

Engender Politics and Governance - Declaration of South Asian Conference on Women Political Rights

Tuesday 17 September 2013, by [Members of the global women's rights movement](#) (Date first published: 12 September 2012).

Declaration Made at South Asian Women's Conference on Women's Political Participation and Representation (Katmandu, 11-12, September 2013).

We the women rights campaigners from south Asian Countries working in members of parliament, political parties, civil society organizations, business and academia gathered in Kathmandu on 11 and 12 September 2013 on the invitation of All Nepal Women's Association to acknowledge the women's struggle, to enhance the solidarity and strengthened the regional and in country movement for women's equal political participation and representation in the south Asian countries have collectively agreed that engendering politics and governance is an urgent needs for peace, prosperity and to end human poverty in South Asian region.

Realizing the marginalization and structural exclusion of women's from governance and political participation has reinforced the feminization of poverty;

Confirming the discrimination and violence against women are further hindering women's accession and influence in politics and governance;

Reaffirming the exclusion of women from politics and governance is violation of fundamental human rights and breaches the spirit of universal declaration of human rights;

Recognizing the women's meaningful engagement in politics and governance can contribute for reducing gaps in society and promotion of peace and dignity for all;

Reconfirming Women's participation in politics and governance is not an endowment rather entitlement of women and compensation for historical and structural exclusion of women;

Recalling the 14 points declaration made by South Asian Women's Conference in 2009 for breaking barriers and claiming women's space in South Asia

Call for political parties, governments and civil society organizations including mass media for taking adequate steps with sincere commitment and practical realization for equal representation and participation of women in politics and governance;

The conference appeal for following actions to engender politics and governance in South Asia:

- Citizenship is the foundation for accessing and influencing politics and governance, we call government of south Asian countries to ensure full and equal citizenship rights for women

- Current notion of delegative liberal democracy model is failed to ensure women's proportionate participation, we demand for reforming democratic system to be more progressive, women friendly and able to recognize and adequately respond the women's needs
- The election modalities on are crucial for attaining women's proportionate participation, we appeal the election commissions of south Asian countries to practice special gender policy that promotes ethical, safer and adequate legislative measures for making women's equal representation and participation in election in many ways as voter, candidate, political campaigner and election observer as well as electoral officials.
- Criminalization of politics and corruption in political system has further hindered women's participation and representation in governance, we call upon political parties, governments, civil society and media to expose the crimes and corruption in politics and to seek accountability and political integrity from political parties.
- Women's political participation and representation in governance is adversely influenced by all discriminatory and harmful cultural practices including early marriages, dowry, violence against women, misconception of witchcraft, exclusion from education and economic engagement. We call government and civil society to take adequate effective actions to end such kind of structural cultural barriers against women's equality in society.
- The patriarchal mindset among the male dominated parliamentary system has not recognized women's competency, the conference call for interventions on changing the patriarchy mindset among political leaders and parliamentarians.
- We declare united regional movement lead by women political leaders together with activists, civil society, workers' union, academia and business sector to further reclaiming women's equal space in politics and governance of south Asia.
- We acknowledge and appreciate the steps taken by people, women and political parties of Nepal to have one-third women parliamentarians in past constitution assembly . We are not fully assured the continuity of 33 percent participation in upcoming election. We call for political parties, in solidarity with struggling civil society and women leaders, at least to institutionalize the 33 percent women's representation in upcoming constitution assembly, to have 50 percent participation in local governments and to move ahead for equal women's representation at all level of political parties and governance.
- We thank the Rt. Honourable President of federal democratic republic of Nepal, Dr. Ram Baran Yadav for availing his precious time and encouragement provided to the participants of the conference. We also thank the Rt. Honourable vice president of federal democratic republic of Nepal, Paramananda Jha for his encouraging speech and being with us during inauguration of this conference.

Celebrate women power for peace, justice and dignity!

12 September 2013, Kathmandu Nepal
