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Women in the 1990's



# Gender Equality May Become a Way of Life for Filipinos



By ESTRELLA MIRANDA-MANIGUIS

**T**he 1990s will most likely mark the decade when "gender equality" becomes part not only of the vocabulary of Filipinos in government but also of their way of thinking and performing.

For this, *machos* will have to blame the "institutionalization" in the Philippine government machinery of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive development planning and programming.

Such institutionalization is one principal mechanism identified in the Philippine Development Plan for Women or PDPW (1989-1992) to effect the "mainstreaming of women in development."

The PDPW -- through a series of consultations by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) with women in government and the private sector in 1988 -- was formulated as a companion plan to the country's economic development plan, the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan or MTPDP (1987-1992). Launched by President Aquino on March 8, 1989, it is a blueprint for policies, strategies, programs/projects and mechanism to ensure that women take part in development "on a basis of equality with men, both as active change agents and as beneficiaries of programs and services."

The reason for having a plan for women is that although the MTPDP implicitly covers the needs of both women and men, it fails to take into account the underlying subordinate position of women in society which prevents them from participating in



*The entire government machinery is working towards the involvement of both women and men in all aspects of national development.*

or benefiting from development projects in the same way as the men.

Orchestrating the implementation of the PDPW is the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) which is authorized by presidential order to monitor, with the NEDA, the Plan's implementation by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as well as to evaluate and update the Plan with the help of said groups.

Actually, the NCRFW was set up as early as 1975 during the United Nations International Women's Year as a response of the Philippine government to the UN General Assembly's call for member-countries to establish a government machinery to attend to women's concerns. The Commission has the mandate to take steps to "ensure the full integration of women for economic, social and cultural development" and "to ensure further equality between women and men."

But although it was quick to act as described, the previous dictatorial regime was in fact too *macho* in its orientation and values that it was impossible for the NCRFW leadership at the time to deal with the root causes of gender inequality, much less -- given the limitations within such a political setup -- to challenge the structural factors abetting sexual discrimination.

What NCRFW did accomplish in the main was the awakening of a good number of women to their potential for public involvement, through

the *Balikatan sa Kaunlaran* Movement which focused on drawing women out of their homes to participate in community development and income-generating projects.

With the change in national leadership came a re-focusing of NCRFW objectives. What the new set of Commission officials saw was that NCRFW should stop being a lone voice in the wilderness, so to speak, but must be able to work within and through the entire government machinery. Furthermore, advocating for women must start with policy-making and planning -- hence, the PDPW.

NCRFW Executive Director Remedios I. Rikken lists four major strategies to implement the PDPW. These are: strengthening the data base on women, establishing appropriate institutional mechanisms in government, providing appropriate training in gender-consciousness raising and technical expertise in gender-responsive planning, and provision of technical assistance in policy-making and programming.

Considered the centerpiece strategy is the creation of so-called Women in Development (WID) Focal Points or FPs as one institutional mechanism to look after women's concerns.

Depending on the organization and operations of the agency, said Ms. Rikken, the FP may be constituted as a committee, a women's desk, a technical working group or a task force.

Targeted to be set up is one FP each for the 20 line departments, 114 attached agencies, 83 govern-



**President Aquino inspects the ranks of her military whose strength is supported by an able Women's Auxilliary Corps.**

ment corporations, three constitutional bodies, 13 regional administrative bodies and four judicial bodies.

The FP acts in behalf of two sets of clientele, explained Ms. Rikken. One is the female constituency serviced by the agency (e.g. women workers for the Department of Labor and Employment, peasant women for the Department of Agrarian Reform) and the second is the agency's women employees themselves who may face problems like sexual harassment, discrimination in hiring/promotion or assignment to sex-typed tasks.

Relative to the agency's female constituency, the FP "coordinates a detailed review/evaluation of the agency's current policies, strategies and programs (primarily) to determine their impact on women, both as agents and as beneficiaries."

This review, noted Ms. Rikken, would also serve to "identify problem areas, issues and gaps in addition to those articulated in the PDPW," as well as to "identify priority programs that need to be expanded, contracted or reformulated to enhance their responsiveness to women's situations."

The focal point's vigilance about the gender-responsiveness of programs and projects extends to the implementation stage, where it may employ several mechanisms to

monitor the situation and ensure such ends. It also keeps an eye out for external factors such as legislative action, the policies and programs of other government agencies and the activities of NGOs which may affect the agency's targets.

In addition, the FP evaluates the set of statistics and indicators used by the agency so that it may correct any inadequacy, aligning its efforts with the government-wide plan to strengthen statistics and indicators on women.

To help achieve these targets and effect overall reorientation, the FP must likewise conduct a comprehensive consciousness-raising program in the agency, said Ms. Rikken.

The flipside FP responsibility is the safeguarding and promotion of the rights of women employees. The FP's tasks in this regard include the evaluation -- for their impact on women -- of the agency's policies, rules and practices in hiring, promotion, training, administration of benefits, etc. with a view to reformulating such if necessary. FPs may also initiate projects to help ease women's double burden, such as putting up a day care center for the children of employees.

Still another planned activity is a program to develop career paths for women, to be coordinated by the Civil Service Commission, the

NCRFW and the agency's human resource development unit.

Soon, women employees who encounter sexual harassment and discrimination on the job will get help from a special team of women lawyers in the CSC called Equality Advocates, revealed Ms. Rikken. She said the FP's task would be to identify people in the agency who will coordinate with the team.

The FP, of course, is responsible for bringing women's concerns to the agency head to whom it is to report periodically. At the same time, such a report is inputted into the NCRFW which is required to report to the President every six months. According to Ms. Rikken, President Aquino has also given her nod to the NCRFW suggestion that she meets at least once a year with Cabinet secretaries solely to discuss what their agencies have accomplished for women.

Ms. Rikken describes the whole process as "synergized," with the NCRFW "making sundot (pricks) here and there" and the various components pressuring one another to perform.

The NCRFW chief stressed that to be effective, a focal point must have certain characteristics. First, it must have a mandate from the agency head defining its powers and responsibilities, to be made known to all the employees. It must be directly responsible to the big boss herself/himself, and must receive the necessary administrative, technical and budgetary support. Not the least, FP members must be trained to help them gain a clear understanding of their responsibilities and to equip them for the job.

Initially, the NCRFW gives assistance by conducting orientation and gender-consciousness seminars for FP members and other priority personnel. In the process, it hopes to develop training modules appropriate to the agency, so the FP could subsequently conduct seminars for the rest of the employees, in the head office as well as regional offices.

Efforts to organize FPs started in October 1989. Ermelita Valdeavilla, NCRFW chief program officer, says that so far, FPs have been organized in seven line departments (agriculture, agrarian reform, environment and natural resources, health, local

government, public works and highways, and science and technology), two attached agencies (Office of the President, Cultural Center of the Philippines), and the National Power Corporation.

FPs have also been initiated in four line departments, and 22 attached agencies and corporations.

"Getting a mandate from the agency head, and getting the employees to understand what the concern is," are the two primary tasks of the FP according to Ms. Valdeavilla. She stressed that the unit must be headed by "someone with clout" to be able to push for the FP's objectives, especially since the concepts of gender equality and women in development still have to be sufficiently understood and appreciated by the majority in the bureaucracy.

Majority of FPs, she revealed, are still at the level of "strategizing" although some have identified or have embarked on specific programs or activities (see boxed story).

The NCRFW has also been undertaking regional pilot-testing to gain experience in the nationwide implementation of the PDPW and to find out how government agencies coordinate on the regional level. Due to its limited resources, the Commission, with NEDA help, selected only one priority region (Region VIII) where it has conducted a number of activities, including the organization of regional FPs in 15 government offices.

Among those who have attended orientation and sensitizing meetings in relation to women in development and the PDPW are women councilors, government planners, representatives of colleges and universities in the region, community organizers, and heads of NGOs with mass-based organizations. A consultative conference has also been held with government and NGO representatives of Southern Leyte, and the PDPW has been presented to the Region VIII Consultative Assembly, added Ms. Valdeavilla.

She disclosed that a crash course on how to teach women's studies is slated for the academic sector in mid-May, as follow-up to a consultative conference on women's studies held with 22 presidents and technical staff of private and state colleges/universities.

#### OUTLINE OF NCRFW TASKS TO IMPLEMENT THE PDPW

- A. Strengthening the data base on women to enable the monitoring of the status of women through time and the impact of policies and programs on women.

The data base would consist of indicators such as labor force participation, mortality rates, educational attainment, participation in decision-making, land ownership, access to credit.

- B. Establishing appropriate institutional mechanisms in government.

1. Creation of WID (Women in Development) Focal Points in all government agencies to address women's concerns in the different government sectoral responsibilities.

These agencies consist of 20 line departments, 114 attached agencies, 83 government corporations, three constitutional bodies, 13 regional administrative bodies, and four judicial bodies.

2. Coordination with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) in PDPW monitoring and updating, to consist mainly of:

- a. NCRFW participation in national development planning through membership in PDP (Philippine Development Plan) sub-committees.
- b. Establishment of mechanisms for PDPW monitoring and updating.

3. NCRFW-NEDA coordination in external funds sourcing for PDPW, principally through a Country Program for Women (CPW).

The CPW is a compendium of project proposals from both GOs and NGOs pursuing the goals of the PDPW, from which external donors can identify projects they might want to fund. It is a parallel document to the Medium-Term Public Investment and Technical Assistance Programs (MTPIP and MTTAP) of the PDP.

- C. Massive gender consciousness raising and training for gender-responsive planning.

Targets are elected government officials both executive and legislative, policy makers, planners and programmers, implementors and others in government leadership positions (e.g. ambassadors, justices, armed forces), as well as the private business sector, NGOs and the general public.

- D. Technical assistance in policy making and programming for women's development, mainly:

1. impact analysis of policies, plans, programs and projects on women.
2. identification of priority women's issues and alternative responses to address them.
3. improving statistical concepts, collection and dissemination of information on women.

# A Primer on the PDPW

## WHY THE NEED FOR A PHILIPPINE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR WOMEN?

1. To address major concerns of women, some of which are:
  - a. *In employment*
    - lower average pay for women relative to men;
    - discrimination against women in hiring, promotion and termination;
    - lower participation of women in decision-making positions;
    - exposure of migrant women workers to sexual and physical abuse; and
    - displacement of women agricultural workers in mechanization and limited access to appropriate skills training.
  - b. *In education*
    - traditional career patterns among women limit their opportunities to engage in more financially and professionally-rewarding jobs; and
    - traditional sex-role stereotyping in textbooks.
  - c. *In marriage and family*
    - women's roles generally confined to home and family;
    - double work burden suffered by women;
    - women hold purse strings but are burdened with making both ends meet; and
    - double standard of morality.
  - d. *In other areas*
    - prostitution and sexual exploitation;
    - violence against women; and
    - pervasive media portrayal of women as sex objects.

## 2. In effect, the PDPW will:

- a. Institutionalize the integration of women's concerns in the development planning process;
- b. Operationalize the Constitutional provision on women: "The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and shall ensure the fundamental equality before the law of women and men" (Art. II, Sec. 14);
- c. Substantiate in more concrete terms the macro statement in the Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) which flows from the gender equality provision of the Constitution: "Women, who constitute half of the nation's population, shall be effectively mobilized," and
- d. Comply with international conventions and agreements such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (FLS) up to the year 2000 to which the Philippines is a signatory.

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE PDPW?

As a major instrument for integrating women in development, the PDPW, which is a companion document to the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan, 1987-1992, serves essentially two purposes:

1. It contributes to the attainment of the MTPDP goals of poverty alleviation, employment genera-

tion, equity and social justice promotion, and sustained economic growth.

2. It embodies a comprehensive program of action for the advancement and development of Filipino women in the next four years.

The PDPW's main goal is to translate the MTPDP's objectives into concrete policies, programs and actions that address the poor and the disadvantaged not only on the basis of class, ethnicity or region but in terms of gender as well. Its broad goal is to promote a gender-responsive development.

The PDPW addresses the concerns of women for equality and development across six major spheres: the individual, the family, and the existing socio-cultural, economic, political and legal structures. Specifically, then, the PDPW's objectives are:

1. To alter the traditional concept of a woman's *individual* self-worth as being subordinate to man;
2. To encourage the formation of *families* that are characterized by a sharing of responsibilities, from parenting and home management to bread-winning and public affairs;
3. To bring about significant changes in the *socio-cultural milieu* that perpetuates discrimination against women;
4. To influence and change the *economic system* to ensure equal access of men and women to productive opportunities;
5. To empower women to fully participate in *political structures and processes*; and
6. To incorporate the concerns for women's equality and development into the *legal system*.

## WHAT ARE THE CONTENTS OF THE PDPW?

Basically, the PDPW focuses on parallel sectors as does the MTPDP except that it has "Special Sectoral Concerns" which are very specific to women. Its six major parts are the following:

Part I, "*The Development Framework*," which situates the PDPW in the context of the whole development process; articulates the rationale, goals and objectives of the PDPW; and highlights the Filipino women's situation from the recent past to the future.

Part II, "*The Economic Sectors*," which covers Agriculture, Agrarian Reform, Environment and Natural Resources Management, Industry and Trade, Industrial Relations, and Services.

Part III, "*The Social Sectors*," which consists of Education and Training, Health, Nutrition and Family Planning, Housing, and Social Welfare and Community Development.

Part IV, "*The Special Concerns Sectors*," which deals with Women and Migration, Prostitution, Violence Against Women, Women and Media, and Women in Arts and Culture.

Part V, "*Infrastructure and Technology Support*," which represents the backbone of the PDPW and includes infrastructure Development as well as Science and Technology.

Part VI, "*Plan Implementation*," which discusses the operational strategies, policies, and measures that need to be undertaken at the pre-implementation and actual implementation stages.

Each chapter of the PDPW contains an overview, development goals and objectives, policies and strate-

gies, and specific targets. Each also contains a package of major development programs and projects, both ongoing and proposed, and domestically and externally-funded.

## WHO SUPPORTED THE PDPW FORMULATION?

The Cabinet Assistance System (CAS) adopted the formulation of the PDPW as one of its main programs under the CAS Committee on Women.

The NCRFW initiated and coordinated the various consultations between and among government departments, non-governmental organizations, women experts and consultants. NEDA provided technical support, and the UN, through the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) and the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), extended financial and technical assistance.

It is envisioned that as soon as the effective methodologies and necessary technical details of the planning for women are worked out, there will no longer be a need for a separate plan for women. Instead, planning for women shall already be integrated into government's periodic planning, programming, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation.

## WHAT ARE THE KEY POLICIES AND STRATEGIES FOR PDPW IMPLEMENTATION?

1. Gender awareness-raising and training of policy-makers, planners and implementors on women's concerns.
2. Strengthening of institutional structures and mechanisms to effectively address women's concerns by:
  - Establishing government sectoral policies, strategies

and programs to address women's concerns;

- Refocusing government sectoral policies, strategies and programs to address women's concerns; and
- Developing and strengthening methodologies for the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the PDPW.

## WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE NCRFW IN PDPW IMPLEMENTATION?

The NCRFW and NEDA will monitor the PDPW's implementation and coordinate its periodic evaluation and updating.

The NCRFW will also promote the PDPW's implementation --

1. through advocacy for women's advancement through consciousness raising, related training and networking;
2. by expanding and improving existing programs for women; and
3. by assisting line departments and NGOs in the sourcing of funds and technical assistance for women's programs.

## WHERE WOULD RESOURCES FOR PDPW IMPLEMENTATION COME FROM?

The resources for the implementation of programs and projects identified in the PDPW shall come from government funds and from external sources. These shall be allocated --

1. through departmental budgeting for new women's programs;
2. by expanding and improving existing programs for women; and
3. by mobilizing uncommitted funds for women's programs.



**SR. CHRISTINE TAN, RGS;**

## Feminists Continue Struggle for Equality

By WILHELMINA OROZCO

**D**ogged, steady work to raise feminine consciousness and to promote peace is what women activists expect will characterize feminism in the 1990s.

With the country continuing to be racked by strifes and dissension and with many Filipino women still lacking a consciousness about their worth as human beings, feminists do not expect new directions for the women's movement in this decade. They expect merely to continue the work started the last few years and consolidate gains which are slowly but surely being made.

Trinidad Domingo, project director of the Katipunan ng Bagong Pilipina (KABAPA), said their organization will pursue the campaign, "No nukes, Yes to Life." KABAPA intends to emphasize the need for adherence to the constitutional provision that no nuclear weapons shall be stored in the country.

Related to this is the campaign for peace which they are carrying out in the various provinces where they have affiliates. "Kung maaari, nakikiusap kami sa mga armadong grupo (na lumalaban sa gubyerno) na kung maaari huwag madamay ang taumbayan sa engkuwentro," she said.

In many cases in the past, civilians were caught in the crossfire as two opposing groups battled. Thus, being a rural-based organization, KABAPA feels the need to address this issue which has been brought to their attention by their members.

"Halimbawa sa Bulacan, may mga kumander ng NPA (New People's Army). Nakikipag-usap kami sa kanila. Sinasabihan namin sila na ginagalang namin ang paniniwala nila. Ngunit doon sa mataong lugar, huwag sana silang magpunta. Ang labanan hindi sa kapwa Pilipino, 'yan ang paliwanag namin. Kung top commander ang kausap namin, naiintindihan naman.



May mga di sumasang-ayon din," narrated Trining.

Created at the inception of the UN Decade for Women, KABAPA adopted the anti-nuke and peace campaign from the beginning. However, during the late 80's, after the World Congress for Women in 1987, they began to raise the consciousness of women with regard to equality.

"Hindi lahat ng babae alam gamitin ang kapantayan, said Trining. Women would say "Hu bayaan mo, talagang trabaho ng babae ang maglinis." But now, a greater awareness of the need for men to share in the household chores has been inculcated among the women. Nowadays, the KABAPA members could talk to their husbands more directly about such things. One member told Trining: "Pagkagaling ng bukid puwede namang 'yung lalaki na ang magtimpla ng kape, dahil ako sa kusina ay nagluluto."

The transformation of the rural women is quite startling considering that it was only a few decades ago that the Spaniards had inculcated the idea that the woman's place is in the home in those farms where they reside.

MAKAMASA, short for Makabayang Kababaihan ng Masa, sees the nineties as a decade for consciousness-raising and education of women, especially the illiterate. Marcela Farola, the president, notes that a large number of women in Tondo, for instance, do not know how to read and write but are ashamed to admit so, much more to be seen taking up literacy lessons. Coming from the





provinces without or with little education and eager to better their lives, these women ventured into the cities of Metro Manila with their families.

In Magsaysay Village where the MAKAMASA is based, Ka Sela and Trinidad Cantiga, the literacy trainer, conduct daily classes which are now composed of 15 learners after starting with just one member a year ago. One learner, Ka Conching, learned how to read and write her name only after attending the literacy sessions.

Virginia Miralao, project manager of Women's Education Development Productivity Research Organization (WEDPRO); and Sunny Benitez, researcher on women's groups, have their own view about the shape of feminism in the nineties.

Virginia and Sunny think the government achieved three landmarks in women's legal history: the signing of the Family Code which is still not very ideal since it hews closely to the preachings of the Catholic Church regarding marital separation; the Philippine Development Plan for Women, a document meant to integrate women's development in all facets of work of the various government bureaucracies; and the Senate bill against discrimination introduced by Senator Leticia Ramos-Shahani.

They foresee that more legal reforms will be initiated in the Nineties addressing the issues of women such as divorce and reproductive rights. These issues could crash head-on with Church rulings. Nonetheless, Virginia thinks that the "Church is stonewalling. Later on its rules will become irrelevant as the women continue to challenge them and the

government especially with regard to reproductive rights. From simple maternal health, women will become more conscious of their reproductive rights."

The Women's Resource and Research Center (WRRRC) also views the '90s with a great deal of optimism.

(As the decade of the eighties was about to end last December, the WRRRC planned to have a big celebration of feminism at the Manila Film Center. The coup unfortunately aborted what could otherwise have been a fitting end to the decade -- women discussing and analyzing the relevance and importance of feminism in their life -- in the family, the community and the society-at-large.

The national conference-festival was finally held last month, February 2-4 and served as a fitting opener to the Nineties.)

Gigi Francisco, research director of WRRRC, noted that the Nineties will usher in a broad range of organizing work. Consciousness-raising will form a big part of the work as the Natconfest revealed the need for deepening the understanding of feminism among women. One farm-woman told Gigi this is the first time women are listening to each other and talking about personal matters regarded as important as national issues.

Irene Donato, education desk coordinator of the Center for Women's Resource, a member organization of GABRIELA, shares Gigi's view. However, she qualifies that organizing will combine political and economic strategies. While raising

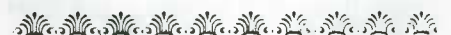
women's political consciousness, socio-economic livelihood projects will also be strengthened. "We have to continue organizing women and educate them about cooperativism."

Working in a community at Damayan Lagi, Quezon City, the CWR is considering hiring a responsible person from whom urban poor women could get advice and education on how to handle their cooperative store. "Kailangan siya para tukuyin ang problema sa pamamahala ng kooperatiba tulad sa pagsusukli ng P50 o kaya paglilista ng mga napamili," Irene explained.

Irene's group provides educational and training materials for various women's groups especially those falling under GABRIELA. Hand in hand with consciousness-raising, the CWR also ventures into teaching the women feminist participatory research.

As calls for equality, development and peace under the UN Decade for Women reverberated in the Eighties, women's groups mushroomed. Members came from the different strata of society. They engaged in various ways to strengthen the women's movement. These groups planted the seeds for a stronger and lasting commitment to the feminist cause and linking women together to give real meaning to Third World Women's liberation.

They are expected to make the 1990s a milestone in the on-going struggle by Filipino women for liberation and quality.





**President Corazon C. Aquino signs into law the bill condemning discrimination against women. Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani, Congresswoman Lorna Verano-Yap and Consuelo Puyat-Reyes were the proponents of this important measure.**

## Chances of Another Woman Presidential Aspirant in 1992 Are Dim

By DIVINA PAREDES-JAPA

**T**he chances of the Philippines electing another woman president in 1992 are remote, but more women are expected to run for local posts like governors and mayors.

Thus observed several female elected officials themselves, on the prospects for women politicians in the 1990s.

This observation is strongly supported by a study conducted late last year by Senator Santanina Rasul for the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women.

Noting that the proportion of women holding local government positions is higher than those holding national positions like in the Senate, Rasul said "the closer the women are to the voting base, the higher their chances are of being voted into office."

She lamented that "few women... actually run for public offices, especially those that require active campaigning on a national scale."

For Rasul, something is amiss in this situation as studies show that more Filipino women than men have voted in the five elections that were held between 1975 and 1985.

Consider these facts.

Only two out of 23 senators in the country are women. There is a similar "lackluster" participation in the House of Representatives where only 18 out of 199, or 9.05 per cent of the total, are women.

"It may be noted that slightly more women are in the Lower House, where campaigning is confined to specified localities, as compared with the Senate where candidates have to campaign all over the country," said Rasul in her report entitled "Equality in Political Participation and Decision Making: the Philippine Experience."

The report which she presented in Vienna pointed out, however, that the participation rate of women at local government level is "slightly better."

While only five of 75 (6.66 per cent) provincial governors are women, there are 10 women vice governors out of 75, or 13.89 per cent of the total.

Sixty eight of the 592 provincial council members, and six of the 59 city mayors, are women.

Women's participation at the municipal or town level was "more impressive," she said, accounting for

306 of 1,532 (20 percent) of the mayors.

In an interview, Rasul said she believes participation by women in politics; specifically in running for elective positions; "is on the rise."

In her study, she noted that during the first elections for the Interim Batasang Pambansa in 1978, 10 of 165 elective seats were won by women. In the 1984 elections, the number of women elected or appointed to the legislative body dropped to 10 of 184 seats.

But this is much better than before when two women were elected to the House of Representatives in 1961; six in 1965; and three in 1969. Two women were elected as senators in 1967.

From these, "we can infer that more women today actively seek, and get elected to, political offices," Rasul said.

Sen. Leticia Ramos Shahani shares Rasul's observations on the participation of women especially in local government politics.

"Mas mahirap ang laban sa 1992 for a woman candidate aspiring to become president after Cory (Aquino), but I believe there will be more women contestants for local posts like governors and mayors," said Shahani, one of the country's top diplomats before she entered politics.

As for the presidency, there are very few names of female aspirants,



**Senator Leticia Ramos Shahani (above, left) and Rep. Tessie Aquino Oreta (above, right) are two of the country's foremost woman political leaders at present.**

if any, being bandied about.

Sen. Neptali Gonzales, president of the ruling coalition's *Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino*, observed that no woman aspirant for the presidency "has come out even with a hint."

In fact, during a forum of the Philippine Futuristics Society last November, only two females -- Miriam Defensor Santiago and former First Lady Imelda Marcos -- were cited as among the contenders in the so-called "1992 derby."

Political analyst and Business World columnist Antonio Gatmaitan did not have a good prognosis for either of the two as viable or serious contenders for the post of the country's chief executive.

Gatmaitan said Defensor, who was then agrarian reform secretary, was a "superstar and darling of the press as a graft-busting and crusading bureau director." But once she moved into the "big leagues" like the Cabinet, she "committed the mistakes of a rookie," said Gatmaitan.

Gatmaitan said Santiago's fans remain "fiercely loyal" but the number of her detractors is growing and must be contained.

Gatmaitan said Imelda Marcos is one of the "wild cards" in the presidential derby. She has "seemingly insurmountable obstacles," like her coming trial in New York and the fact

that Washington would not likely "let her off the hook."

But the leaders of the country's three largest political parties said nothing can stop women from aspiring for the presidency.

"Why not?" Senate President and Liberal Party president Jovito Salonga said when asked whether he believes Filipina politicians would actively pursue the presidency after the experience under Cory Aquino.

The election is open to men and women alike, said LDP's Gonzales. "If a woman aspirant feels that she can win, she will pursue that legitimate aspiration."

Rasul said several factors account for the limited participation of women in politics, especially national politics.

Most women in the country are expected to carry the double burden of having to work and having to take care of the family at the same time. Thus, the "huge demands on the politician's time and efforts may be said to impinge on the woman's responsibilities towards her family," said Rasul.

Rasul said most of those she interviewed felt that women are "more active participants in politics today." All of the respondents, moreover, said having a woman president, "has helped cleave a path of opportunity for women in government."

Still there are criticisms heard, especially from the opposition, that after the term of President Aquino, which admittedly has been tumultuous if not scandal-prone, the Filipino people would not warm up to another woman president so soon.

This type of talk riles many of the female politicians interviewed, among them Rep. Dominique Coseteng of Quezon City.

Coseteng said this thinking is "unfair, simplistic illogical and chauvinistic."

"One woman can not be taken as representing all other women," she said.

Granting that Mrs. Aquino did not perform well, it's not entirely her fault, she said. "Who are her advisers, are they not men? Surely if we judge all men by these male advisers of the president, then many of us will say that men will not make good presidents either," Coseteng said.

She advises, though, a woman who plans to enter public life to study and prepare herself. "She must be prepared from the cradle, so to speak."

With two more years to prepare for the so-called "derby" for national political posts, women interested in the Philippine presidency can follow Coseteng's advise and start their preparations now.



**I**s "woman power" really making in-roads into the Philippines' mainstream officialdom?

With a woman president, more substantial female participation in the country's political processes seems to be a foregone conclusion.

But a study undertaken by Prosperina Domingo Tapales, entitled "Women in the Philippine Bureaucracy: Comparison of 1983 and 1989 Administrative Leaders," challenges this assumption. The study, takes a look at female participation in the Philippine bureaucracy. It concludes that, in spite of a woman president and greater participation in government, women have to hurdle more barriers before they can claim equal participation.

"While women's participation in the political process is quantitatively better," says the study, "their qualitative participation has decreased because they are in less powerful jobs or because they really do not feel their strength even in policy-making posts." Their broader participation is brought about by high educational qualifications which are pre-requisites to career advancement in the bureaucracy.

Tapales' work aims to replicate a 1983 study on Philippine higher civil servants, comparing men and women in terms of socio-economic backgrounds, perception of potency in policy making and implementation, as well as their respective perceptions of women's roles in society.

The study also compares the Marcos and Aquino bureaucrats as far as economic backgrounds and roles of Filipino higher civil servants are concerned. Both studies were supported by a grant from the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

There were 177 respondents in 1983, with 89 females and 88 males. In the 1989 study, the sample size was 138, with 69 females and 69 males.

The study is significant because, based on projections made by the Civil Service Commission (real figures cannot be given because of the seemingly endless reorganization in government), women comprise more than half (51.36 per cent) of the government's total personnel. CSC statistics also reveal that, at the higher levels in the bureaucracy, the pro-

portion of women is 37.82 per cent -- an impressive figure, points out Tapales who suggests that it could be the highest in the world.

However, impressive that may seem, data from the various government agencies reveal that men still heavily dominate the top bureaucratic levels. The women are numerous only in two Cabinet departments: Social Welfare and Tourism.

Over at the Department of Education, Culture and Sports, while the classroom teachers are largely female, the DECS top leadership is still largely male, none of its five under-secretaries is a woman nor any of its six assistant secretaries. (In the latest Cabinet revamp which occurred after the study was completed, the female DECS secretary was replaced by a male.)

Tapales' study set out to see if the profile of the 1983 top women bureaucrats still held true in 1989. Some 33.7 per cent of the women were from Metro Manila against 18.2 per cent of the men. More women also had to serve as assistant directors before they were appointed to the top posts.

The 1989 profile exhibits many of the same basic characteristics as in 1983, with slight differences. The women in the high posts tend to have higher education and are younger than the men. They are in the 41-50 age bracket, compared to the males who are in the 51 and above age bracket. The women come almost equally from urban and rural areas -- indicating increased mobility -- while among the men, a larger proportion come from urban areas outside of Metro Manila. The employment of the rural-born, says Tapales, is a positive trend in the Aquino administration.

The study noted that it is harder for a woman to get into top policy-making positions in government. Says the study: "It is still easier for a man to enter the bureaucracy laterally. Although there are more women in the line/staff posts as the men, their proportion in the more powerful posts has become smaller."

In 1989, more women than men have gone to graduate school, continuing the trend in '83. The data show more women (42 per cent) have master's degrees and doctoral degrees than the men (32 per cent). Many of the female respondents also

By LITA CONSIGNADO

## Two Studies

# Woma

came from higher income families.

This is more pronounced in the upper income level where daughters of government officials comprise 23.19 per cent as against only 11.59 per cent for the men.

An interesting revelation in the 1989 study is the fact that there are more men and women (15.9 per cent) from Catholic schools today in the upper levels of the bureaucracy, up from 4.6 per cent for the men and seven per cent among women in 1983.

The effect of drastic reorganization (the study points out that one aim of reorganization, according to the Presidential Commission on Good Government, was to "de-Marcosify" the bureaucracy) was seen in the Aquino bureaucracy. Many of the Aquino bureaucrats come from the private sector (17.39 per cent compared to 6.8 per cent among the Marcos bureaucrats). Only 41 of 138 civil servants have been in their present positions for only one year, and 26 have held it for less than one year.

Less than three-fourths (17.74 per cent) of the 1989 respondents felt that their involvement in policy formulation extended to the implementation phase. This is in contrast to 1983, wherein 86.46 percent reported that they were involved in the implementation of the policies they initiated. This could be attributed to the existence of Congress today, which had taken over the functions of policy implementation.

That women perceive they have little influence in policy making, says Tapales, is related to the fact that more men than women are in powerful posts, whereas many women remain in administrative staff positions.

What motivates the 1989 bureaucrats to join the government? In order of priority, they list: 1) public service, 2) security of tenure, 3) first "available" job and, 4) ability to influence policy. In 1983, ability to influence

By DIVINA PAREDES-JAPA

**T**hough a woman occupies the highest position in this country, the presidency, female participation in the other policymaking bodies in government is not widespread, recent data show.

There is now only one female department secretary, Mita Pardo de Tavera. There used to be two others, Miriam Defensor Santiago for agrarian reform and Lourdes Quisumbing for education. But they have since been replaced.

Senator Santanina Rasul laments this development. "Those were key Cabinet positions," she said.

In her study presented last year at

age of female employees such as the Department of Transportation and Communication of which only 12.5 per cent of employees are women; Public Works and Highways 3.12 per cent; Agriculture, 11.76 per cent; and Environment and Natural Resources, 3.12 per cent.

The Department of Education, Culture and Sports is female dominated, as 80 per cent of public school teachers are women. However, only 24 per cent of top policy-making positions in this department are held by women. When President Aquino took power, she named a woman education secretary. But she has since been replaced by a man.

Furthermore, in areas where there is a mixture of male and female em-

Civil

## Servants Are Still

# Fighting Discrimination

policy ranked first, followed by public service, security of tenure, and job availability.

As far as perceptions about women's roles in society are concerned, all of the respondents in both studies ranked first "attending to children." Women ranked attending to career second. Men ranked this third next only to supervising the household. The women ranked attending to her office third and supervising household fourth.

Also consistent in both studies is the selflessness of women. In 1983, they ranked attending to personal needs seventh; in 1989 it is sixth.

The Aquino bureaucrats are quite candid about their personal lives. Regarding their marital status, 2.9 per cent acknowledged that they were separated from their spouses. As to the question of role conflict between career and home, they cited the extended families and readily available domestic help. The women claim they reach the top posts because they consider their career and home equally important. Consistent is their desire to succeed in both roles.

a meeting of the United Nations division for the advancement of women, the lady senator noted that out of 154 positions of secretary, undersecretary and assistant secretary in the 18 departments of government, 29 or nearly 19 per cent, were occupied by women.

This was before the recent Cabinet revamp which eased out Santiago and Quisumbing from the President's official family. Both were replaced by males.

Participation of women in 20 government financial institutions or government-controlled corporations is a low 9.02 per cent, said Rasul. Only 12 out of 100 top positions, like chairperson of the board, president or board members, are held by women, Rasul noted.

The number of female bureau directors and regional directors of the various departments in the executive branch is quite high. Of the 316 bureau and regional directors, 85 or 26.89 per cent are women.

A woman heads the Civil Service Commission, the government's central personnel agency.

But participation of women at the top levels - as secretary, undersecretary, assistant secretary, bureau director and regional director - vary by department.

This was because there are offices classified as "male dominated" or "female dominated."

The "traditionally masculine" departments have a very low percent-

age of female employees, the top policy-makers are still men, Rasul reported.

A 1987 survey of 500,000 government employees at all levels revealed that women already occupy 51.36 per cent of all positions, both career and non-career.

This indicates an increase in the number of female civil servants in the country. In contrast, women comprised 41 per cent of government employees in 1979, and 45 per cent in 1983.

Rasul said that with the expected increase in participation of women in various fields, both the government and non-government sectors must provide women with support facilities so they can continue performing the equally important functions related to home and family.

Support facilities include day care centers and women's community support centers.

The lady senator likewise called for a review of the policies on appointment and promotion of government employees to remove sex biases and ensure that women employees get a "fair deal."

Rasul concluded that obstacles to women's full participation in policy making are not "insurmountable" but are still awaiting final resolution.

**Profile of Top Policy-Makers of Government Agencies,  
by Sex (May 1989)**

Office	Male	Female	Total	Per Cent Female
1. NEDA	40	19	59	32.20
2. Agrarian Reform	56	8	64	12.50
3. Social Work	2	44	46	95.65
4. Tourism	23	21	44	47.72
5. Science & Technology	19	6	25	24.00
6. Public Works & Highways	35	1	36	2.78
7. Health	38	16	54	29.63
8. Justice	36	11	47	23.40
9. Local Government	12	2	14	14.29
10. Labor	54	23	77	29.87
11. Education	46	16	62	25.81
12. Environment & Natural Resources	76	2	78	2.56
13. Budget & Management	34	15	49	30.61
14. Agriculture	87	6	93	6.52
15. Trade & Industry	36	24	60	4.00
16. Finance	24	8	32	25.00
17. Foreign Affairs	31	14	45	31.11
<b>Total</b>	<b>649</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>885</b>	

**Perceived Participation in Policy Formulation**

	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	65	94.20	60	86.95	125	90.58
No	3	4.35	5	7.25	8	5.80
No response	1	1.45	4	5.80	5	3.62
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>100</b>

### Involvement in the Implementation of Projects Initiated

Involvement	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	48	69.57	51	73.91	99	71.74
No	3	4.35	3	4.35	6	4.35
No response/ Not applicable	18	26.08	15	21.74	33	23.91
<b>Total</b>	69	100	69	100	138	100

### Perceived Ability to Have Suggestions Carried Out

Ability to Persuade	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. Yes, most of the time	49	71.01	52	75.36	101	73.19
2. Sometimes	16	23.19	9	13.04	25	18.12
3. No	—	—	1	1.45	1	.72
4. No response	4	5.80	7	10.14	11	7.97
<b>Total</b>	69	100	69	100	138	100

### Willingness of Respondents to Take Jobs Outside Government

Willingness	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Yes	15	21.74	4	5.80	19	13.77
No	37	53.62	45	65.22	82	59.42
Depends	9	13.04	13	18.84	22	15.94
No response	8	11.59	7	10.14	15	10.87
<b>Total</b>	69	100	69	100	138	100

## Woman Councilors Seek Equality

By GLORIA E. MELENCIO

**H**aving women in local government councils does not necessarily mean that women have finally been given a share in politics. Ask the Women Councilors' League of the Philippines, Inc. (WCLPI).

Women still perform the traditionally known feminine functions in this male-dominated field. Discrimination still persists even in the political arena where women who dared enter are believed to have guts more than others.

In WCLPI's national convention held this month, the first ever to be held in the country, women councilors complained that they are being relegated to positions like heads of finance committee or secretaries. WCLPI board director Cora Malanyaon, the only woman councilor in Davao City, said the stereotype roles and "not-so-important functions" kill the women's initiatives and inhibit them from further development.

"Not because we have a woman president means everything will be rosy for women. Nasa kultura pa rin natin na discriminated ang kababaihan," she says.

But the women are not inclined to accept things as they are.



*Mrs. Irene Morada-Santiago, Asia/Pacific Director of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) delivers the keynote address.*

With 1200 woman councilors from all over the country in attendance, the WCLPI adopted a resolution to strengthen this organization from the regional up to the municipal levels. WCLPI coordinates with the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women.

The convention held at the Golden Shell Pavilion formally launched the organization which actually came into life in May 1988. Women councilors in Metro Manila had been the core of the organization until it decided to expand its membership nationwide.

WCLPI President Alice Herrera, councilor from Quezon City, said the women mean business. They are serious in passing laws that will help their women constituents. In doing so, women councilors must be given a chance to enhance their skills and put to practice what they know, she says.

Herrera cites the councilors' assessment of the government's livelihood programs as having "no impact" at all on the people. WCLPI aims to attack this perennial problem since it is usually the women constituents who are beneficiaries of such programs.

"Kalat ang implementasyon ng programa at kailangang maayos ito," she stresses.

Councilor Malanyaon sees the need to create a support mechanism for women who are victims of sexual abuse. Women constituents get so helpless that they do not know who to run to. Women councilors vowed to come to their rescue.

WCLPI decided, among others, to support the bill proposed by Senator Leticia Shahani imposing the death penalty on rapists. The councilors said this may lessen rape cases in the country which, authorities say, are on the rise.

As in the case of other government employees, WCLPI complains of the non-implementation of the salary standardization scheme of the government. They say they are being shortchanged. However, this women's organization will still have to conduct a study as to their average pay scale. Wage rates of councilors differ according to the class their regions belong to.

Women and men councilors share the same problems when it comes to wages.



*Participants of the First Congress of the Women Councilors League of the Philippines listen to President Corazon C. Aquino's speech on the value of their presence in the political arena.*



# Not Just a Numbers Game

By President Corazon C. Aquino

**I**t is my pleasure to meet you, fellow woman workers in government. I am most interested to hear the women's view from your end. For being councilors in constant touch with the grassroots, you have a better perspective of the specific problems of your constituents, particularly the women. And with your views, this government will have a stronger grasp of what problems we must prioritize to improve the Filipino woman's condition.

I understand that your convention, the first of its kind among elected women city and municipal councilors, shall look at the concerns and issues that you face as women in political decision-making positions. It is high time that we did so. For the number of women in government positions is increasing. Perhaps, it has something to do with having a woman President or, the increasing number may indicate the acceptance, albeit hesitant, by our macho males, of the innate capabilities of Filipino women.

Two years ago, I proclaimed March 8 of every year as Women's Rights and International Peace Day. And on that day last year, I launched the Philippine Development Plan for Women. That document is the statement of this government's commitment to the advancement of women as it integrates the concerns of women in the national planning process. It has been adopted as a companion plan to the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) for 1989-1992.

Also, among the highlights of last year's celebration was the First National Congress of Women in Government. That was perhaps the first time that women in different line agencies looked at the situation of women in the bureaucracy.

I was informed that pre-congress consultations and subsequent discussions brought to light important issues such as policies involving the hiring, promotion, benefits and support systems for women in government service. I am glad that these issues were taken up because the inequity between men and women in the workplace has been a bone of contention for so long. The courses of action pointed out by that congress are in the process of being integrated into national policies.

It is good that you organized this convention. For we must understand the problems related to women as persons so that we can better address the problems of our constituencies as a whole.

The involvement of women in government has indeed increased. But the question to ask is: how many of them are in the more important decision-making positions? From the statistics, it seems that only a few have been entrusted with such functions. In the exercise of my appointing powers, I have endeavored to draw from the increasing number of highly-qualified women. For far too long the women, no matter how competent, have been shunted to the sidelines.

In fact, the small number of women involved in the political life of nations was one of the global issues discussed during the World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Nairobi in 1985.

But the issue is not so much a numbers game, as a matter of preparing women for qualitative participation in the country's political life while balancing the burdens of home and office. Tradition has assigned us to be executives of home and hearth. Despite our claims to modernism, we may very well accept that the shackles of tradition are not easily shed: The working Filipina still has to shuttle between home and work with equal efficiency.

When our government signed the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in 1985, we agreed that we would:

- Achieve equity in the appointment, election and promotion of women to high posts in executive, legislative and judiciary branches.

- Establish special offices preferably headed by women to monitor and accelerate the process of equitable representation of women in politics.
- Publicize availability of decision-making posts more widely.
- Compile reports on the numbers in public service.
- Promote awareness of women's political rights through formal and non-formal education, NGOs, trade unions, media and business organizations.
- Create institutional procedures that assist the most vulnerable, least privileged and most oppressed groups of women to participate actively in all forms of policy formulation, monitoring, review and appraisal.

Today, I reiterate our government's commitment to that agreement. And I renew my promise to support our women through the National Commission on the Role of Women.

Significantly moving forward through the workings of this Commission, a Commission that is truly ours, we shall evolve a culture where women and men become authentic partners in the upkeep of family life and home management. Then, we shall have more time and greater energy to take active part in the politics of our barangays, our regions, our nation.

Indeed, we women can make the great difference in our nation's governance. The ability to make our people move towards a political culture that is sensitive and fair to gender lies in our hands. But we can do these only if we work together in sustained unity.

Thus, I encourage this convention of women councilors to accelerate the efforts to uplift and promote women's rights and welfare through local legislation. For every effective law passed will be crucial to the women's cause and the nation's growth. Let each one here be committed to serve the nation by serving the Filipina.

Binabati ko kayong lahat ng isang matagumpay na pagdiriwang ng ating International Women's Month. Magandang hapon sa inyong lahat.

# A Different Kind of Politics

(Excerpts from a speech delivered by Ma. Irene M. Santiago, Chief, Asia/Pacific Section of the United Nations Development Fund for Women before the Woman Councilors League of the Philippines on March 6, 1990).

**A**s recently as 1980, the World Bank reported that women represent over 60 per cent of the world's illiterate population; receive 10 per cent of the world's income; and own less than one per cent of the world's real property. Women and girls represent 52 per cent of the world's population but are counted as only 33 per cent of the official labor force, yet they perform 67 per cent of all hours worked. Today, women earn three-fourths of what a man earns in the manufacturing industry. Women's unpaid home and domestic labor represents the equivalent of one-third the gross global product, or US\$4 trillion in unacknowledged labor. Educationally, in the lesser developed countries two-thirds of all females over the age of 25 have received no schooling compared with half of men in the same group. Politically, although women represent 50 per cent of the world's enfranchised population, they hold only 10 per cent of the seats in national legislatures. Even in the developed world, ten of the eleven oldest democracies waited until the 20th century to give women the vote.

The feminist writer, Maxine Molyneux, has written: "Politics, more than any other realm, because of its condensation of power and authority, has remained largely a monopoly of men. This is so empirically, as evidenced by the minuscule percentage of women occupying positions of political power in every country of the world. But it is also true symbolically in that the attributes considered necessary for political effectiveness are seen as quintessentially masculine. As a consequence, political women . . . are seen as deviants, the trespassers or the guests in a terrain which does not fundamentally belong to them."

Indeed a recent six-country study undertaken by UNESCO on women in politics have listed the following as obstacles:

- family's disapproval of women's participation in politics because politics is considered dirty, corrupt and immoral;
- the heavy demands of family responsibilities leaving women little or no time for

- political participation; and
- fear of scandals, character assassinations, and social disapproval.

Women politicians said their political careers were largely possible because of the availability of household help and the encouragement of husbands.

Women politicians generally had a good education, belonged to well-educated families practicing no discrimination between daughters and sons. They tended to be older children and daughters in families with few sons. In fact they tended to be strong and behaved as sons. They were also known as strong and capable mothers. They usually came from families in professional occupations with liberal attitudes toward social issues. They were usually from urban, middle class and liberal backgrounds. They also had much exposure to organizations during their student days. More often than not they were office-bearers. A woman usually entered politics to replace her husband -- at his retirement or death.

Given these data, where do we find the potential women politicians? Or better still, how do we develop our young girls to become the women politicians of tomorrow?

The answer, I suggest, is in the 3S's: namely socialization, social support structures and skills.

Socialization tells our girls and boys what they can do and can't do, what they can dream to be, how they behave, what is rewarded and punished.

We must socialize our young girls so that they view assertiveness and strength as positive not negative attributes. We must also teach them to view conflict as an element of any change and to use this to their advantage. How many times have we as women decided in situations of conflict not to say anything to our husbands, or to our colleagues in our organizations "kasi ayaw na natin ng gulo"? As girls we are socialized to be the harmonizers of the race, suffering quietly and patiently, hoping our reward will be in heaven. To become leaders, we must create more opportunities for our girls to be office-bearers in myriad organiza-

tions in school where they will be exposed to many social and political issues. At the same time we have to work on our sons, too, to accept as "normal" that a girl is assertive and strong and able to speak out and argue her case.

Which brings us to the second essential element that will enable larger numbers of women to participate actively in politics: social support structures. The UNESCO study showed that the availability of domestic help was considered part of the support needed by women politicians. I see the day when care for home and children can be the responsibility of husbands or by institutions for child care and home management. These social support structures are particularly crucial if we want poor women to become active political leaders.

The third element is skills. We need to develop skills to negotiate, to advocate, to communicate, to mobilize, and to manage. In other words, to be professional and to do a good job.

But it is not enough to just have more of us. Our goals are not simply to get a few more women in high positions of power while the majority remain destitute or marginal at best. Indeed, highly visible women have to be careful not to provide the smokescreens that will further invisibilize poor and powerless women.

Our politics must be different. Our politics must be participatory, inclusive and transformative.

While we insist that so-called women's issues are added to the political agenda, we must make it clear that all issues are women's issues, that women have things to say about all the other areas of life such as trade and commerce, industry, agriculture, fisheries, forestry, infrastructure, appropriations, etc.

Apart from setting and expanding the political agenda, our politics must bring back the very basic notion that public service is a public trust. We must truly be public servants.

Only then can we re-define power not as control and domination, privilege and pomp as power is defined in today's arena. Power must become for us the capacity, the ability, the potency, to act effectively for the common good.

# Philippine Laws Affecting Women Inconsistent?

By DIVINA PAREDES-JAPA

**T**here is a seeming inconsistency in the new Constitution about the role of Filipino women, according to a study by a Filipino women lawyer.

While the charter says women shall enjoy full civil and political rights, it also lumps women with the underprivileged and weak sectors, like the disabled and elderly, said Emelina Quintillan in her paper entitled "Women in Law and Policy."

Quintillan said the same Constitution which guarantees respect for the basic human rights of both sexes also has a provision on strengthening family life and protecting "the life of the mother and the life of the unborn from conception."

While this provision may mean positive action for women's health, "it could also operate to limit the Filipino woman's reproductive rights" as it also allows anti-abortion laws, said Quintillan in her paper presented during the recent meeting in Manila of the ASEAN Women's Programme.

Quintillan also cited in her paper some provisions in the law that discriminate against women. There are certain disabilities imposed on them, for instance, that are not imposed on the other sex.

She said the second paragraph of Article 39 of the Civil Code states that a married woman aged 21 and above is qualified for all acts of civil life "except in cases specified by law."

"This article is indicative of women's inferior status in law, considering that men are not subjected to the same exception 'specified by law' that limits their capacity to act," said Quintillan.

The family Code gives a married woman full capacity to enter into contracts and has the same disabilities imposed on a married man.

But since the Family Code does not supersede the said article of the Civil Code, "it appears that in matters outside of family relations, women's capacity to act may still be curtailed by law which does not apply to men," she added.

Quintillan said that women have also been subjected to protective legislation in labor and employment. Working women are also often "lumped together" with minors in labor legislation.

"This is indicative of the paternalistic attitude towards working women," she noted.

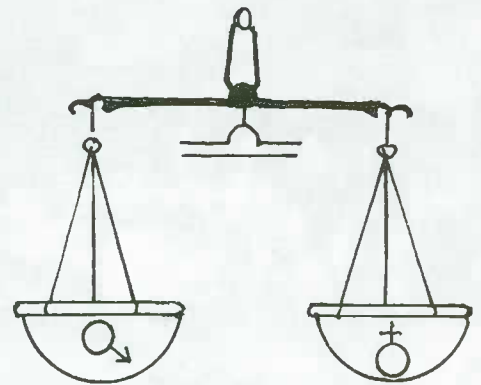
The law also requires marriage for women in government before they can be entitled to maternity leave benefits, while this is not practiced in the private sector.

Filipino women, however, have had other gains throughout the years. A number of these are in political rights.

The Constitution guarantees women equal political rights with men with regard to citizenship, suffrage, the right to hold public office, and to organize or join associations.

Filipino women also no longer lose their citizenship even if they marry foreigners unless they renounce it.

In the field of health and social services, a National Code on the Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes was passed, whose primary purpose is to educate women on the value of breastfeeding, said Myrna Feliciano and Ma. Lourdes Aranal-Sereno, both



of the University of the Philippines College of Law, in their study "A Gender Analysis of Philippine Laws."

Admission to state universities and colleges is not based on gender, they added.

But even if there are laws that are said to be "gender-neutral" they continue to operate in a gender-biased society, said Quintillan.

Socio-cultural attitudes also affect the substance of the law, she said. The influence of religion is clear in the anti-divorce and anti-abortion laws as well as differences in the Family Code and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws.

Feliciano and Sereno, on the other hand, have recommended revising the following laws:

- \* Those that confer a right or benefit only to men but do not confer the same rights on women, or vice versa;
- \* Those that confer a right or benefit only to women because of presumptions of their economic dependence on men, but do not give the same rights or benefits to men who are economically dependent on women;
- \* Those that use gender specific terms, such as "widow" or "wife" without intending to refer exclusively to that gender; and
- \* Those that place a greater disability or penalty on one sex than on the other for the commission or omission of the same act.





## Day Care Center Is a Big Hit with CSC Workers

1.5-million-strong bureaucracy, the country's single biggest workforce.

It is but fitting that it is the Civil Service Commission (CSC) which is now pilot-testing a day care center project. As the central personnel agency of the Philippine government, the CSC has the task of promoting productivity, efficiency and high morale of the government's entire personnel complement.

Now almost a year old, the CSC nursery offers a feasible alternative for working mothers who cannot afford or who do not trust a babysitter to look after their children.

Established on April 3, 1989, the administrative requirements of the center was first handled by the Secretariat, a division under the Office of the Chairman. Around seven lady employees ran the center then, working in shifts. They took turns in seeing to it that the children's snacks, instructional materials and learning environment were well-prepared. Then, in June, four female employees from other offices of the Commission who have teaching backgrounds assisted them. Recently, however, CSC hired a full time teacher.

The initial cost of the center was covered through a contribution from the discretionary fund of the chairperson of the Commission and a counterpart fund raised by the mothers themselves. It covered the furnishing of an airconditioned room and the purchase of some instructional materials.

So far, no figures are available on how much the center has cost the Commission. An evaluation exercise, to be conducted in April when the project is a year old, is expected to come up with estimates on what is being spent for the center.

At present, however, the mothers are totally responsible for expenses covering children's snacks and the janitor's allowance. Employees availing of the services of the center average a monthly contribution of P20.

Children of all employees of the Commission, from executives to rank-and-file workers, are eligible for enrollment at the center. Even janitors of a private agency servicing the Commission -- as long as they work in the CSC -- can enrol their children.

The center now has a total of 25 children under its care. They range in ages from three to six years. The center has five three-year-old kids, ten four-year-olds, seven five-year-olds, and three six-year-olds.

In the months that the center has been in existence, it seems that not only the children benefited but their parents as well. There appears to be a greater camaraderie and a stronger bond among parents whose children are enrolled at the center.

The parents have even organized the CSC Day Care Center Parents Association. Formed on Nov. 23, 1988, the group has Erlinda Laygo as president.

The parents are far from reticent about how they feel about the center.

"Nakakatulong talaga ang Day Care center sa amin, lalo na sa anak ko," according to Thelma Cadacio, a janitress who is a mother of five. "Noong Agosto ko lang siya pinasok diyan, marami na siyang alam ngayon at laging excited pumasok. Maaga nang gumising at sa tanghali, pagkatapos kumain, agad bumabalik doon sa classroom nila. Enjoy na enjoy 'yong anak ko. Natuto na ring magayos sa katawan. 'Yong mga nakababatang kapatid niya ipapasok ko na rin sa susunod . . ."

Laygo said the center is advantageous for both the parents and the Commission. "The absences of working parents are minimized. The child learns because the teaching method is personalized. Personally, I highly recommend the implementation of a similar programme in other government offices."

Laborer Wilfredo Lachica has two children in the center. He too, has noticed changes in them. "Napapan-sin ko mas marami ang natutunan nilang Ingles. Malaki rin ang nakita kong pagbabago nila sa ugali, sa paglilinis ng katawan. Nakakatulong itong day care center sa amin dahil sampo ang anak ko at sa bahay lang ang misis ko."

The apparent success of the day care center is encouraging the Commission to repeat the exercise in its regional offices.

The Commission hopes it has been able to set an example for other government offices in attending to the welfare and well-being of its employees, particularly the women.

**T**he problem of building a family and pursuing a career at the same time is becoming more prevalent in the Philippines today. More and more women are leaving hearth and home to seek employment either due to economic necessity or personal ambition

But it is not an easy decision to make as there are various difficulties to overcome. One of these difficulties and a most serious one -- is child care. While working women may be able to delegate readily other household chores like cooking, cleaning and laundry to domestic help, they are more reluctant to leave the children in the care of other people, even their own relatives. In urban areas where families often do not have relatives who can take care of the children, the problem becomes a major source of anxiety to working women. Such anxiety, as many employers know, can reduce productivity and increase the rate of absenteeism.

Thus, in developed countries like the United States, day care centers have become indispensable services for career women who also happen to be mothers with young children.

The American employers have recognized that, business-wise, investing in day care centers is a sound policy. They found that by relieving parents, particularly working mothers, of the worry about their children while they are in their offices, individual work productivity and efficiency have improved significantly.

Day care centers are still a rarity in the Philippines, particularly in the

# Women venture into non-traditional jobs



By OLIVIA H. TRIPON

**T**his year, the first batch of women graduates trained in non-traditional skills will find out if industry is ready for a female electrician, welder and steel fabricator, mason or plumber.

Sponsored by the Netherlands government, the project "Women in Non-Traditional Trades" (WINT) is a new approach in women's development which started in May 1989. A demonstration project for the Asia-Pacific region, WINT is implemented by the National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC) with technical assistance from the International Labor Organization. The demonstration sites are in Batangas, Southern Tagalog and in Cotabato, Northern Mindanao.

The pilot programs offer free training in nine basic trades namely: automotive, electricity, carpentry, furniture and cabinet making, refrigeration and airconditioning, masonry, plumbing, welding and repair and maintenance of office equipment. Basic skills training courses last from four to six months plus on-the-job training for 30 days.

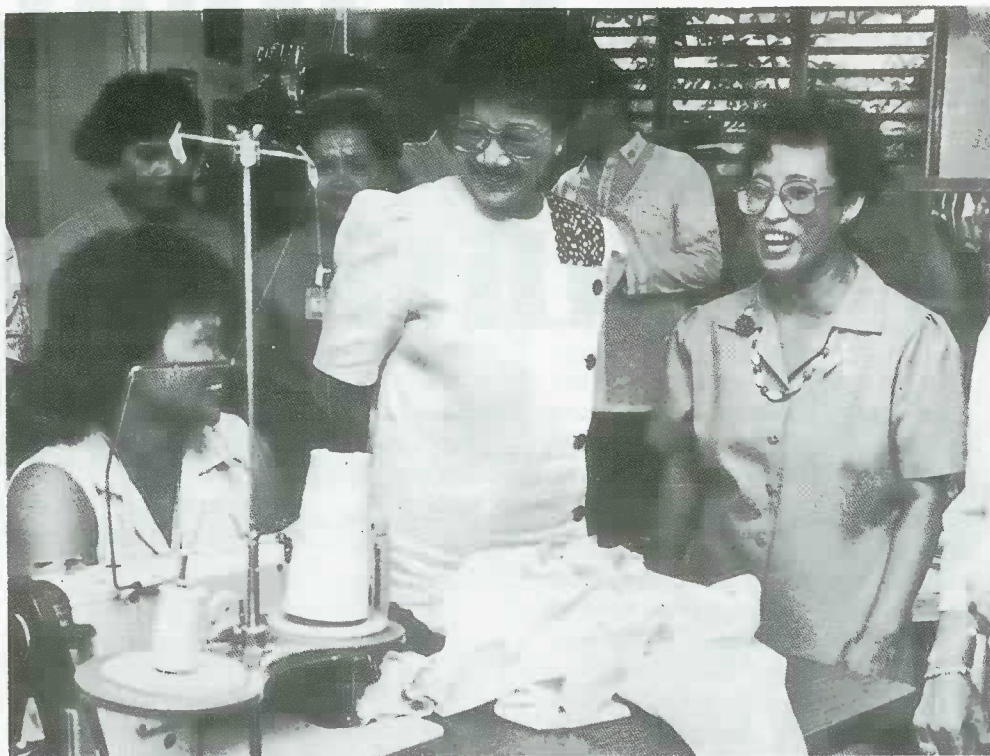


The project caters to out-of-school and unemployed women from low-income families between 18 to 35 years old. WINT aims to reach a total of 1,620 women in three years -- at least five women per trade area per region in three batches a year; 10 per trade area in the second year and 15 in the third year.

Female trainees get free uniforms and accommodations in the dorm, job placements as well as opportunities to be a trainor and an entrepreneur.

According to Nenette de la Cruz, NMYC supervising manpower development officer, the first batch, who started training last May, recently graduated and are now undergoing on-the-job training. Eleven graduated from Batangas -- four from general electrical, six from welding and steel fabrication, and one from general automotive. Cotabato graduated only two female electricians from the first batch.

The second batch graduated last November. In Batangas, four studied to be machine shop operators, 11 automotive mechanics, nine build-



ing construction workers, nine electricians, 15 ref and aircon mechanics, and 12 welders and steel fabricators. Cotabato has a bigger enrollment in the second batch--three for general automotive, three for general electricity, five for ref and aircon service and two for welding and steel fabricating.

There were also participants in trainers' training courses, a two-week course in methodology for women instructors, production supervisors and trainers.

Other institutions have also gotten into the act such as the Marikina Institute of Science and Technology. As part of its goal to give women other skills to enhance their chances for employment, the institute offered a scholarship in machine shop for 15 women this semester.

The decision to provide training to women in areas they were traditionally barred from makes a lot of sense. With more and more skilled men going overseas to work, industry will have a lot of vacancies which women, trained in non-traditional skills, can fill up. And companies appear not to be averse to the idea of hiring women for jobs they did not use to do before.

Pilipinas Shell and Philippine Airlines (PAL) have female welders. PAL boasts of its first woman pilot. San Miguel Corporation has machine shop operators who are women. The country has had a woman air traffic controller since the early '80s. WINT participants are being offered on-the-job training in the National Power Corporation, AG&P, and Sarmiento Car Shop, among others.

As the country gears up to reach "newly-industrialized country" (NIC) status along with Thailand and other countries in Southeast Asia, women can now take the opportunity to train in non-traditional skills and be recognized, not as a queer minority ("the only rose among the thorns") but as able partners in industrial growth.

***Filipino women are now moving from traditional occupations to non-traditional jobs.***

By GLORIA E. MELENCIO

## Campaign for Peace Links Women Past and Present

**G**reetings to you babailanes (Visayas), balianas (Bicol), managanitos (Pangasinan) and catalonans (Tagalog) -- women of the past who performed peace offerings when your tribes were threatened by wars before the coming of the Spaniards.

We are writing this to you at a time when we are ruled by the first Filipino woman president, who in her New Year address declared the 1990s as the "Decade for Peace."

You may smile and say that during the pre-colonial period, you had advanced the same cause in a different manner.

We are humbled by your feat. While women of today launch such a campaign at the twilight of the 20th century with the convenience afforded by personal computers, you had your peace ceremonies recorded in our native "alibata," the early Filipino writing carved in tree barks, bamboos and leaves, which unfortunately were not handed down to us.

Your prowess in stopping imminent tribal wars must have threatened the chauvinist Spaniards since aggressive women were unheard of in their Christian religion and culture. Thus, some of you were burned to death -- all records of history in your time included -- because those men made themselves believe you had been witches and were possessed by demons.

Yes, we are also as beleaguered as you were about our people's plight. Wars still threaten us today as you were threatened by them.

Indeed, the latest *coup d'etat* which took place on December 1, 1989, the sixth and bloodiest attempt to topple the nearly four-year old administration of President Corazon Aquino, left 113 persons dead and more than 500 injured.

The military putsch was crushed on the ninth day but the political climate remains unstable and gives us sleepless nights. How many more lives we cared for and cradled to life would be sacrificed, would be caught in the crossfire by the next senseless war instigated by only a few?

This Decade for Peace campaign proposed by Philippine Ambassador to Rome Howard Dy immediately



*Santanina Rasul*

after the December coup and later endorsed by the President is only one of the various campaigns different women's organizations have in our islands to achieve peace.

We no longer thrust lances through a hog's heart and chant incantations to calm men's warring hearts like you did in your peace ceremonies. We organize ourselves into groups like the Coalition for Peace. It is composed of men and women from various sectors who adhere to the "preservation of peace and democracy" in the country.

This multi-sectoral coalition is an umbrella organization of some 43 government and non-government organizations in the country's 13 regions. In place of your ceremonial dances, prayers and chants, this coalition will be holding a conference in June this year.

Called the Peace Agenda, woman members of the Social Development Index and a newly-appointed member of the United Nations Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (UNCEDAW) representing the Philippines, declares that this lead organization is on the way to forming ten to twelve teams in preparation for the peace congress.

Deles believes that national problems can be threshed out through dialogues such as this forthcoming conference. Women will be presenting analyses of the peace issue as well as our peace agenda during the decade.

You had your way of educating the people in a very ceremonial and colorful manner. By inviting them to offer sacrifices during your peace ceremonies, you encouraged participation and eventually knew the meaning of peace during your time.

We, too, in our own way, will strive to educate our people on the ways of peace. We hope to be as successful as you were although our means will be less colorful and more straightforward.

At the start of the campaign of the Decade for Peace, educational forums and dialogues will be launched to inform the people about what is happening in the country. Justice Cecilia Munoz-Palma says: "May mga taong madaling mahikayat kaya kailangan ang education campaign. The mutineers have been saying they are trying to get power (from the government) to improve the lives of the people. We would like to dispute that."



In your time, threats to peace might have been as complicated as ours. Different women of today give varied views on the sources of our conflicts.

President Aquino sees the "Marxist left" and the "fascist right" as the sources of conflict. The President sees herself as at the center of the political spectrum parrying blows from the left and the right. Indeed, aside from the threat of the military mutineers, there is the nagging problem of conflicts between the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and the Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army, between AFP and the Moro National Liberation Front, and between AFP and the Cordillera People's Liberation Army.

Deles traces the political instability in the country to "lack of social justice and pluralism." You, women of the past, may be awed by this problem because you had no such thing as land ownership during the pre-colonial period.

Deles explains that unequal distribution of wealth and power breeds restlessness among the people. Hunger pangs are not tolerated when you know somewhere in our land some people have bountiful tables and more food are fed to the rich people's dogs while the poor man's family barely gets by on what little they have.

She stresses that lack of tolerance for other political groups also

creates dissension. Opinions and ideas must not be monopolized by any political group and the interplay of political forces must be within the limits of the democratic processes, she says.

She adds that when one decides to work outside the democratic framework, disorder begins. And when one arms himself or herself to attain his/her end, war looms.

"We do not need guns for they do not solve the problem," Deles declares.

AMIHAN, a peasant women's organization, shares Deles' opinion on unequal distribution of wealth and expounds on the subject. Lita Mariano, AMIHAN secretary general, notes that landlessness among the peasants causes poverty and poverty breeds war.

"Hindi makakamit ang kapayapaan hanggang may kahirapan," Mariano, a mother of three in Nueva Ecija, states.

Samahan ng Maralitang Kababaihang Nagkakaisa (SAMAKANA), another grassroots organization in the urban poor communities, links the peace issue to the presence of the military bases here in the country. Ria Buenaventura, SAMAKANA general secretary, asks: "Paano magkakaroon ng kapayapaan kung may mga base-militar ng Kano sa bansa? Lunsaran ito ng karanasan at sa pamamagitan nito ipinatutupad ang total war policy."

Buenaventura says urban poor communities will have peace if people have decent jobs, if they have houses at affordable cost, if their children have a free and quality education, if they have health centers that are well-equipped, and if social services are given free to them.

We know that such problems did not exist in your days but times have changed. Development has complicated our present-day problem. Now women are offering their own solution and we think this can be the way to peace.

Justice Palma says that if people learn to uphold the constitution and if we are organized against coups, this country can have peace. Deles believes improvement in the government and negotiated settlement with different political groups are the solution. AMIHAN's Mariano proposes a genuine land reform for the countryside for lasting peace. SAMAKANA's Buenaventura demands the dismantling of the US military bases in the country.

Come June, all this will be at the center of debates of the Coalition for Peace. Hopefully, this will result in the success of the Decade for Peace campaign.

Just like you, women of the past, we do not put our trust in accidents; instead we put history in our hands. This is the legacy that we inherited from you.



# Ka Sela -- Activist and Mother

By Wilhelmina Orozco



**E**xcept for the hair, which has turned completely white, there is very little on Ka Sela's face to indicate that much of her 62 years has not been pleasant and comfortable. The face is placid and still somewhat youthful.

Hers is a story repeated in the lives of thousands of Filipino women and retold in every generation. It is a story which confirms what countless women already know -- that the so-called fair sex is not always, if ever, the weaker one.

Born in Leyte, Ka Sela -- Marcela Devaras Farola -- only managed to graduate from the elementary grades. It was sheer determination which enabled her to accomplish this feat, a rare accomplishment then (and even now for many Filipinas in many places) for a girl. Her illiterate parents were not inclined to encourage her in her pursuit of an education.

"I used to walk to school, in Dulag, Leyte, about one kilometer away from our barrio. When graduation day came, my parents did not attend. The clothes and shoes I wore were given by my relatives. I cried, because they were not around to share in my happiness. I think they did not find the need to encourage me to go on studying because we were poor," Ka Sela says:

What hurt her most was when her parents refused to allow her uncle to send her to school in Mindanao. Her father, a fisherman, acceded at first; but upon seeing her ready to depart with all of her clothes in one bundle, he changed his decision and said, "We are poor, we shall suffer together. You be contented with what we have," her father declared. Her mother did not contradict her father's

decision.

Exactly why her father changed his mind Ka Sela does not know for sure.

Perhaps Ka Sela's parents found her useful to them in so many ways, as all the other five children in the family. That is why they did not want to let her go. In her childhood, she used to accompany her mother in the fields, planting and harvesting rice and corn. She would carry the bundles of corn and take charge of grinding them at home. She also used to sell tuba (coconut wine) in front of their house. Thus, her parents found it difficult to let her leave.

It was while selling tuba that Ka Sela met her husband, Pedro Farola. He was the son of a government foreman overseeing the blasting of Leyte mountains for road-building projects in the 50s. Pedro was employed in the Coca-Cola Bottling Company. The couple had five children -- Edna, Edgar, Oscar, Emma and Pedro Junior.

In 1961 Pedro Sr. was forced to resign from the company because of a kidney ailment which required surgery. As a result of the operation he could no longer do overtime work, necessary given his responsibilities as a mixer of the company's product. Because no other department in the company wanted him, Pedro Sr. resigned and to try his luck in Manila. However, tragedy struck a month after he arrived in the city to live with his brother. Goons, who had a fight with Pedro brother, stabbed Ka Sela's husband 11 times.

Therefore, at age 34, Ka Sela was a widow and a single parent with five young children to raise. Ka Sela accepted the inevitable and did her best to support her brood. She became a vendor of fish and camote and a dishwasher. She would earn P1.25 at the end of the day and probably have some camotes left which she brought home. With her day's earning she would buy a ganta (four kilos) of rice cost only 90 centavos then.

In 1968, Ka Sela left for Manila leaving behind all her children. The eldest, Edna was aged 15 then and the youngest, Pedro, aged 7. She placed her fate in the hands of a kumpare who, with his wife had an employment office in Baliwag, Bulacan.

Ka Sela eventually got a job taking care of an elderly woman who was so cranky and arrogant that she would watch her every move, and hurl epithets for slight mistakes.

Ka Sela's luck finally changed when she met a kababayan. Through this person, she was able to settle in Tondo where she found her own relatives.

Two years after that she returned to her province, to visit the children she missed so much. She brought her eldest, Edna to Manila and she got a job in an electronic company. Between 1975 and 76, Ka Sela was able to bring all her children to Manila.

Despite their poverty, Ka Sela's children, except for Edna who wanted to go only up to high school, all went to college. Oscar, the third child earned a degree in psychology. Her children's education was financed either through the help of unmarried sister of her late husband, or by their working while studying as Oscar did. He is now a medical student at the University of Santo Tomas, a private scholar of a generous foreign woman.

Ka Sela started to venture further afield as her children grew up. She became active as a volunteer in their parish of San Pablo and, as an organizer for a community organization, the Samahang Kristiyanong Komunidad (SKK). In the 70's she helped provincial settlers to acquire titles to their own lots in Tondo.

As an SKK member, Ka Sela joined political meetings, rallies and demonstrations to assert the settlers' demands for land adopting as their motto: "Land for the landless." Their zeal was not always appreciated by the government so there were some confrontations with government authorities particularly at the height of the martial law regime.

The efforts of Ka Sela and her companions have succeeded. Today, they own reblocked lots in Tondo about 60 to 80 square meters per family, with the mortgage assessed depending on their capacity to pay. Ka Sela has her own lot now, still shared with some of her children. Through her active membership as a volunteer in the parish, she has received a housing construction loan provided by foreign funding agencies. She has constructed a house with two rooms, a sala, a tiled kitchen, a veranda on the second floor, and a toilet.

# Women's Month Marked



**A** wide variety of activities was held in March to mark Women's Month.

Exhibits, symposia, concert, seminars, television and radio programs, book launchings and others were organized during the month.

Theme of the celebration was "Kababaihan para sa Kaunlaran, Sulong sa Dekada '90."

Coinciding with the month-long festivities was the announcement by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) that President Corazon C. Aquino was chosen as one of four women politicians who would be the first recipients of the Noel Award for Political Leadership.

The award is a joint project of UNIFEM and the Noel Foundation.

Other recipients of the award are former Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland of Norway, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, and Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Great Britain.

Sharon Capeling-Alakija, UNIFEM director, informed the President of the award during a call at Malacañang.

Ms. Alakija later met with some leaders of prominent non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss the relationship between the UN agency and the women's groups.

Another major event during the month was the launching by the Senate Committee on Woman and Family Relations, headed by Senator Santanina Rasul, of two important documents.

These are the "Compilation of Legislation on Women," and the "Directory of Resource Persons on Legislation on Women."

Senate President Jovito Salonga was the guest speaker during the launching.

Also during the month, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conducted a seminar on economic reporting for women journalists. It was attended by representatives from 12 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

The month ended with the National Congress of Women which was participated in jointly by governmental and non-governmental organizations.

# The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women

## HISTORY

The National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) was established on January 7, 1975 by Presidential Decree No. 633.

It was governed by a 25-member Board of Commissioners made up of members of the Cabinet and civic leaders. Its day-to-day tasks were carried out by a staff headed by an Executive Director.

It undertook livelihood projects for women and participated in women's gatherings in the international level.

In 1986, there was a change in the membership of the Board. NCRFW reviewed its mandate and decided on a shift in direction. It limited itself to the formulation of policies and the coordination of programs of, by and for women.

After consultations with women and women's groups, NCRFW tasked itself with the formulation of the Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW), 1989-1992, the goal of which is to make the bureaucracy responsive to women's concerns and gender issues. It was formally approved and adopted on March 8, 1989 through Executive Order No. 348.

## MANDATE

As the national machinery on women's affairs, the NCRFW is mandated to monitor, in coordination with the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), the implementation, assessment and updating of the PDPW by the various government agencies.

The NCRFW assists the President and the Cabinet in policy formulation and program implementation for the integration of women in national development:

## KEY FUNCTIONS

The PDPW is a companion to the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) 1987-1992. It is a mechanism devised to ensure the mainstreaming of women in all aspects of national development.

It serves two main purposes:

- \* It contributes to the attainment of the MTPDP goals of poverty alleviation, employment generation, equity and social justice promotion, and sustained economic growth.
- \* It embodies a comprehensive program of action for the advancement and development of Filipino women from 1989 to 1992.

NCRFW ensures PDPW implementation through the institutionalization of gender-sensitive and gender-responsive planning and programming by the various line departments.

Its major tasks are:

- \* Strengthening the data base on women through the development of a set of indicators on the status of women and their situation.
- \* Establishing appropriate institutional mechanisms in government by assisting focal points for women-in-development (WID) in every line department, government agency and instrumentality in pursuing its mandate towards its woman employees and its woman constituency; fund sourcing by launching and monitoring the Country Program for Women which is a compendium of project proposals in support of programs beneficial to women.
- \* Providing appropriate training in gender-consciousness raising and technical expertise in gender-responsive planning.
- \* Providing technical assistance in policy-making and programming.

By pursuing its mandate, the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women (NCRFW) envisions a gender-responsive bureaucracy spearheading the move towards a gender-fair society.

## **AN UNSAID WORD**

*She who has power to call her man  
From that estranged intensity  
Where his mind forages alone,  
Yet keeps her peace and leaves him free,  
And when his thoughts to her return  
Stands where he left her, still his own,  
Knows this the hardest thing to learn.*

**-- Adrienne Rich**