

The Future is Now: Immediate Needs In The Region

Southeast Asian Women Peacebuilders Network

Introduction

The Southeast Asian Women Peacebuilders Network (SEAWP) made its debut with a regional summit in May 2020. A platform for women in civil society organisations around the region, acting as activists, negotiators, lawyers and peacebuilders, the network was created to showcase the work these peacebuilding experts and practitioners do, as well as forwarding the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.

SEAWP's first seven months beginning May 2020 has been impressive: its webinars have reached a wide set of audience and the speakers have been a good mix of well-known experts and lesser known ones, with a breadth of experiences among them. These webinars have also featured young women working within the security and conflict areas as researchers and other significant roles.

In September 2020, SEAWP began its second series of webinars and came to the realisation that it has been challenging during these unprecedented times. In embracing the new normal, the increasing number of webinars have taken over the lives of many, and people, including peacebuilding experts, are either too busy or have over committed themselves to other panels, hence the limited number of webinars as was originally planned. The second series of activities was supported by the Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan.

The regional webinar in February 2021 saw the actors in Women, Peace and Security discussing the next steps for Southeast Asia, aligned with the following criteria:

- The Joint Statement on Women, Peace and Security in ASEAN adopted at the 31st ASEAN Summit in Manila in November 2017, recognizes that peace and security are essential to the achievement of sustainable development and are interconnected and vital to the future of ASEAN, emphasizing women's equal, full, and effective participation at all stages of peace processes given their indispensable roles in the prevention and resolution of conflict, peacebuilding and peacekeeping.
- Recognising the CEDAW GR 30's agenda on the importance of conflict prevention for women's rights notwithstanding, conflict prevention efforts often exclude women's experiences as not relevant for predicting conflict, and women's participation in conflict prevention is low. The Committee has previously noted the low participation of women in institutions working on preventive diplomacy and on global issues such as military expenditure and nuclear disarmament. In addition to falling short of the Convention, such gender-blind conflict prevention

measures cannot adequately predict and prevent conflict. It is only by including female stakeholders and using a gendered analysis of conflict that States parties can design appropriate responses.

- That women's participation in the peace process is crucial: addressing Gender Based Violence (GBV) in a conflict setting, recognizing the leadership of, and supporting women's organizations at the grass-root level.

SEAWP aims to be a leading regional network and collective of women peacebuilders in Southeast Asia.

Today, you can find SEAWP at the following channels:

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Executive Summary

This policy paper highlights the research findings of issues pertinent to the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) discussion in Southeast Asia that includes traditional security and emerging issues such as climate change, water and food security, and social media disinformation. The paper comprises detailed research findings and discussion outputs from the webinar session and conference held by the Southeast Asian Women Peacebuilders Network (SEAWPN). The SEAWPN highlights how women's presence in tackling these issues, encourages and leads to inclusivity in peace talk processes, and fosters the recognition of minority groups.

Summary Research findings

1. Women are disproportionately affected by climate change because women have fewer resources to adapt to changing climate conditions.
2. Comprehension of the intersection between gender, climate and security can enhance policy formulation and create concrete solutions that can prevent conflict and foster lasting peace.
3. Political communication is vital in ensuring that research output is delivered to policymakers.

4. Cooperation needs to be enhanced with vulnerable groups; the gap of information between women's interlinkages dampens action from the community, and this makes documentation efforts crucial.
5. Address the urgency of having both gender-inclusive policies and regulations, and the immediate need to increase the number of women involved in decision-making and leadership positions.
6. The rising trend of social media disinformation, lack of women representation, and lack of gender-inclusive policies and regulations, will further silence women from voicing their ideas and concerns.
7. Female leaders and female-oriented CSOs are often subject to digital harassment. This comes with a whole slew of gender-oriented attacks, including sexual harassment, hatred based on social norms, targeting of family members, threats of sexual assault, and the discrediting of women leaders' by targeting their political careers with character assassinations that affect their careers.
8. Involvement of women CSO and women grassroots community in day-to-day peacebuilding will mainstream women's involvement and participation in decision-making.
9. Grassroots communities should be provided with a platform to speak out and create more connections between NGO and CSO, as they have valuable experience and knowledge about their communities.

Webinar recommendation:

1. Optimise the role of researcher not only in research but also as advocate for the government in policy-making.
2. Involve vulnerable groups and indigenous communities by providing them with a platform to voice their ideas and concerns about climate change.
3. Increase involvement of women organisations in tackling emerging issues.
4. Passing gender inclusive policies and regulations to mitigate social media misinformation.
5. Educational and rehabilitation approaches in punishing offenders of social media misinformation.
6. Impose regulations on social media companies to mitigate digital pollution.
7. Establish fact-checking mechanisms as preventive measures.



Background of the policy paper

The increasingly unstable global climate is not only an environmental or economic issue, but it is now so extensive that it is now a threat to international security. Flooding, disease, and famine have caused an unprecedented rate of migration in regions of high tensions. Also, drought and crop-failure have led to intensified competition for food, water and energy in places that are already experiencing scarcity. These impacts will contribute to security risks for many people worldwide, particularly for women as crucial providers of food, water, and energy. The disproportionate effect on women means that they have fewer resources to adapt to the changing conditions. With this in mind, it is hoped that the urgency of climate change will transform the traditional gender norms in Southeast Asia into a more gender-inclusive society that promotes gender equality in decision-making, and in leadership positions of peace and development processes. Policy-makers must understand the inextricable link between gender, climate, and security to formulate concrete solutions that can prevent conflict and foster lasting peace. Addressing climate-related security risks from a gender approach will also enable the nation-state to achieve targets in three different SDG goals.

According to Oxfam, there are 800 million food-insecure people in 2017, with rural women being the most affected.¹ This number is expected to reach above 840 million by 2030 if recent trends continue; notwithstanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.² In most

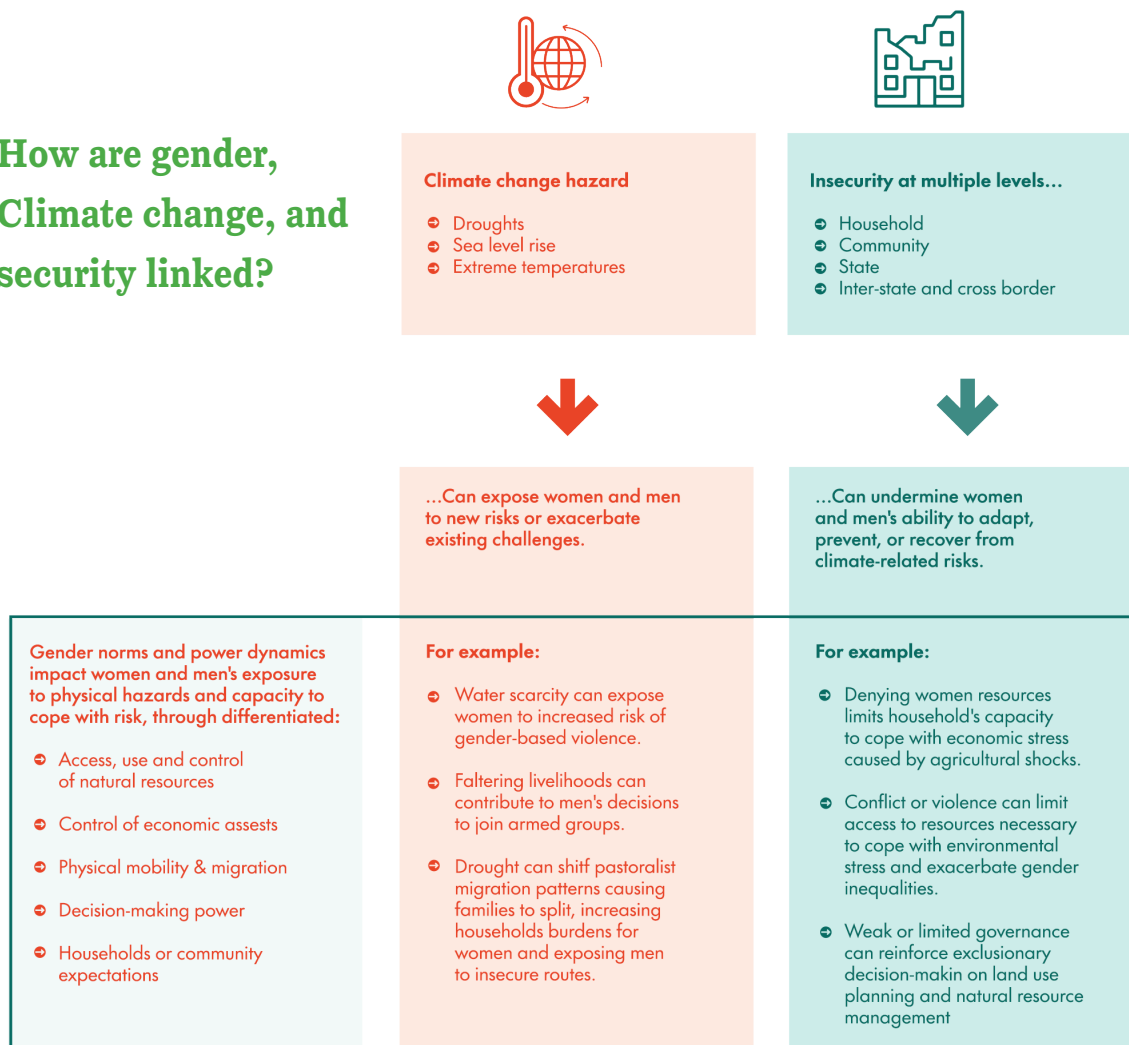
¹ OXFAM, 2017, "Gender Inequalities and Food Security", P7. Dr. Mazlan Usman
² FAO, 2020, "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World".

of society, women bear the primary responsibility for water acquisition and management. On average, women spend 200 million hours collecting water for their families and 266 million hours to go to the toilet.³ Climate change has disproportionately affected women. Extreme weather such as drought and flood, particularly affect the poor, which is composed of 70% women. Moreover, women also tend to have less access to fundamental human rights and are prone to systemic gender violence.



Considering women's role and responsibility in sustaining the community's livelihood as providers of food, water and energy, women should be allowed to engage in more leadership roles, such as governing natural resources or mediating natural resource-related disputes. The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 recognizes the importance of women's participation at all levels in the "prevention, management and resolution of conflict." Therefore, active participation and opportunities for women in leadership roles are crucial for the empowerment of women, as these highlight women's ability to participate in decision-making processes.

How are gender, Climate change, and security linked?



In ASEAN, women and girls in the region are still vulnerable to various human insecurities. The protection of women's human rights has essentially been confined to the socio-cultural areas, which is addressed separately from political and security concerns. However, in political upheavals and conflicts, it is evident that women suffer disproportionately compared to men. Considering the region's vulnerability towards climate change, the region's resilience and adaptation to climate change are vital for its sustainability. Therefore, states should optimise women's specific and valuable contribution to sustaining peace and security of the country and the region in these crucial times.

In support of the ASEAN community's women, peace and security agenda, the Southeast Asian Women Peacebuilders Network (SEAWPN) held a series of online seminars on women's role in promoting peace and security. One of the topics of its webinar session was on climate change and security, that was panelled by women working in different sectors of society, and representing different clusters of women in the society that included academics, representatives of non-governmental organisations, and civil society organisations. The discussion of the webinar was driven by the following questions:

1. What kind of changes do we need to implement, and what strategies are we looking at?
2. How can grassroots take the initiative to protect the environment?
3. What are the examples of women addressing these issues?

The seminar primarily revolved around each panellist's experience in the field as academics and practitioners, and on how women overcome emerging contemporary issues of today, and identify the challenges and best practices. The seminar encouraged participants to engage in Question-and-Answer sessions, but only one question from the audience made it to the discussions due to time constraints.



Moreover, the increasing interdependence on social media, and frequent usage of online platforms have created information disorder, including misinformation, and disinformation, thus presenting a new challenge for the WPS agenda. As the modern world becomes more and more interconnected and information spreads faster, the dissemination of hoaxes and fake news through social media can have severe implications ranging from impacting on elections, spreading anti-vaccine narratives, and inciting hatred and violence.

Moreover, if the trend of gendered disinformation is left unchecked, then women's equality in political participation can be seriously threatened. More often than not, online spaces

have been utilized to systematically exclude women leaders and undermine the role of women in public life. The attacks on women, in combination with personal attacks driven by political motivation, make the online platform a dangerous space for women to use their voice. Women leaders, including CEOs, sportswomen, and politicians, are often subject to these forms of harassment.

Findings and discussions

Climate change, food and water security and the role of WPS

The study of climate change is not only centred on discussions about actors at the governmental level, it is also about having empathy and understanding towards victims, and experiencing the effects of climate change. One key strategy to mitigate climate change and enhance food and water security is political communication, especially if it delivers research output to policymakers.⁴ In Indonesia, for example, development policies can improve the welfare of the community, but it can adversely affect the environment, and erode the participation of the marginalised such as rural women whose lands have been lost to settlement areas. The key is to communicate research output as part of policy intervention. Lobbying the parliament to collaborate on policies that increase women's meaningful participation in climate change policies is also crucial. Such a case was found in the Philippines, which is one of the most disaster-prone countries. As there is a tendency to take a business-as-usual approach, it is crucial to communicate risks and climate change more effectively.

Other than communication, comprehension is also pertinent. A webinar speaker from UNICEF Malaysia highlighted the case of climate pledge in Malaysia, and the submission

⁴ Irine Hiraswari Gayatri. 2020. The Other Violent Extremism: Climate Change, Food and Water Security, 29 October 2020.

of net environmental contribution (NEC) to UNFOC. Out of the 186 NECs analysed, there were only 69 concerning women and gender inequality. Women organisations should be considered as equal partners to process and implementation. Only 40% of the NECs referred to children, with 20% specifically mentioning children, while only 2% explicitly touched on child-specific policies. In June, UNDP and UNICEF surveyed youth perspective on climate change, and the report was launched in November 2020.⁵

Moreover, states should also enhance collaboration with vulnerable groups to address climate change, food, and water security. Working with vulnerable communities is often tricky and takes a lot of time. One needs to gain their trust before the data collection stage. This is due to the community's experience of being subjected to systematic violence and attacks for years. It is also crucial to establish that the data will be monitored, and by whom. KAMY, a youth organisation in Malaysia, found that during the exchange of knowledge with indigenous groups, the degradation of forests, and the rapid expansion of monoculture plantation, have had severe consequences for women because of their role of sustaining life and culture. Ecological degradation leads to water scarcity which consequentially affects the sowing season and seeds collection. Documenting knowledge is critical because women need first to acknowledge the interlinkages before the community's healing process can occur. Currently, women are witnessing what is happening, and they are aware of their surroundings, but only a few can relate. This gap of information has dampened action from the community. Thus, efforts of documentation are crucial.

Despite all the challenges, it is equally important to acknowledge the success that women have achieved in mitigating climate change. In Lembata, East Nusa Tenggara, young women created a simple tool for water purification. The area is prone to drought and has become extremely dry over the years due to climate change. To find water, women need to walk at least 2 km before the government could install a purification system. This initiative, community support, and collectivism are important aspects of women's role in mitigating climate change.⁶

Another story comes from the Karen community in Thailand that started collecting aloo seeds from different places to ensure that the seeds survive through future generations. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they shared the seeds with the community around them. Organising for food sufficiency is an act of healing. In Pos Lanai, Malaysia, where people have been displaced from their homes, men and women are working together, and the young are in charge of coordinating plans. They are also reaching out and being trained by the government. However, the youth have been feeling immobilised due to the pandemic's impact, restricting access to education, skills development, and employment

⁵ Jasmine Ilham. 2020. The Other Violent Extremism: Climate Change, Food and Water Security, 29 October 2020

⁶ Irine Hiraswari Gayatri. 2020. The Other Violent Extremism: Climate Change, Food and Water Security, 29 October 2020

opportunities. The current situation has made them feel powerless due to their inability to contribute to society and their feelings of uncertainty about the future. This has resulted in a mindset shift in how the youth see their role in society. The speaker from KAMY gave an example of the youth's role in advocacy, and the youth must discover alternative methods to contribute to society, and find new opportunities. One of the examples given by KAMY was youth NGO in Malaysia, where members have been visiting indigenous communities, and documenting what is currently going on. Although policymakers may not see the documentation, sharing it with the public will initiate new and important discourse.

Similarly, the influence of women in mitigating climate change has also happened in Papua. Although known as a conflict-affected area, there are stories on how women try to preserve the agriculture system and empower themselves amid climate change to attain food security and contribute to their community. The traditional role in providing food for their families and community members is crucial for the female members of the indigenous community. The prescribed role of Papuan women in caring for the community's food gardens and forests underscores their dependency on access to land. However, women have no rights of land ownership and natural resources of their native lands. Thus, land loss due to loss of settlements, or loss caused by natural disasters, often leads to community displacement. Therefore, exploitation or depletion of natural resources due to climate change contributes to the families and communities' harsh lives. Women's inability to carry out their roles in securing food also puts them at further risk of violence.

Misinformation and Disinformation in Social Media

Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, people spend more time online, with the internet becoming the leading platform for interaction. Paralleling this uptick in internet usage is the rise of information disorder, including misinformation and disinformation. Although not a new occurrence, the increased use of online platforms has caused a global increase in information pollution. People's rationales for creating and disseminating these types of polluted messages are often varied. These include the types of content, the means of spreading news, and the platforms used to transmit such messages.

However, before delving deeper into the ramifications of information disorder, it is important to define what constitutes information disorder, and the different types of information disorder. The Council of Europe introduced a framework dividing information disorder into two broad categories, namely false, and harmful.⁷ The first type of disorder, misinformation, refers to the 'dissemination of false information without the intention

⁷ Jia Vern Tham. 2021. Misinformation and Disinformation in Social Media: The New Challenge for Women. Social Media and Its Impact on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding, 19 February 2021.

of causing harm, for example, editorial errors, satirical news.’ This type of information disorder falls under the category of false information. The second type misinformation disorder refers to the ‘dissemination of genuine information with the intent of causing harm (for example, leaks of personal information, using a dead person’s photo without context to ignite hatred towards a particular group). This type of information disorder falls under the category of ‘harmful’ information. The third type of information disorder, disinformation, is arguably the most dangerous and refers to the ‘dissemination of false information with the intent of causing harm (for example, propaganda posters, deep fakes, conspiracy theories). This type of information disorder is categorised as both ‘false’ and ‘harmful’ information.

The effects of these different types and examples of information disorder can be broad and difficult to compile and assess holistically. However, harassment -- including the leaking of personal information -- sowing mistrust, confusion, and anger leading to targeted hatred, threats of violence, in addition to the deterioration of democracy, are all among the most common and widely acknowledged effects of information disorder. Female leaders and female-oriented CSOs often experience these effects, in addition to gender-oriented attacks, which include sexual harassment, hatred based on social norms, the targeting of family members, threats of sexual assault, and the discrediting of women leaders by character assassinations.

There are many examples of female leaders being the target of information disorder in Malaysia. Tengku Emma Zuriana Tengku Azmi, an Ambassador for the European Rohingya Council whose work centres on providing healthcare and education for Rohingya refugees in Malaysia, became a target of cyberbullying and harassment in April 2020 after she spoke in support of Rohingya refugees.⁸ She suffered:

- False claims about her citizenship.
- The exposure of her personal information.
- Rape threats made against her.

Heidi Quah, the head of the NGO ‘Refuge for Refugees,’ was targeted in June 2020 for shedding light on the plight of refugees. As a result, she suffered disinformation efforts against her NGO, with many labelling her NGO, its advocacy campaigns, and its crowdfunding campaigns as disingenuous. She experienced hate speech and threats of violence.

⁸ Jia Vern Tham. 2021. Misinformation and Disinformation in Social Media: The New Challenge for Women. Social Media and Its Impact on Women’s Participation in Peacebuilding, 19 February 2021.

Lastly, there is the example of Hannah Yeoh, the MP for Segambut, who previously worked on the National Strategy Plan to end child marriage. In March 2020, she became the target of a disinformation campaign for ‘insulting the religion of Islam’ through her work on the National Strategy Plan to end child marriage. In June 2020, she was even investigated by the Royal Malaysia Police over the same disinformation campaign.

With numerous disinformation, and both types of misinformation aimed at female leaders in Malaysia, the Malaysian Government has implemented a few initiatives.⁹ To counter the spread of false information online, the Government has implemented the fact-checking mechanism ‘Sebenarnya.My’, in addition to creating the Communications and Multimedia Ministry Quick Response Team¹⁰. The Team can fact-check viral news stories within 30 minutes to three hours, and monitor the spread of viral news stories.

The Government has also afforded the Malaysian Multimedia and Communications Commission the ability to submit takedown requests to social media companies if need be. Also, certain legislation such as Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act, and Sections 543 to 549 of the Penal Code, allow the Government the means to legally combat information disorder campaigns¹¹. However, specific issues and challenges arise with the different initiatives implemented by the Government. Regarding the fact-checking mechanism, more often than not, women still face the burden of having to explain the falseness of the claims, or disinformation campaigns made against them. Additionally, women are forced to rely on authority figures whose objectivity has been called into question numerous times. Therefore, it is necessary to create a more conducive space for civil society-led fact-checkers as the Malaysian Government cannot comprehensively and thoroughly fact-check every piece of information on the internet. Given the objectivity issues of relevant Government institutions, journalists should also create an independent media council to monitor the spread of information online.

Regarding the submission of takedown requests to social media companies, because there are no specific legal provisions that oblige social media companies to act on submissions of takedowns, many requests are often ignored. The creation of social media regulations should emulate the rules in Germany, which mandate local teams to enrich algorithms and detect the false information towards women. Within these regulations, there should also be a mandate to have precise levels of seriousness for inaccurate and/or harmful information as part of social media guidelines for taking down content, in addition to having a commission create specific intervention mechanisms, such as pre-sharing or pre-publication pop-up prompts.

9 Ibid.

10 New Strait Times Online. 2020. Public can help authorities combat fake news: New Straits Times. <https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/05/594646/public-can-help-authorities-combat-fake-news>

11 Ibid.

Regarding present legislation, overly vague wording, and broad scope, and over punitive laws have been prone to misuse and fail to sufficiently address non-criminal disinformation. Moreover, despite an increase in online sexual harassment during the lockdown, the sexual harassment bill remains to be enacted. These legislations, therefore, need to be amended, or supplemented with conditions where false and harmful information would constitute criminal offences. However, law enforcement agencies should also be required to consider aggravating and mitigating factors in handing out punishments, with educational and rehabilitative approaches being the main priorities when ‘punishing’ offenders. At present, the example in Malaysia has shown that we cannot simply rely on legislation to tackle issues of misinformation and social media usage. There must be a media arbiter. The state must also allocate resources to schools, and media to determine the seriousness of an issue on a specific scale to decide on how to respond best and proportionally. Most importantly, there must be an effort to educate, and not just outright punish. A system of warnings can be most helpful in this regard.

Women inclusion in peace talk

The importance of women’s participation in tackling emerging issues such as climate change, water and food security illustrates the urgency of gender-inclusive policies and regulations, and the immediate need to increase the number of women involved in decision-making and leadership positions. With the rising trend of social media disinformation, women’s representation and lack of gender-inclusive policies and regulations will further silence women from voicing their ideas and concerns. Considering women are powerful agents of change, this would be a significant loss if women’s role in society is not optimised.

In tackling climate change, it has been said that women understand what is needed to adapt to the changing environmental conditions, and often are better at coming up with practical solutions. In East Nusa Tenggara in Indonesia, for instance, women take the role of farming assistants. However, this is recognised only at the local level. Hence, there needs to be more conversation, informal political agenda-setting and initiatives from the grassroots. There is a tendency to politicise climate change in Indonesia due to the multiparty system that creates competitions between political parties for access to resources.¹² Therefore, it is vital to have an independent and critical community organisation. Civil society organisations that strive to bring global issues into the discussion at the national level are now mushrooming. Topics such as women, peace and security, climate change, violent extremism and others, are making their way into the discussion.

¹² Irine Hiraswari Gayatri. 2020. The Other Violent Extremism: Climate Change, Food and Water Security, 29 October 2020.

Moreover, women's involvement in decision-making and leadership positions can also bring incredible benefit in tackling other issues. There are other evidence of success from the participation of women in peace talks. Women's presence in peace negotiations between the Filipino Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) created a new dynamic in the room. Three out of five of the government representatives who took part in the negotiation were women. Initially, women were limited to serving in consulting roles, and were not given seats at the negotiation table.¹³ However, when the working groups began discussing more technical issues such as power-sharing, dealing with arms, women started to play further significant role, eventually making their most meaningful contribution to the peace efforts.

Nonetheless, despite the greater involvement of women in peace negotiations, challenges remain when pushing for the inclusion of specific gender provisions within peace agreements or even legislation. For one, 'The right of women to meaningful political participation is one of the hardest provisions to include in the Philippines - Moro peace agreement. Then, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was initially incredibly resistant to the inclusion of this provision as part of its mandate as an autonomous regional government. The Moro Islamic Liberation Front was hesitant about the potential responsibilities that this might entail, and began questioning the definition of 'meaningful political participation.' Arguably, only women can define what they consider 'meaningful'.¹⁴ Fortunately, the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro, March 2014, ultimately included such provisions, in addition to requirements that had socio-economic programmes for civilian women and former female fighters to allow for greater post-conflict integration. As it stands, within the Bangsamoro Assembly, 13/80 Assembly Members are women, the Deputy Majority Leader is a woman, the Minority Leader is a woman, and several of the thirteen female assembly members also chair the Committees.¹⁵ While in the Bangsamoro Cabinet, the current Minister of Social Services, the Minister of Science and Technology, the Head of the Regional Commission on Bangsamoro Women, and the Attorney General are all women.

Female involvement in the peace processes normalises female leadership, making it part of the cultural norm, and challenges the masculine leadership role model wherein the individual needs to be tough, powerful, and dominant. The contingent of the CPC by the Mindanao people's caucus were the first all-women contingent. Therefore, these efforts

13 Miriam Coronel-Ferrer. 2021. Women Too Often Omitted from Peace Processes: Lessons Learnt from the Philippines Women Inclusion in Peacebuilding: A Framework for Continued Sustainability, 19 February 2021.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

normalise women's participation and their leadership roles, and create women inclusivity as part of the cultural norm. This approach institutionalises women, peace and security agenda at the national level, and eventually as a collective, at the regional level.

The successful involvement of women's participation in the Moro peace process is the work of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the North and South of the Philippines. CSOs are an integral part of this endeavour, working alongside the tribal councils in both the South and North Philippines on tribal council affairs. Its members are primarily male-dominated. CSOs helped and were involved in every step of the peace process. Even if they cannot become negotiators, the CSOs supported the lobbying of congress and the senate, and offered ground perspectives, especially in the peace negotiations in Manila. Therefore, it is necessary to involve women CSOs and women grassroots community in day-to-day peacebuilding as it mainstreams women's involvement and participation in decision-making.

Additionally, grassroots communities also require a platform to speak out and create more connections between NGOs and CSOs. In Malaysia, there is a hashtag called #jagarakyat. The solidarity is already in place but needs to be fortified. There needs to be training for grassroots intellectuals whom are knowledgeable about their communities, and understand ways to pass on information to the younger groups. In such sessions, there should be a discussion about the needs of society. These knowledge exchanges could also give grassroots organisations hopes and ideas, as well as best practices.



Policy Recommendations

From the findings and discussions of the SEAWPN webinar series and conference, the participants recommended several approaches for stakeholders at the national and regional level to enhance women, peace and security agenda in tackling emerging issues such as climate change, food and water security, and social media disinformation.

Firstly, researchers should enhance their roles as part of the policy-making process, in order to tackle the WPS agenda's challenges and communicate the research output. Researchers should pay attention to methods on how to effectively communicate their work to the government to build better comprehension of climate change, food and water security, and ensure the inclusion of women and other minority groups. Through evidence-based policy-making, researchers can act as a bridge between academics, CSOs and policy-makers.¹⁶

Secondly, there are many successful examples of women and other vulnerable groups being involved in addressing climate change, water and food security -- aside from this forum -- in which women can brainstorm and find solutions to the emerging issues. Therefore, it is recommended that vulnerable groups, women, and indigenous communities should be provided platforms for knowledge exchanges, and to conduct training to address climate change, food and water security. The influence of women in mitigating climate change

¹⁶ Irine Hiraswari Gayatri. 2020. Other Violent Extremism: Climate Change, Food and Water Security, 29 October 2020.

in Papua, despite its reputation as a conflict-affected area, has shown how women have succeeded in preserving the agriculture system and empowering themselves amid climate change, in order to attain food security for their community. The traditional role of women as food providers for their families and as members of organisations is significant for female members of the Indigenous community. The prescribed role of Papuan women in caring for the community's food gardens and forests emphasises their dependency on access to land. However, women have no rights to ownership of their Indigenous land and its natural resources. Thus, the loss of land due to loss of settlements, or natural disasters, often leads to community displacement. Therefore, exploitation of natural resources, or the depletion of natural resources, due to climate change contributes to the families and communities' severe livelihoods. Women's inability to carry out their roles in securing food also puts them at further risk of violence.

Moreover, the success of women's involvement in Papua highlights the need for more women organisations that should be made partners in these efforts. Women's roles in tackling climate change, food and water security, and their participation in peace talks, have invited more attention to other achievements in peace and development realms, including how to solve challenges of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda.¹⁷ Women's ability to identify and build on the capacity of existing community-led initiatives and spaces shows women's ability to mobilise and influence even in times of chaos. These approaches women take are often conducted within the local informal grassroots spaces. Thus, it shows that women's vital role is not only at the formal level but also at the everyday level.

In mitigating misinformation in social media usage, it is recommended that governments pass gender-inclusive regulations and policies, and provide proper education to perpetrators to prevent recurrence. The panel recommendation focuses on prevention and education rather than punishment, as simply criminalising the act itself is no guarantee that the same incident will not be repeated.¹⁸ The example presented in Malaysia has shown that misinformation and social media usage are serious problems that should not be avoided by policy-makers as there is no crime without any victims, even in the digital space. Regulations should apply for punitive measures towards the offenders and to social media companies too. These companies are responsible for ensuring that their platform is not used for the harmful spread of information. Therefore, social media regulation is also crucial in tackling the issue of false information on social media. Moreover, the establishment of fact-checking mechanisms can also prevent the harmful effects of misinformation. Although this solution is highly reliant on authorities, it could also create a conducive space for civil society-led fact-checkers.

17 Ili Nadiyah Dzulfakar. 2020. The Other Violent Extremism: Climate Change, Food and Water Security, 29 October 2020.

18 Jia Vern Tham. 2021. Misinformation and Disinformation in Social Media: The New Challenge for Women. Social Media and Its Impact on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding, 19 February 2021.

Conclusion

In conclusion, with the increasingly dynamic and ever-changing nature of today's issues, peacebuilders must be able to formulate agile and sustainable means to meet these challenges. Women must be part of the conversation at all levels since they play critical roles in their families and communities. Evidence have shown that women empowerment can deliver results across a variety of sectors. Women are not only victims but also powerful agents of change and possess specific knowledge and skills to contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation effectively, but they are vastly underrepresented in decision-making processes at all levels. The importance of women empowerment in ASEAN community building and promoting a more gendered approach to peace and conflict in the region needs consideration.

Women are affected differently and more severely by climate change and its impacts on agriculture, natural disasters, and climate change-induced migrations, because of social roles, discrimination and poverty. Therefore, women should be a part of the conversation. Highlighting women's role can encourage gender inclusivity in peace talks that will generate the recognition of minority groups and strengthen grassroots communities' involvement.

Even though the 21st century affords us all many new opportunities, digital divides between different segments of society persist and can exacerbate certain groups' exclusion. Several challenges of modern technologies include the increasing prevalence of information pollution, which casts a dark cloud on online information, which creates disinformation and misinformation, and sows anger and distrust within society, as is the case in Malaysia. Therefore, mechanisms need to be urgently developed to better protect activists and human rights defenders, and include women in the process. Women's inclusion in peace talks and peacebuilding will contribute to the process and substance differently, bringing diverse actors, as well as ensuring gender mainstreaming at all levels of intervention.



Steering Committee SEAWP
