



**THE 44<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
OF ASEAN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY  
5-11 AUGUST 2023  
Jakarta, Indonesia**

*Responsive Parliaments for a Stable and Prosperous ASEAN*

*(Res. 44GA/2023/WAIPA/02)*

**RESOLUTION ON  
ENHANCING ASEAN RESILIENCE THROUGH WOMEN LEADERSHIP  
AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE PARLIAMENTS**

***Sponsored by Indonesia  
Co-sponsored by Philippines***

***The Forty-fourth AIPA General Assembly:***

***Noting*** that equal participation of men and women in public affairs and decision-making has long been recognized as a human right as enshrined in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1953 Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), 2000 United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325 OR S/RES/1325 and other relevant UN Security Council Statements;

***Recalling*** the First Virtual Meeting of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA (WAIPA) hosted via videoconference on 5 June 2023 and hosted by the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, under the theme “Enhancing ASEAN Resilience through Women Leadership and Gender-Responsive Parliaments”;

***Reaffirming*** women’s participation in the decision-making process as stated in paragraph 13 of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, that: “*Women’s empowerment and their full participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in the decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace;*”

***Recalling*** the AIPA Resolutions No. 35GA/2014/WAIPA/02 on “*Strengthening Women Parliamentarians Roles in ASEAN Community Building*”; Resolution No. 35GA/2014/WAIPA/03 on “*Women Leadership in Southeast Asia*”; Resolution No. 36GA/2015/WAIPA/02 on “*Promoting a Culture of Respect and the Rights of Women and Girls Toward Inclusiveness*”; Resolution No. 36GA/2015/WAIPA/03 on “*Strengthening Legal Framework to Eliminate Violence Against Women and Children in ASEAN*”; and Resolution No.40GA/2019/WAIPA/01 on “*Promoting Gender Equality and*

*the Empowerment of Women in ASEAN*"; the AIPA Resolution No. 43GA/2022/WAIPA/01 on "Promoting the Role of Women Parliamentarians in Advancing the Women, Peace and Security Agenda"; and the AIPA Resolution No. 43GA/2022/WAIPA/02 on "Gender Equality and Women Empowerment for a Sustainable, Inclusive and Resilient COVID-19 Recovery";

**Recalling** further the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, and the ASEAN Community Vision 2025, ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Blueprint 2025, ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on Women Peace and Security and ASEAN Regional Framework for Protection, Gender and Inclusion to promote equitable access to opportunities for all;

**Encouraging** also ASEAN Member States' commitment to promote and implement the equitable and effective participation of women in all fields and at various levels of society and in the political sphere as enshrined in the ASEAN Declaration on the Gender-Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals (2017); and Declaration of the Advancement of Women in the ASEAN Region (1988);

**Noting** that women are still underrepresented in the decision-making process and leadership positions, both in parliament and public governance;

**Recognizing** that empowering women parliamentarians and increasing women's political leadership positions will enhance the diversity of leadership, inclusive and equitable decision-making processes to ensure more comprehensive legislative frameworks and, responsive governance structures for promoting sustainable peace and development, including increased capacity among ASEAN and ASEAN Member States to tackle emerging socio-economic, security, and political challenges;

**Recognizing** that the role of women parliamentarians is placed across all three pillars of the ASEAN Community namely the Political-Security, Economic and Socio-Cultural Communities and that the women parliamentarians of AIPA have been actively participating within the AIPA framework through various programs and activities;

**Acknowledging** significant progress that have been made by ASEAN Members States in promoting gender equality, inclusion, and empowerment of women and more efforts that are required to achieve gender equality and the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals.

**Hereby resolves to:**

**Call upon** AIPA Member Parliaments to enhance their contribution, implementation and monitoring of the progress of the implementation of CEDAW, the ASEAN Human Rights Declaration, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action concerning gender equality, women representation, and political leadership and ASEAN Declaration on the Gender Responsive Implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and Sustainable Development Goals;

**Urge** AIPA Member Parliaments to monitor the implementation of the ASEAN Community Vision 2025 and promote equitable access to opportunities for women and gender equality for implementation of all the Sustainable Development Goals;

**Encourage** AIPA Member Parliaments to ensure a safe, healthy and inclusive ecosystem that supports and empowers for women in politics, by developing affirmative action of women representation in parliaments, providing empowerment and civic, political education and leadership for women and youth addressing violence against women in politics both online and offline, addressing institutional bias and discrimination, and engaging with political parties to support and provide capacity building for women and empower them during their political career;

**Call Upon** the AIPA Member Parliaments, as catalysts in overcoming gender disparities and advancing women's rights, to prioritize women's equal and meaningful participation in politics, provision for decent work, ending violence against women and children, and fulfilling the goal of social inclusion and shared prosperity in the legislation agenda;

**Urge** the AIPA Member Parliaments to address intersectional barriers and multifaceted challenges of women political participation and socio-economic development, including negative stereotypes, sexism, institutional gender bias and gender-based discrimination in politics and socio-economic development;

**Encourage** AIPA Member Parliaments to share experiences about customized program, women-led support programs for women and women-led businesses;

**Call upon** the governments of ASEAN Member States to strengthen cooperation with the international community to support women in areas such as start-ups, poverty reduction, vocational training, digital transformation, etc.;

**Urge** AIPA Member Parliaments to enhance gender awareness as well as to develop and adopt gender-responsive mechanism in decision-making, leadership, law making, budgeting, and oversight;

**Call Upon** AIPA Member Parliaments to ensure the equal representation of women in the decision-making process and safeguard the presence of women in leadership positions;

**Urge** AIPA Member Parliaments to include and actively encourage male allies in advancing the gender equality agenda to increase the awareness of mainstreaming gender perspectives in cultural, structural, and socioeconomic aspects;

**Encourage** the AIPA Member Parliaments to incorporate gender-responsive programming in policy making and political participation at all levels to reduce gender inequalities by crafting gender-responsive laws, where applicable, to ensure a resilient, inclusive, and equitable future for ASEAN Member States;

**Support** the development of the ASEAN Plan of Actions on Women's Political Participation and direct/task the AIPA Secretariat to carry out the implementation of the programmes in close collaboration with the ASEAN Committee on Women, and submit a report to the Coordinating Committee of WAIPA in close collaboration with the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women.

Adopted on the ninth day of August 2023 in Jakarta, Indonesia.



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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

**RESOLUTION ON ENHANCING ASEAN RESILIENCE THROUGH  
WOMEN LEADERSHIP AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE PARLIAMENT**

In the wake of unprecedented global challenges, including the post-pandemic recovery, shifting geopolitical dynamics, and multifaceted socio-economic disparities, there is an urgent need for policymakers, government, and society to build sustained community resilience. The COVID-19 pandemic that hit the world in the past couple of years showed us how prone our societies were. The threats of such diseases were not only affecting people's health, but also hampering the healthcare system, economic conditions, and education aspects of the communities.

The pandemic has brought to light the disproportionate impact on vulnerable populations, revealing differing effects on women and men, and further emphasizing the concerning reality that women have been less likely than men to actively participate in the development of response and recovery policies. Based on UN-Women data, COVID-19 pushed an estimated 47 million additional women and girls into extreme poverty and further widen the gender poverty gap. Due to the pandemic, women are at risk of various problems such as unemployment and even gender-based violence.

The Southeast Asian region, like the rest of the world, finds itself at a critical juncture, requiring inclusive and forward-thinking leadership to navigate these complexities effectively. It is crucial for the Coordinating Committee of WAIPA to emphasize the importance of women's leadership and promoting gender-responsive policies to protect and build resilience among ASEAN societies. It is imperative for ASEAN member states to mainstream gender perspective and gender risk assessment in their decision-making processes. Parliaments should take immediate action to advocate gender-responsive policy to equip women facing challenges in various aspects of life.

Despite progress, Southeast Asia continues to face challenges in achieving gender equality in political representation and leadership. Female lawmakers only hold approximately 20% of total parliamentary seats across ASEAN member states, which not only hinders changes from taking place, but also implies that the gender equality in policymaking and parliamentary processes is still far below the expected rate. Evidence suggests that societies with greater women's political representation and leadership tend to exhibit improved governance, increased focus on social issues, and enhanced

policy outcomes that address gender-based inequalities. Women parliamentarians share common experiences with other women. Their distinctive interests in particular policy areas, enable them to offer the perspectives of women to politics. Empowering women parliamentarians and increasing women's political leadership positions will lead to more comprehensive legislative frameworks, responsive governance structures, and equitable decision-making processes, thus bolstering ASEAN's capacity to tackle emerging socio-economic and political challenges.

It is also essential to recognize and strengthen women's leadership potential in economic activities, as women are still participating in social and economic inclusion programs with resilience despite the existing challenges. In Southeast Asia, an estimated 78 million micro-, small-, and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) are owned and operated by women, employing millions of people and serving as key drivers of innovation, job creation, poverty reduction, and are pivotal in supporting the state's economy during the pandemic and beyond. Recalling the AIPA Resolution No. 42GA/2021/WAIPA/01 on "Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment in the Future of Work and Post-Pandemic Recovery through Digital and Financial Inclusion," adopted in Brunei Darussalam, it is also important to eradicate digital literacy gap between men and women. As economies grow toward digital, gender-inclusive digital workforces are pretty much needed. Supporting digital literacy in women-led and women-owned MSMEs will create opportunities for women to fully participate in the digital economy and as part of communities' resilience. Closing the gender digital divide in the region will also give protection for young girls and women against internet-based violence and crimes such as internet fraud, digital prostitution, and human trafficking. Through empowering women's leadership in economic activities, ASEAN can unlock immense potential for sustainable, resilient, and inclusive growth, ensuring that women's voices and perspectives are integrated into economic decision-making processes.

AIPA has been consistently advocating gender inclusion for its programs. It is a necessity to invest in women's inclusivity to reduce the gender gap in ASEAN countries. Gender equality is a critical element in building community's resilience and achieving sustainable development. Women play a critical role in effectively tackling multifaceted community issues. The knowledge and perspectives they bring are such assets to enhance collective actions and help produce suitable and sustainable solutions for the community.

When women's voices are included in the process of planning and decision-making, they can provide input on gender-based risk and assessment plans and program implementation. Women's inclusion in resilience programs will also equip women to have the knowledge and skills to actively participate in the community resilience planning and implementation processes. Normalizing the involvement of women in community also creates awareness and a more supportive environment for women to thrive. It will also create safe spaces for women to share their knowledge and experience, bridge the gap among stakeholders, and foster a spirit of collaboration.

Against this backdrop, the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians of AIPA recognizes the urgent need to harness the transformative power of women's leadership

and establish gender-responsive parliaments to address the unique challenges faced by the region. By embracing women's active participation in decision-making processes, we can build a more resilient ASEAN, where diverse perspectives are valued, gender equality is prioritized, and sustainable progress can be achieved. This timely meeting aims to foster collaborative efforts, share best practices, and develop strategies that can effectively respond to the region's post-pandemic recovery, geopolitical dynamics, and other challenges in 2023, thereby highlighting the crucial role of women leaders and gender-responsive governance in ensuring a resilient and equitable future for ASEAN member states.