



Gender Equality in Public Life & Elected Office

Political parties are the key entry point for women to enter elected office and to have a meaningful voice in governance institutions and decision-making. It is critical that party structures, policies, practices and values support and promote gender equality. The following suggestions are ways in which all political parties can work towards the important goal of gender equality in Myanmar.

Internal Party Organisation

- Ensure that the party's legal framework explicitly mentions and addresses gender equality
- Adopt measures, including internal quotas, that ensure women's participation on committees and governing structures
- Set targets for women's participation at party conferences and meetings - this can include holding separate forums for women
- Establish women's wings and sections within parties, formally integrated into the party structure, with defined roles and responsibilities and appropriate funding
- Ensure that gender is mainstreamed into all of the party's policies

Pre- Elections

- Place women candidates in winning seats
- Expand the pool of women candidates
- Provide training in skills such as fundraising, message development, media relations and communicating with voters
- Form strategic partnerships with civil society organizations and engage with men to promote women's participation in public life and decision-making
- Share experiences across countries and the region

During the Election Period

- Train and promote women in campaign leadership positions
- Ensure women's visibility in the campaign by providing additional media exposure
- Identify and disseminate party positions that are priorities for women
- Provide information to voters that include specific messages, such as - the importance of women's votes, and the importance of women's representation in parliament

Source: *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation*, UNDP and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 2012. Available for free download at <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/womens-empowerment.html>

After the Elections

- Conduct an assessment of the level of gender equality within the party, with the aim of identifying and ultimately eliminating, any practices or rules that may directly or indirectly discriminate against women
- Promote gender-sensitive reforms in political institutions, such as changing the sitting times of parliament and the parliamentary calendar to accommodate parliamentarians with families
- Ensure gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in party policies, including by supporting gender-specific policy reform, such as combating gender-based violence or targeting parental leave or reproductive rights issues, and by promoting gender equality in areas like access to justice, health, nationality, labour, land rights, social security and inheritance
- Support cross-party networks of women, and women's parliamentary caucuses, to help channel women's interests and concerns and can help to mainstream gender in policy development and government oversight
- Ensure women elected to a political institution are provided with leadership roles within the parliamentary group (e.g. group chairperson) and parliamentary committees (e.g. chairperson or group focal point)
- Ensure that women who are elected can access appropriate training and skills development, including cross-visits to other countries
- Raise awareness of all party members (men and women) on gender equality

Myanmar: Women in Parliament 2012*

	(A) Total Number of Constituencies/Appointees	(B) Total Number of Elected Seats	Total Number of Women Elected	Percentage of Women Elected to Parliament/s
Pyithu Hluttaw (Lower House)	440 – 330 constituencies – 110 military appointees	322	25	5.7% - of 440 total (A) 7.8% - of 322 elected seats (B)
Amyotha Hluttaw (Upper House)	224 – 168 constituencies – 56 military appointees	168	4	1.8% - of 224 total (A) 2.4% - of 168 elected seats (B)
Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (Union Assembly: Upper and Lower Houses)	664 – 498 constituencies – 166 military appointees	490	29	4.4% - of 664 total (A) 6.0% - of 490 elected seats (B)
Pyinae/Tine Dae Tha Gyi Hluttaw (State/Region Parliaments)	887 – 665 constituencies – 222 military appointees	663	24	2.7% - of 887 total (A) 3.6% - of 663 elected seats (B)
Total	1,551	1,153	53	3.4% - of 1,551 total (A) 4.6% - of 1,153 elected seats (B)

* Produced by Phan Tee Eain and the Gender Equality Network, October 2012

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