



OUR VOICE

JOINT STATEMENT TO THE APEC SUMMIT

We, the undersigned women's organisations working across six countries in Asia and the Pacific region, are members of Our Voice, which is a campaign working to increase the representation and effective participation of women in decision-making across Asia and the Pacific.¹

We welcome the acknowledgment in the *Da Nang Declaration 2017*, of the importance of women's economic empowerment including the need for initiatives to promote women's leadership.

We support the *2018 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Statement* and the recognition of the importance of women's representation and voice for balanced decision-making at the highest levels of politics and government and as business leaders and entrepreneurs.

The *Sustainable Development Goals*, agreed to by the World's Governments in 2015, contain a specific target in relation to women's participation in decision making. Under Target 5.5, Governments have committed to ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Women's right to full and effective participation in decision making is also clearly stated in international human rights agreements and frameworks, including the *Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*, the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the *Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration*.

However, women remain under-represented in leadership at all levels of society. The current worldwide average of women's participation in national parliaments is 24%. The percentage of women in Pacific parliaments is 7.5% (2018), the lowest in the world.

Temporary special measures, such as quotas and reserved seats, have been used successfully to increase women's representation. Of the 47 countries in the world with 30% or more women's participation in national parliaments, 41 countries (85%) use at least one form of quota system.

In Timor-Leste, legislated candidate quotas were introduced in 2006, with women now making up 33.8% of the national parliament.²

In this regard, we are encouraged by the consideration of temporary special measures to increase women's representation in the current Review of Electoral Laws being undertaken by the Constitutional and Law Reform Commission in Papua New Guinea.³

WE ENCOURAGE APEC LEADERS TO:

- Recommit to women's economic empowerment and gender equality in the APEC region, as recommended in the 2018 APEC Women and the Economy Forum Statement.
- Recognise the importance of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 5, and the importance of women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.
- Encourage the use of temporary special measures to accelerate women's representation in public and private sectors within APEC countries.

STATEMENT BY OUR VOICE PARTNERS

Bougainville Women's Federation (BWF)



Voice For Change (VFC)



Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN)



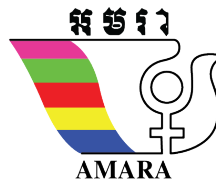
Women's Rights Action Movement (WRAM)



Gender and Development for Cambodia (GADC)



AMARA



Ta'ang Women's Organisation



Wide Bay Conservation Association (WBCA)



Nazareth Centre for Rehabilitation (NCFR)



International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)



Asistencia Legal ba Feto no Labarik (ALFeLa)



Eastern Highlands Family Voice



¹ Our Voice is part of Women's Action for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE), which is a ground-breaking women's leadership program that brings together and supports individual women, organisations, and movements in Asia and the Pacific region to increase the representation of women in diverse leadership positions. To find out more see: www.iwda.org.au/wave/our-voice.

² See The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), Gender Quotas Database, <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas>.

³ See the submission from PNG Our Voice partners at <https://iwda.org.au/resource/review-of-electoral-laws-submission-our-voice-png-partners/>.