 4 describes the disparity within political parties and their support of women at different levels of the DPR.



Figure 4: Percent of Women Members from Total Seats Won by Political Parties



Source: Center for Political Study, University of Indonesia (Puskapol), 2010.

Political parties lack established and transparent recruitment procedures for candidates and continue to hinder women’s electability despite the quota law

Because the rank of a candidate in the Indonesian electoral system is still the main determinant for winning a seat, political party recruitment procedures are incredibly important. Political parties each have internal regulations and rules for recruitment and ranking of candidates. Some political parties are willing to use internal regulations as a tool to include women in the central executive board and other party structures. The United Development Party (PPP), for example, requires 20% women to be on their central and local executive boards, down to district level (Republika Online, 2007). Other political parties, however, have used the internal regulations to exclude women; for example, parties often provide little support or educational opportunities for female candidates.

Political parties are not compliant with the quota law that specifies the percentage of women required in central management structure

Women who are not elected to decision-making positions within political parties have little opportunity to develop political skills and knowledge. This also keeps women from influencing the party agenda. Political Party Law No. 2/2008 and the revised Political Party Law No. 2/2011 require new political parties to have 30% women in their central executive boards. While this does not apply to established political parties (those that gain the majority of seats in the DPR), it sets an important precedent for all parties in Indonesia. Prior to the 2009 elections, all but one party had 30% women in their central executive board, although little information was known about what positions they held. Post 2009 elections, the numbers dropped significantly, in one case from 35% to 6.7%. With a lack of enforcement by the Elections Commission and a limited requirement for information to be made available to the public on political party membership, political parties have the freedom to ignore the quota (Ministry of Law and Human Rights). Data available on women’s membership in the central executive boards of nine political parties during 2004 elections indicates that only the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) had a woman in a top leadership position, none of the party secretaries were women and two parties, the United Development Party (PBP) and the PDIP, had female treasurers (Siregar, 2006).



The Elections Commission must do more to ensure that the gender quota is fulfilled within political parties

It is the responsibility of the Elections Commission, as an agent of electoral law enforcement, to verify documents to ensure that each political party has fulfilled the gender quota in its candidate lists (Article 57 of the Quota Law) and to return documents of political parties which have not fulfilled the requirements so that they can redress the imbalance (Article 58, 1-2). Rather than enforcing these provisions, the Elections Commission has chosen instead to use printed media to publically announce a party's non-compliance. While the Elections Commission can be commended for taking this public action, further enforcement is needed by this governing body to fully ensure that regulations are adhered to.

There continues to be discrimination and resistance against women taking public political roles in Indonesia

A survey conducted by Komnas Perempuan prior to the 2009 election revealed intimidation and gender-based discrimination against female voters and legislative candidates. Chairperson Neng Dara Afiah was quoted saying, *"In this election, it is still difficult for women, and this vulnerable group has often suffered from intimidation and has been more discriminated against in the lead-up to the 2009 election than in the 2004 general election"* (Jakarta Post, 2009). Women who enter public life after raising a family are more likely to be seen as ill-suited for high political office because they lack relevant training and knowledge. As they cannot access resources and economic opportunities as easily as men, they struggle to finance campaigns. Political parties wary of losing power are reluctant to

support women candidates they perceive as poorly trained or financed. Women also face discrimination because they pose a threat to male politicians and candidates; they have strengths that attract voters, including the perception that they have more integrity. The capacity of women needs to be strengthened to combat these obstacles.

Women's representation in decision-making roles in government and the civil service remains low

Female headed ministries in the 2009-2014 Cabinet include the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Trade (MoT), and the State Ministry for National Development Planning (BAPPE-NAS). The current Cabinet has four women out of 34 members (14.7%), similar to the four women out of 36 members in the previous Cabinet. This remains lower than the percentage of women in the DPR at 18% in 2009 (UNDP, 2010). Women also continue to be seriously under-represented in the top echelon of civil service positions where they constitute 8.7% compared with 46.3% of civil service officers overall (BKN, 2011). Their representation in top decision-making positions in all government ministries and agencies and in independent state-formed commissions is similarly low.

Box 3: Empowering Women in Village Decision-making Processes

The PNPM Generasi program is supported by the Women's and Children's Health Revolution Program and was started in NTT in 2009. It enforces a fine if women are not included in village decisions about activity funding including medical and posyandu health services. Focus group discussions are held for women where they can express their ideas. In gender-mixed forums, men tend to remain more active in voicing their opinions and still form the majority of village elite.

Source: Febrinary et al., 2010

While decentralization could increase opportunities for women's involvement in development planning, current practice suggests they are still excluded

The *Musrenbang* Guidelines provide a mandatory requirement for the participation of women in annual village, sub-district, and district level development planning so that their concerns can be taken into consideration for programming and budgeting. This is stipulated in annual joint circulars from the State Minister for BAPPENAS, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and the MoF. Early research on the Guidelines' impact found that men still played a dominant role, while many women play a token role, supporting their husbands or other male figures as seen in Box 3 (Syukri et al, 2011).

In the latest round of development planning (February 2011), several districts trialed a *Musrenbang Perempuan* prior to the regular village *Musrenbang* meeting so women could identify their priorities for consideration by the community. This needs to be carefully monitored to make sure women are not subsequently excluded from the mainstream planning process. Consideration also has to be given to improving the *Musrenbang* process overall, as there remains insufficient legislation and regulations to clarify the role, function and powers of community groups, NGOs and professional associations in local planning and budgeting. These challenges, combined with poor oversight by local authorities, limits the effectiveness and influence of the *Musrenbang* process (USAID, 2007).



Continuing stereotypes about the appropriate roles for women affect their ability to participate in decision-making

Women in Indonesia are generally not considered to be the decision-makers at family or community levels. A recent opinion poll on the attitudes and perceptions of women's social, economic and political participation revealed that 77.6% of male and female respondents believed that men should be the decision-makers of the community. In addition, 95% said that men should be the leaders of their households and 94% felt that women should not work without permission from their husbands (UNDP, 2010. p.23). Gender bias in knowledge, attitudes and practices continues to exist nation-wide and reveals the need to expand education and gender-training programs for all ages.

Policy Issues

Indonesia's commitment to international agreements fuels continued commitment to empowering women

The MDGs, to which Indonesia became a signatory in 2001, form an overarching framework that places human rights and poverty at the center of development policies. An indicator for progress in MDG3 for gender equality and women's empowerment is the proportion of seats held by women in the National Legislature. In a recent survey, respondents chose 'Indonesia's commitment to international treaties and agreements' as a main factor influencing a desire to increase women's representation (IFES, 2011). Throughout the 2009 election period, discussions in media and a number of surveys confirmed that one area of reform in the electoral system that enjoys pop-

ular support is the greater participation of women as candidates in political races. A diversity of Indonesians believe that the proportion of women in legislatures is too low and there is strong support for quotas to increase the number of women on party lists for legislative elections (USAID, 2009).

The government has strengthened its commitment to women in politics and decision-making through National Development Plans

The National Medium Term Development Plan 2009-2014, as part of the National Long Term Development Plan (RPJPN) 2005-2025 discusses improving the quality of life and the role of women. Goals found in the chapter include the following: *“The assurance of gender equity in various laws, development programs and public policy...”* (Chapter 12). This commitment, while commendatory, has yet to result in significant increased representation for women in politics or decision-making.

Indonesia’s quota law regarding the participation of women changed in 2008, resulting in a stronger, yet flawed gender quota for parliaments and political parties

Law No.10/2008 on General Elections, unlike the 2003 voluntary gender quota law, includes a clear quota for the nomination of women. The law grants political parties the opportunity to present closed lists (through Article 214) while requiring that at least one in every three candidates on the list be a woman (Article 55). A closed list system gives political parties the right to directly select representatives to the DPR. Political parties are required, by the 2008 Political Party Law, to include 30% women on their central boards. In December 2008, the Constitutional Court declared

Article 214 unconstitutional in regard to equal rights for all as well as the rights to freedom of association and freedom of expression (Constitutional Court Decision, 2008). This resulted in a semi-open system just months before the election, making voter preference a determining factor for election (Bessell, 2010). Voter preference was heavily influenced by candidate ranking on the party list and political party support, as discussed above.

Indonesian Women’s Caucuses and women CSOs have played an active role in ensuring the government’s policy commitments to women are implemented

The Indonesian Political and Parliamentary Women’s Caucuses work to increase women’s involvement in Indonesian politics and serve as a gathering place for women members of the DPR. Women NGOs and CSOs are strategic partners in women’s political empowerment and were crucial in pushing for the quota law and other key legislation regarding women’s rights (i.e. Elimination of Domestic Violence Law). Currently, 17.5% of the total NGOs registered in Indonesia address women’s issues or implement a gender program (SMERU, 2010). CSOs, however, still need to find ways to become active and sustainable at the local level to offer opportunities for women across all sectors of society and government.

Recommendations

- Sector agencies, the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Law and Human Rights, and the Elections Commission, monitored by the Ministry of Women’s Empowerment and Child Protection (MoWECP), to improve provisions to achieve the gender quota for 2014-2019 DPR through placement criteria and a mandatory one-in-three zip-

per mechanism, with an additional requirement to have at least 30% women on the first and second places on the candidate list.

- Election Commission to have stronger oversight authority in order to take stronger measures against non-compliance, including restricting political parties' participation in electoral districts where they do not meet the regulated placement and nomination requirement of 30% women candidates.
- Elections Commission to collect sex disaggregated data that is incorporated into its decision-making processes and is made available to voters, candidates and elected members of parliaments by sex.
- Ministry of Home Affairs to make public the process of elections at all levels of government, particularly since political parties now receive state funds based on the calculation of their seats in the parliament.
- Ministry for State Apparatus, in coordination with the MoWECP, to increase numbers of women in high echelons of government institutions including technical agencies, ministries and state-formed commissions through a systematic career acceleration program, including educational scholarships.
- CSOs and Women's Caucuses, supported by ministries and the Cabinet, to cooperate in increasing public awareness through school curriculum and civic education about gender and social equality in politics and decision-making.
- CSOs and Women's Caucuses, supported by ministries and the Cabinet, to collaborate on improving women and men's participation in and capacity for public office through training programs at the local, provincial, and national level, including regular follow-ups and impact assessments.
- Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Finance and National Development Agency (Bappenas), in co-

ordination with local governments and Regional Representative Council (DPD), to establish targets and mechanisms for women's engagement at the local development planning level with an additional provision and oversight mechanism included in the annual Circular Letter on the Guideline for Musrenbang Processes.

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