



WOMEN LEADERS AND THE NEW ASIAN CENTURY

Insights from the Government, Private Sector, and Civil Society

Edited by Astrid S. Tuminez and Maria del Mar Garza

Women Leaders and the New Asian Century

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez

Regional Director, Legal and Corporate Affairs, Southeast Asia

Microsoft

“Women can’t have it all,” is a refrain that has sparked a tremendous amount of conversation in global media. Indra Nooyi, CEO of Pepsico, confessed it at the Aspen Ideas Festival in 2014. Debora Spar, president of Barnard College in New York City, argued it in her 2013 book, *Wonder Women: Sex, Power, and the Quest for Perfection*. And in 2012, Anne-Marie Slaughter, now President and CEO of The New America Foundation, ignited an angst-ridden global conversation with a similar headline in the *Atlantic Monthly* magazine. “Women can’t have it all” generally reflects the frustration of well-educated, talented, and often affluent women in western countries who have pursued high-charging careers and faced the painful bifurcation of their exciting lives of success and leadership, on one hand, and their squeezed personal and family lives, on the other.

Do women leaders in Asia feel the same frustration as their more westernised counterparts—that they “can’t have it all”? What challenges do Asian women leaders face? What about those just launching, or are in the middle of, their leadership journeys? How do women in Asia sustain ambition, meaning, and effectiveness in their own pathway to leadership? What policies and practices help or hinder women’s leadership potential?

In the last three decades, girls and young women in many Asian countries have advanced significantly in the four metrics of gender equality measured by the World Economic Forum’s *Global Gender Gap Report*: health and survival, education, economic opportunity, and political empowerment. More women in Asia today are getting tertiary education and entering the pipeline of work and leadership. Yet, in this region (as elsewhere), a glaring gender gap persists the higher one ventures up the rungs of leadership: the higher the rung, the fewer the women. So, it seems, in Asia as in the West, “women can’t have it all.” And, in large parts of Asia, the fundamental valuation of girls persistently lags that of boys; leading to continued female foeticide, lower investments in girls’ education and welfare, and persistent obstacles to female leadership.

What is to be done? In 2012, with support from the Rockefeller Foundation, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Asia Society launched in Shanghai a report on

women’s leadership in Asia. Entitled, *Rising to the Top?*, the report examined the state of women’s leadership in the public, private and non-profit sectors in Asia-Pacific countries. It also examined policies and practices that have helped or hindered women in their pathways to leadership from birth to maturity.

To continue the conversation launched with *Rising to the Top?*, the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Microsoft, Rockefeller, and Oxfam convened senior leaders from government, corporations, and non-profits at a symposium in Bangkok, Thailand on April 22, 2014 to share insights and raise questions on women’s leadership in Asia. Despite financial crises in 1997-1998 and 2008-2009, Asia remains a region of tremendous growth and unprecedented opportunity. In fact, nine Asian economies have grown a minimum of 7% every year for 25 years until 2008, a feat “unheard of before the latter half of the twentieth century.”¹ Alongside this growth, Asia has confronted, and continues to confront, complex and intractable problems, including severe inequality, widespread environmental degradation, and intractable and violent conflicts. To address these problems effectively, Asia will need all its human talent and all its leaders, male and female. The region is far from tapping fully its female talent. In this context, scholars and multi-sectoral leaders who met in Bangkok conducted a rich discussion on the state of female leadership, persistent challenges, and new opportunities in Asia.

We present below a brief report, with supplementary materials, on the conversation that took place on April 22, 2014. The report highlights the ideas and viewpoints exchanged, including specific insights from each sector (government, corporations, and non-profits). No single set of actors can fully address the whats, hows, and whys of women’s leadership and gender equality. These matters cut across families, teams, organisations, countries, and regions in the world. By exchanging insights, we did not expect to get definitive answers. But, as this report shows, we have elucidated problems and, even more importantly, highlighted solutions, advancing the critical arguments as well as loftier aspirations that underpin the case for greater women’s leadership in Asia.

The Rise of Asia and Women's Leadership

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Haresh Koobchandani

Managing Director
Microsoft Thailand

Haresh Khoobchandani, General Manager of Microsoft Thailand, opened the symposium by talking first about his personal experience as a private sector leader. Microsoft hired him in 1997, when he had neither a university degree nor any background in IT. He saw this as an expression of the company's belief in diversity and inclusion in hiring. As Haresh rose through the ranks of the company, he internalised the importance of promoting diversity and inclusion. In particular, he trained his eye on greater gender equality, acknowledging the unique talents and insights that women bring to the table. Under his leadership at Microsoft Thailand, women have come to occupy 55% of management and leadership positions. This is a big achievement compared to the 25% benchmark in the software industry^{2 3}.

What is diversity? Haresh referred to it as “the full range of human differences and similarities and how we embrace all of them together.” Diversity must go hand-in-hand with inclusion. Leaders must deliberately harness differences in order to solve problems and grow business. When diversity and inclusion are both present, they contribute to building a competitive advantage for teams and organisations.

Diversity and inclusion promote creativity and innovation in the workplace. In the case of Microsoft, collaborative energy has risen because talented people with different backgrounds have come together to innovate and to fuel success for more than three decades. The world itself is diverse and complex, and it is necessary for organisations to embrace different

experiences and different smarts to better navigate challenges and opportunities.

Women's leadership must be at the core of any discussion of diversity and inclusion. Women are emerging in massive ways. On one hand, they represent the current and next generation of consumers. On the other, they are increasingly contributing to the sustainability and development of organisations where they work. A recent Fortune 500 analysis showed that organisations with higher female representation delivered 53% more return on equity to shareholders than those with fewer women⁴.

Despite the excellent arguments for increasing the number of women in leadership positions, many remain unclear on how to make this happen. One lesson from Microsoft is that diversity must begin at the top. Senior leaders must buy into the concept and exercise strong leadership to make diversity and inclusion a value and a practice. At Microsoft, diversity is part of the performance targets that every country manager must meet. The company believes in inclusive employment to sustain human talent that will help the company stay competitive. Flexibility is at the very centre of this policy, and this is particularly important for women. Because the company allows its employees to work from home or other locations, women are able to have some of the flexibility required for work-life balance. Microsoft also provides networking opportunities between global and in-country women leaders, generating the space for them to learn from each other and to grow networks for career advancement.

Dr. Juree Vichit-Vadakan

Advisor and former Dean, Vice-President and President

National Institute of Development Administration
Thailand

Dr. Juree Vichit-Vadakan began by noting that, in a country like Thailand, a first glance might indicate that there are no barriers or obstacles to women's leadership. Women are everywhere: in the market, in offices, in universities, and in the public sector. However, a closer look at leadership, especially top leadership, reveals that women are not really "making it". Excluding family businesses and some major corporations, women are not yet "there" in terms of making it to the top echelons of authority and decision-making.

In her study of women and leadership in Thailand, Dr. Vichit-Vadakan interviewed the top leadership at six public sector organisations. She initially asked if the organisations had discriminatory policies or if women were performing more poorly compared to men. Responses were negative across the board. Women, in fact, entered public sector organisations at the same pace as men in the early years. However, after some point, their pathways diverge: men go higher while women are left behind. With maternity, in particular, women's responsibilities at home increase. They tend to take a bigger burden than their male counterparts at home, and this becomes the first hidden barrier to leadership.

Would it not be better for the family and society if both men and women took on tasks—especially at home—more equally? How might one characterise the factors that truly prevent women from moving forward? These factors, according to Dr. Vichit-Vadakan, are deeply rooted in culture

and society. Two clear examples can be found in the education system and in media.

In the case of education in Thailand, socialisation from a very young age promotes leadership among boys, but not girls. For example, boys are encouraged to participate in competitive sports, while girls are marginalised. At younger ages, boys and girls are equally represented in student leadership positions. But by high school, the young men are disproportionately represented while young women, as a general rule, begin moving into the background.

Media also plays a crucial role in socialising women. In Thailand, media is full of female portrayals that can be debilitating to women's self-image. Advertisement, for example, plays a big role. Women are commoditised and their worth devalued. The overwhelming emphasis on physical beauty is particularly destructive. As a result, the confidence of women is constantly challenged. The examples of socialisation and female valuation in education and media underline some of the "hidden barriers and invisible obstacles" that are hindering women's pathways to leadership. There is no single solution for these problems, but we could begin by propagating awareness of deeply-rooted cultural and social factors that must be carefully addressed to make the playing field more equal for boys and girls, and women and men.

Redefining Masculinities

Traditionally, discussions of gender equality and women's leadership have revolved around and among women. Yet experts agree that society and culture have a large role to play in creating an enabling or disabling environment for women's leadership. Thus, research and debate on women's leadership must, of necessity, address the role of men in shaping values, norms and attitudes that support or hinder women's leadership potential.

Redefining masculinities is particularly relevant in the case of women and leadership for two reasons. First, men continue to occupy most leadership positions in practically all sectors. They control decision-making levers that make them the best potential partners in promoting women's leadership within organisations. Research also shows that leaders set the tone on diversity and inclusion, and that cascades down the ranks of their organisations. Haresh Khoobchandani and his team in Microsoft Thailand are a good example of this. Indeed, Microsoft Thailand shows that male leadership at the top can become the best catalyst for women's leadership.

A second crucial reason for men to be at the heart of the conversation is that women are continuing to breach traditional gender roles—for example, by becoming breadwinners. In the U.S., four of every ten households now include a mother who is either the sole or primary earner in the family. In Asia, women, including many who travel abroad to work as professionals or as caregivers and domestic helpers, are also becoming primary breadwinners. Two-thirds of the female population in Asia have jobs outside the home; that number is 59% for Southeast Asia⁵. In addition, traditional roles are being breached with women in the more developed Asian economies opting not to get married and not to have children⁶. These changing social and economic practices require men to redefine masculinity and traditional male roles.

An interesting case in the redefinition of masculinity is MenCare, a successful global campaign that speaks up for a change in the roles for men. MenCare seeks to engage men as caregivers and advocates for progressive family legislation and institutions to work on this key dimension of gender equality. In some regions of Sri Lanka, for example, MenCare has engaged men in communities where women have migrated to the Middle East for better economic opportunities. Such engagement has given men the opportunity to learn to develop as fathers and primary caregivers for their own children.

Another interesting case is the work of Gary Barker, director of the gender, violence, and rights team of the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW). His work focuses on engaging boys and men on the subject of gender equality. Gary has successfully worked with men in Brazil, Rwanda, and the U.S. to help boys and men become more aware of gender equality and to reduce gender-based violence. In his experience, the key to working with men is to identify community members who already support women's leadership and gender equality, and partner with them to develop their skills. These men become leaders and role models in their communities. The idea is to create a critical mass of men who can bring about change at a larger scale in their communities⁷.



Women's Leadership in the Public Sector

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP

Dr. Maytinee Bhongsvej

Secretary General

Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women
Thailand

In the last 24 years, Thailand has seen an 8% increase in women's participation in the public sector. This increase has been, to a large extent, the result of advocacy efforts for gender equality in Thailand in the last 20 years. The Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women, through its research arm—the Gender and Development Research Institute, has been part of the effort to support women's participation in decision-making in politics and public administration. Based on the Association's research and experience,

coordinated and continuous work at three different levels are needed to support women's leadership in the public sector: the general public, political parties, and women candidates.

With the general public, the Association's work has focused on increasing social acceptance of women's achievements and changes that have taken place in gender roles. Female achievement in different fields has been emphasised through awards and photo competitions highlighting women at work. The media

has been an important partner in reaching out to the general public, particularly to increase awareness of women candidates during an election period.

With political parties, the Association has focused on periods prior to an election, conducting activities and generating spaces to discuss specific policies for women. Advocacy efforts to increase women's participation in political parties has also been critical. But "success" has been difficult to come by. In many cases, women's participation in political parties may increase, but they are not ranked highly enough on the party list and thus not elected. After elections, networking within the winning coalition is key to ensuring that gender equality is taken into account in party decisions and in the formulation of laws.

Caitlin Wiesen

Regional Manager

UNDP Asia-pacific Regional Center

Women contribute to a broad range of issues when they participate in public policy. Research shows, for example, that higher female participation in political parties leads to greater prioritisation of issues that impact health. Women are also more likely to work across parties than men, and their involvement with peace agreements and post-conflict reconstruction enhances the chances of long-term success in peace-making. Despite these and many other documented contributions of women to policy-making, Asia still lags behind in female representation in the public sector.

The 2010 Regional Human Development Report, "Power, Voices and Rights," focused on the barriers to women's political participation and engagement. Three broad areas were identified: stereotypes of women's roles, political barriers, and economic barriers. Stereotypes refer to women's traditional roles, which are often limited to the private sphere and associated with reproductive and caretaking activities. Political barriers are associated with male domination of politics, along with the practice of ignoring or overlooking women's perspectives. Finally, economic barriers are associated with women's lower ownership of productive resources and assets, which hinders their political engagement

Finally, women candidates themselves need to be supported. The Association has done this through intensive mentoring and training. After elections, generating networking spaces between elected women leaders and women organisations is critical. The objective is to raise female elected officials' awareness of the different issues women face and offer them support in advancing gender equality in the policy arena.

The last 20 years have seen an important change for women in the public sector in Thailand, but gender equality in leadership has not yet been achieved. For more significant and enduring changes to take place, a clear, long-term strategy is required with the participation of the government, the public sector, and the private sector.

because economic resources are usually required for political campaigning.

There is a conventional wisdom that equates economic development and democracy as the solution to the problem of women's political participation. However, economic development and democracy are only necessary, but not sufficient, variables. For instance, in Afghanistan, a very poor and conflict-ridden country, women occupy 26% of the national parliament. This contrasts sharply with Japan, a democratic and highly developed state, where only 8% of the parliament are women. What this underlines is the need for design and intentionality. Specifically, targeted and intentional engagement must happen to augment the participation of women as leaders in the public sector. This might include mentoring for women at different stages in their political careers; financial support; and other support (especially from male leaders) to create space for women in the political sphere. Finally, as the UNDP report notes "[the] development type, political transitions, existing gender roles, and power relations demonstrate that there are many layers [and] many complexities in promoting women's participation" in the public sector⁸.

Roberta Clarke

Regional Director

UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Roberta Clarke noted that women have come a long way. Activism has changed the landscape of women's rights, and women's empowerment has been acknowledged as an important policy goal. However, there is still a long way to go to achieve gender equality. In many spheres of activity, including the public sector, women still lag in participation at higher levels of decision-making. For instance, women hold only 20% of parliamentary seats worldwide; in Asia, this number is only 18%, lagging behind the rest of the world.

One explanation for the low participation of women in the public sector is the prevalent unconscious bias and gender stereotyping that privileges men over women. One clear example of this bias at work is the persistent wage gap between men and women. Well-documented evidence reveals that men with the same qualifications and in the same positions tend to get paid more than their female counterparts.

The cultural bias and discrimination against women as leaders in the public sphere is deep-seated and it is for

these reasons that the Women's Convention (CEDAW) calls for temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men and to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment. An example of such special measures is quotas. We know now that it is in those countries that have adopted quotas that women's participation in parliament has increased. Thus, quotas are seen as an important counter to historical disadvantage, which studies have shown to work best when accompanied by steps to generate political and public support.

Essentially, what is needed is broad-based political will in both public and private sectors. Women need more choice through enhanced capabilities through education, decent work, and access to productive resources, land, credit, reproductive health services, social protection.

Women's equal access to leadership is a fundamental human right and a necessary step towards a fuller and more robust democracy.

Affirmative Action to Promote Women Leadership in the Public Sector

Affirmative action refers to the special provision of opportunities for a group that has experienced discrimination. It is meant to be a temporary policy that needs to be removed once the structural factors leading to the discrimination of the group are overcome. In the context of women's participation in the public sector, affirmative action usually takes the form of quotas, or a number of seats that are reserved for women in political or local government structures. The aim of these reservations is to increase women's participation in policy-making⁹. Despite being largely controversial, quotas are now in place in over 100 countries.

The reservation system for women in local government in India has been long studied as a natural experiment to understand the impact of women quotas on political participation and policy outcomes. The resulting evidence is mixed. Raghavendra Chattopadhyay and Esther Duflo found that women's participation in local villages was higher when there were seats reserved for them in the local councils¹⁰. The logic behind this is that changes take place in the social context (perceptions and attitudes) as a result of the presence of women leaders in the local government.

In addition, evidence suggests that after quotas are removed, women have a higher chance of getting elected than in constituencies where quotas were never implemented in the first place¹¹. This can be explained by the fact that, in places where quotas had previously existed, more women stood for public positions, and changes in public perception and voter attitudes worked in favour of women's leadership.

But the overall impact of affirmative action on policy outcomes is mixed. Evidence suggests that women in local governance structures are usually more responsive to women's needs in policy-making¹⁰. However, this effect seems to be only temporary: as women stay in power longer, they become more responsive to men's, rather than women's, priorities in policy-making^{12 13}.



Women's Leadership in the Private Sector BEYOND THE GLASS CEILING

Siriyupa Roongrerngsuke

Executive Director and Head of Human Resources Program

The Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration
Chulalongkorn University

A 2014 Grant Thornton report on women in the workforce shows that the global average of women's participation in the work force is around 45%, while the global average of women in senior management positions is 24%. Four Asian countries are among the top ten in terms of women's participation in senior management positions: China in the 1st place (51%), Philippines in 6th (37%), Thailand in 8th (36%), and Vietnam in 9th (33%). At first glance, it seems that Southeast Asia is performing quite well.

However, a look at the difference between women's enrolment in tertiary education and women's participation in the labour force reveals a different picture. In Asia-Pacific, 14% of the women who enrol in tertiary education never work. In countries such as Malaysia and Thailand, more women than men are enrolled in universities. But only a very small percentage of these well-educated women become CEOs or Managing Directors, compared to their male counterparts. This is what is often referred to as the "glass ceiling."

We work in a performance-oriented society and it is, therefore, logical to ask: are women incapable? Do they perform more poorly than men? Not at all. Men and women have proven to be equally effective leaders. And both genders share common competencies: high drive, high determination, high IQ. These attributes are not at all dependent on gender.

What, then, explains women's relatively low participation in senior management positions? In many cases, women do not receive the approval and support they need at home in order to enable them to invest more fully in their professional roles. This is a result of culture. The "glass ceiling" is not real, but created by

gender stereotypes and cultural norms and values. And culture is the result of a large socialisation process involving the family, school, and university. Changing culture requires transforming how people think, perceive, and believe. The organisation is at the end of the pipeline, and yet we expect change to happen at this level, after girls and boys and men and women have already undergone a long and thorough process of socialisation. This approach is not going to bring sustainable results. What is needed from all actors in all sectors are ways to address deep-rooted perceptions and attitudes. Unconscious biases must be removed to make the playing field a more level one for women with the ambition and capabilities to become leaders.

Watanan Petersik

Independent Director

CIMB

Watanan Petersik joined the financial services sector 30 years ago, when Wall St. had just started actively recruiting women. Her professional experience reflects the opportunities that the rise of Asia have brought to women in this sector.

With the beginning of Asia's growth period in 1985, new professions and opportunities opened up for everyone, including women. In the financial sector in particular, cultural factors worked in favour of women in Asia. In Thai and Chinese cultures, money has traditionally been the woman's domain. This interplay between culture and gender partially explains the great number of women CFOs in the region.

In the early 2000s, women came in record numbers to the financial sector at the starting level, but many did not stay. Companies in the financial sector worked at the institutional level with the objective to retain women. They set quotas for women at each level, but found that women themselves did not want quotas. Companies increased maternity leave and offered flexible work conditions to improve women's work-life balance. Mentoring was heavily deployed, including both female and male mentors for women. In addition, networking spaces were generated for women to compensate for the

informal male networks present in the private sector and from which women were usually excluded.

Despite all the institutional efforts to recruit, cultivate, and retain women in the financial sector, in 2014 the numbers of women are the same as in 2008. At entry level, 50% of the employees are women. By associate level, the percentage drops to 30%, and then 20% at the executive level and in senior management. The overall percentage of women on boards is usually in the single digits. Why is there still an amazing drop off of women in the financial industry? One conclusion is that it is not enough to change the institutions. More importantly, attitudes must change.

In Singapore, only 30% of companies think it is important to have women on the board. There remains a shortfall in creating the value proposition for gender diversity in the corporate sector. Those who care about the issue must demonstrate more effectively the relationship between larger women participation on boards, on one hand, and better corporate governance and more inclusive financial policies, on the other. Women have a big role to play in the future directions of capitalism. Greater female representation is needed in order to ensure better outcomes.

Nattha Komolvadhin

TV Journalist

Thai Public Broadcasting Service

As one of the few senior female reporters working as an anchor at Thai Public Broadcasting Service and a regular presenter of the news and current affairs, Nattha Komolvadhin noted that media today in Thailand is more inclusive for women than it was in the 1990's, when it was very much male-dominated. Young female reporters are now visible everywhere in press conferences and as TV reporters. However, many remain unable to reach decision-making positions. Very few work as senior reporters or in news rooms. Senior editors, mostly men, make decisions on the content that is produced, aired, or published. They have their own unconscious biases and, in most cases, fail to introduce women's perspectives in the media.

Female reporters have the responsibility to introduce women's perspectives in their work. The first step is for female reporters to develop their own critical views on

issues such as sexism, teen pregnancy, violence against women, and women's leadership. This will enable them to better educate the general public and raise the level of debate on these themes. It is also important for all journalists, not only women journalists, to encourage the discussion of women's issues and perspectives by inviting more female commentators, politicians and columnists to participate in the media.

Finally, Nattha explained that female TV reporters have a broad impact as role models for young reporters and the general public. Their work has the potential to fuel other women's aspirations to become leaders and public figures. In this respect, social media can be very empowering because there are no editors who control content. Therefore, social media has the potential to give a stronger voice to women's issues and perspectives.

Global Diversity and Inclusion at Microsoft

Microsoft has a comprehensive plan to promote and integrate global diversity and inclusion at every level within the organisation. Microsoft's executive staff are committed to ensuring that diversity and inclusion are a part of everyday business, from acquiring and retaining great talent to serving customers and developing innovative products. Diversity and inclusion are seen as a long-term business strategy that will help enable the future success of the company.

In the Asia-Pacific region, Microsoft's Legal and Corporate Affairs (LCA) group supports women's leadership in a variety of ways. First is in hiring. The leadership team, under the leadership of Jeff Bullwinkel, has more women than men (as of August 2014). The general counsels for South Korea and Japan, traditionally difficult places for women to rise in leadership ranks, are female; so is the head of LCA, Southeast Asia. A second area of support helps new and expectant mothers transition smoothly to, and from, maternity leave. Before maternity leave commences, temporary replacements are hired so that expectant mothers' work may be transitioned to replacement staff, as needed. An informal support group of women also works to share experiences and tips for mothering and parenting after new mothers return to work. Third, LCA supports internal and external activities to strengthen women's leadership. This includes internal speaking events (e.g. International Women's Day), mentoring circles involving Microsoft and other tech companies in Singapore, and support for activities such as DigiGirlz, which introduces high school female students to careers in tech. LCA also engages in policy activities to support women and women's leadership, contributing, for example, to the APEC Ministerial on Women's Entrepreneurship and to discussions with public sector leaders on the value of diversity and inclusion.



Women's Leadership in the Civil Society

BUILDING RESILIENCE

Thida Khus

Executive Director
SILAKA Cambodia

Silaka is an NGO that has focused on quality programs to build capacities for individuals and organisations in Cambodia. Thida Khus, executive director, noted that civil society has been behind the efforts to increase women's political representation in Cambodia. From 2005 to 2012, the percentage of women elected in local governments increased from 8% to 17%. Progress has been slow, and gender parity in political representation remains work-in-progress. As she explained, "Maybe there is no glass ceiling, but there is a sticky floor."

Increasing women's representation in elected positions is certainly laudable, but the work does not end there. As of 2012, it was evident that within political parties that had opened up positions to women, the men continued occupying decision-making roles, while the women did the heavy lifting. The reluctance of men to support more women leaders in the political world stem from the fact that they were framing the question of women's political participation as a win-lose situation: "If we give women higher levels of authority, where would we [men] be?"

Given ongoing challenges and a rapidly changing context, Cambodian civil society organisations had to adapt the work they were doing to enhance female political leadership. Initially, the strategy focused on working with women candidates, the electorate, and elected women leaders. The focus has since changed to include political parties, where communication with party leaders and members, usually men, is critical. Enhancing male leaders' awareness and getting them to see value in greater women's participation at the leadership level is critical. Finally, in Cambodia, civil

society's active participation in reforming the electoral system has opened the window for demanding effective parity between men and women, as stated in the constitution.

Civil society's capacity to bring about sustainable and broad changes through focused interventions is limited. A clear lesson is for civil society to work as advocates to influence policy-making and shape policy. Success in influencing policy might give the best chance for bringing about more inclusive electoral rules and political institutions.

Sasiya Sophastienphong & Chaliya Sophasawatsakul

Regional Enterprise Development Program Coordinator
Global Digital Vision Producer
Oxfam

Oxfam is a development organisation working in 97 countries under the mandate of alleviating poverty. In Asia, Oxfam is present in 15 countries, where inequality is the largest challenge to poverty reduction. This inequality also manifests itself as a gender gap in the areas of economic advancement and opportunity among the poor.

Despite rapid urbanisation in Asia, half the region's population still lives in rural areas. Women in these areas face many challenges, including limited access to markets, information, credit and mobility. These challenges often lead to a lack of control over their own lives and the lives of their families and communities, as well as sub-optimal economic outcomes.

To increase their power in the market and to enhance market access, women form cooperatives or private companies, where they bring together their skills, produce and resources. Instead of taking long, individual journeys to the markets or relying on intermediaries, they sell their produce to the company or cooperative. The company, by selling the total produce that is procured from individual producers, can negotiate better

prices in the market and reduce transportation costs because of economies of scale.

Oxfam works to empower rural women by investing in rural companies and cooperatives, and providing training to their members. At present, Oxfam has invested in 22 companies, eight of which are located in Asia. But the story does not end there. These companies actively promote women's participation at all levels, including decision-making positions, and their impact exceeds the purely economic.

As part of a larger group and a conscious effort to promote diversity, rural coops and companies give women the opportunity to have more control in their own lives and in the lives of their communities. Culture, including traditional gender roles and traditional beliefs, are still a difficult barrier to overcome. But the introduction of women-led cooperatives is an important step in changing these perceptions. Women are also able to leverage new technology, including relatively cheap Nokia phones, to empower themselves on market pricing and other information relevant to their businesses and daily lives.

Srisak Thaiarry

Executive Director

National Council for Child and Youth Development
Thailand

It is usually the case that more women than men work in the non-profit sector. Therefore, some might argue that there is no need to argue strongly for women's leadership in the non-profit sector. However, as Srisak Thaiarry underlined, "in the non-profit sector, supporting women within the organisation is less a gender issue, and more of a survival issue."

The non-profit sector may have more women, but it also represents a vulnerable sector for employment. Funding and sustainability are major concerns. Non-profits need to work hard to deliver results, while ensuring visibility and recognition by potential donors. At the same time, salaries are significantly lower compared to the private or even government, sectors. Given the traditional distribution of gender roles in Thailand, men are usually not able to fulfil their

responsibility as chief breadwinners by working in the non-profit sector. As a result, women occupy most of the positions from entry level to top management.

Faced with challenging and pressing issues in poverty alleviation, health, youth, and environment, non-profits require talented and capable individuals to lead their organisations. Advancing women's leadership within the non-profit sector is, therefore, not so much an issue of women needing to prove that they can work better than men. Instead, the development of the overall pool of human capital in non-profits is required to ensure the survival and sustainability of these organisations. The non-profit sector must find better ways to sustain itself instead of relying perennially on the largesse of funders and donors.

The Pink Phone Revolution¹⁴

Women for Prosperity was founded by Nanda Pok, a woman leader who fled Cambodia before the Khmer Rouge regime came to power. She returned in 1992 to contribute to the reconstruction of the country. The organisation's mandate is to develop women's leadership at all levels of society.

In one of their projects, they have incorporated pink mobile technology to impact women's lives. Under the project, female community councillors receive training on leadership skills, self-confidence, and knowledge on how the local government system works. In some districts where the project has been in place, women's participation in community councils is as high as 70%. As a result, women's issues—e.g. maternal health—have received more attention. To support the work they are doing, women elected by villagers were provided mobile phones and trained to use mobile technology.

Why technology?

Mobile technology has improved female local leaders' capacity to access information and reach support networks. Women councillors now have an additional tool for addressing issues within their communities. Thus, their ability to intervene more effectively has been strengthened. Among other things, phones are used for emergency health care, to call the authorities in cases of family violence, and to improve market information access. Use of the phone has given local women leaders confidence in their own skills and has positioned them to learn how to use other technologies to improve their communities.

Why pink?

The colour is used to identify phones that belong to women. In this way it is easy to spot when a man has taken it away from a woman. This creates an easy mechanism for the community to ensure that the phones remain in the hands of women.

Sustainable Social Enterprises

Survival is a pressing challenge for non-profit organisations. Their work depends largely on volunteer work, donors, and funders. Women, who often lead these organisations, receive little or no remuneration for their work. Social enterprises have the potential to make the generation of social value a sustainable form of work and leadership for women.

The Thai Social Enterprise Office defines social enterprises as businesses that trade to tackle social problems, improve communities, help people address life challenges, or preserve the environment¹⁵. The Thai Social Enterprise Office is one of several public institutions that support social enterprises in Thailand, which has been credited as having “the most sophisticated structural support for social enterprise [besides India and China]”¹⁶.

An example of a social innovation led by women is the Sustainable Agriculture Foundation. Supa Yaimuang introduced a city farming model aimed at improving access to nutrition and safe food while increasing the incomes of the most vulnerable urban population¹⁷. Through the City Farming Project, Supa has not only improved nutrition, but also transformed the landscape of Bangkok and other cities. Abandoned lots have been transformed into city gardens, providing free vegetables to the community and selling them to local restaurants. This has also fostered the development of Farmers’ Networks, which support the development of urban farmers through cooperative management¹⁸.

Women Leaders and the New Asian Century

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez, Regional Director, Legal and Corporate Affairs, Southeast Asia, Microsoft

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Haresh Khoobchandani, Managing Director, Microsoft Thailand

Dr. Juree Vichit-Vadakan, Advisor and former Dean, Vice-President and President, National Institute of Development Administration, Thailand

CLOSING THE GENDER GAP: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Panellists

Roberta Clarke, Regional Director, UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Caitlin Wiesen, Regional Manager, UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre

Dr. Maytinee Bhongsvej, Secretary General, Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women, Thailand

Moderator

Jeff Bullwinkel, Associate General Counsel and Director of Legal & Corporate Affairs, Asia Pacific/Japan, Microsoft

BEYOND THE GLASS CEILING: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Panellists

Nattha Komolvadhin, TV Journalist, Thai Public Broadcasting Service

Siriyupa Roongrerngsuke, Executive Director and Head of Human Resources Program, Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration, Chulalongkorn University

Watanan Petersik, Independent Director, CIMB

Moderator

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez, Regional Director Legal and Corporate Affairs, Southeast Asia, Microsoft

BUILDING RESILIENCE: WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP IN THE CIVIL SOCIETY SECTOR

Panellists

Thida Khus, Executive Director, SILAKA, Cambodia

Chaliya Sophasawatsakul, Global Digital Vision Producer, and Sasiya Sophastienphong, Regional Enterprise Development Program Coordinator, Oxfam

Srisak Thaiarray, Executive Director, National Council for Child and Youth Development

Moderator

Fern Uennatornwarangoon, Senior Program Associate, Rockefeller Foundation

Speakers' Bios

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez

Regional Director, Legal and Corporate Affairs,
Southeast Asia
Microsoft

Dr. Astrid S. Tuminez is Regional Director of Legal and Corporate Affairs in Southeast Asia for Microsoft Corporation. She previously served as Vice Dean of Research at the Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. Prior to joining the LKY School, Dr. Tuminez was Senior Research Associate of the Philippine Facilitation Project of the United States Institute of Peace. She was also a Senior Fellow of the Southeast Asian Research Center of the City University of Hong Kong.

Dr. Tuminez has been a Senior Advisor for Strategy and Programs, Salzburg Global Seminar. She is also the former Director of Research for alternative investments at AIG Global Investment Corporation. In the early 1990s, she ran the Moscow office of the Harvard Project on Strengthening Democratic Institutions. Dr. Tuminez is also a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Her publications include *Russian Nationalism Since 1856: Ideology and the Making of Foreign Policy* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), *Rising to the Top? A Report on Women's Pathways to Leadership in Asia* (2012), journal articles, and opinion pieces. Dr. Tuminez earned her Master's from Harvard University and her PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Haresh Khoobchandani

Managing Director
Microsoft Thailand

Mr. Khoobchandani has more than 15 years of experience working with Microsoft, taking on various roles in sales and marketing and other leadership positions in Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the company's Asia Pacific Regional Headquarters. Prior to his current position, Haresh served as Chief Operating Officer for Microsoft in Indonesia. He is the Vice President of the Singapore Computer Society (SCS) and sits on the Singapore Polytechnic Advisory Committee for the School of Digital Media and Infocomm Technology and the Information Technology Advisory Committee at Nanyang Polytechnic. Haresh holds a Master's of Business

Administration with Distinction from the University of Stirling and was recently awarded, in 2011, the Global Brand Leadership Award from the World Brand Congress in recognition of his thought leadership in marketing.

Dr. Juree Vichit-Vadakan

Advisor and Former Dean, Vice President and President,
National Institute of Development Administration,
Thailand

Dr. Juree Vichit-Vadakan teaches at the School of Public Administration, National Institute of Development Administration, where she has served as Dean, Vice President, and President. Currently, she serves as the Secretary-General of Transparency International (Thailand Chapter). She has worked extensively in gender equality and women's rights, good governance and anti-corruption. She founded the Center for Philanthropy and Civil Society, which advocates for balanced, equitable, and sustainable development, as well as for fostering civil society and giving in society for social purposes. In 2003, Dr. Juree was appointed as the Chair of the Organizing Committee for Women Leaders Network Conference and served as the Chair of APEC's Gender Focal Point Network for 2003. From 2004 to 2007, she was a member of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women.

Roberta Clarke

Regional Director
UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Roberta Clarke is the Regional Program Director of the UN Women Office for Asia and the Pacific and the Representative for UN Women in Thailand. She is a sociologist and attorney-at-law, specialising in human rights law. She has written on gender and development, including on violence against women and gender mainstreaming. She has been the Vice President of the Trinidad and Tobago Family Planning Association, editor of the legal journal of the Law Association of Trinidad and Tobago, The Lawyer, and board member of the organisation, Women, Law and Development International. Roberta has also been a member of the Advisory Council of Interights as well as the International.

Roberta has also been a member of the Advisory Council of Interights as well as the International Council for Human Rights Policy. She is also the mother of four children.

Caitlin Wiesen

Regional Manager
UNDP Regional Center

Caitlin Wiesen has over 25 years of experience in development, working on issues of poverty reduction, governance, civil society empowerment, gender, human rights, HIV and health. Ms. Wiesen has held a variety of positions at UNDP. Prior to joining the Asia-Pacific Regional Center as Regional Manager in 2013, she was the Country Director of UNDP India (2010-2013). She was Regional Practice Leader and Program Coordinator for Asia and the Pacific on human rights, gender inequality and the human development dimensions of HIV, based in Colombo, Sri Lanka (2006-2010). Prior to this, she was Senior Advisor on Poverty and Sustainable Human Development for Africa (1993-1998) and Director, Civil Society Division in the Bureau of Strategic Partnerships (1999-2002). Between 2003 and 2006, Ms. Wiesen was the Senior Advisor and Deputy Director in the Bureau of Development Policy. Ms. Wiesen has worked extensively in Asia and the Pacific, Africa, North America and Europe. She holds a Master's in International Finance and Energy Policy from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University.

Dr. Maytinee Bhongsvej

Secretary General
Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women

Dr. Maytinee Bhongsvej is a Thai gender advocate and has been involved in promoting gender equality work for over 20 years, after an extensive stint in human resources development for the Thai government. Her gender work started when she served as the manager for a gender mainstreaming programme in water resources development with the Mekong River Commission. During that time, she also served as a volunteer doing advocacy writing on promoting women in politics and administration for the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women of Thailand, which she later joined as executive director. She worked in that capacity for 15 years, overseeing the operation of the shelter for survivors of violence, advocacy for increasing women in decision-

making, and youth empowerment. She now serves as the Secretary-General of the Association. She is also a member of several national committees related to women and provides consultancy on issues related to violence against women, empowerment of women, and gender mainstreaming.

Jeff Bullwinkel

Associate General Counsel and Director of Legal & Corporate Affairs Asia Pacific/Japan
Microsoft

Jeff Bullwinkel serves as Microsoft's Director of Legal and Corporate Affairs for the Asia Pacific region. He is based in Singapore and oversees Microsoft's legal and corporate affairs teams across the region. That includes, among other things, supporting commercial transactions and providing regulatory counsel to business groups on public policy issues such as intellectual property rights, privacy, internet security and safety, competition, and international trade. Mr. Bullwinkel joined Microsoft in 2000 and was initially based in Hong Kong, where he managed the company's public policy activities across Asia.

Prior to joining Microsoft, Mr. Bullwinkel was with Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, an international law firm based in New York. Mr. Bullwinkel also served as a federal prosecutor with the Office of International Affairs, Criminal Division, US Department of Justice, from 1996-2000. At the US DoJ, he was responsible for a wide range of matters relating to international law, including negotiating bilateral treaties and multilateral conventions on international cooperation in criminal matters and providing advice on international law to the Office of the Attorney General. Mr. Bullwinkel is originally from the New York area. He graduated with honors from Duke University with a Bachelor of Arts degree and received his law degree with honors from New York University. He is a member of the New York State Bar.

Nattha Komolvadhin

TV Journalist
Thai Public Broadcasting Service

Dr. Nattha Komolvadhin began her career as a journalist at the Nation Group in 1994. She worked as an economic journalist for ITV, now a defunct television station, between 1996 and 1998, before being granted the Royal Thai Government Scholarship to further her master's and doctoral degrees in the U.K. While pursuing her postgraduate study in London, Dr. Nattha also worked part-time as

a BBC correspondent for the BBC Thai Language Division. She received her Ph.D. in Sociology and Gender Studies from the London School of Economics in 2004. Between 2005-2008, Dr. Nattha worked as a researcher at Chiang Mai University. At present, as the ASEAN News editor and anchor at Thai Public Broadcasting Service (ThaiPBS), she is one of the regular presenters of the news and current affairs program, Thini ThaiPBS (This is ThaiPBS), and the interview-based current affairs program, Topchot (Questions Answered). She has interviewed Thai and world political leaders, including the Dalai Lama, Tony Blair and Aung San Suu Kyi.

Siriyupa Roongrerngsuke

Executive Director and Head of Human Resources Program
Sasin Graduate Institute of Business Administration
Chulalongkorn University

Siriyupa Roongrerngsuke spent more than twenty years at Sasin, where she developed academic programs in Human Resource Management (Graduate Diploma in HRM and Master of Science in HRM), turning these into some of the best HR programs in Asia. Her expertise includes strategic human resource management, cross-cultural management, organisational development and change, leadership branding and coaching, and performance management. Her research studies in cross cultural technology transfer, biotechnology management, human resources management, and leadership received funding from international organisations such as APEC- HRD-BMN, EU, and the University of London. Her recent books, *Unlocking Leadership in Thailand* (Nation News Network, 2012) and *Best HR Practices in Thailand* (Nation News Network, 2010), are widely recognised for creating the first and the most comprehensive Leadership Development and HRM in Thailand.

Dr. Siriyupa received her Ph.D. in Public Administration with outstanding academic award from the University of Southern California.

Watanan Petersik

Independent Director
CIMB

Watanan Petersik has been in the finance industry for over 30 years. During her banking career, she held senior management positions in research and banking for a series of European and American banking firms in Bangkok, Thailand and Hong Kong. Her last

position before leaving full-time banking in 2006 were Managing Director, Investment Banking and Chief of Staff/COO Asia ex-Japan for Goldman Sachs. Since then, Watanan has been a Senior Advisor for TPG Capital, a private equity firm. She currently sits on the Board of CIMB Thai Bank, where she is Chairman of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee and a member of the Audit Committee. She is also on the Board of CIMB Group in Malaysia. Watanan is a Senior Moderator for the Aspen Institute, which is active with the Aspen Global Leadership Network in South Africa and the U.S. She is also on the Board of the Lien Centre for Social Innovation at the Singapore Management University.

Thida Khus

Executive Director
SILAKA Cambodia

Thida Khus is a director, trainer, and consultant with over 20 years of management and organisational development experiences in Cambodia and in the U.S. During her work in human services in San Antonio and in Washington, DC, the organisations she served received numerous awards for excellent services to the community and good management of volunteers' resources by The Texas Department of Human Resources and the National Association for the Advancement of Education of Cambodian, Lao and Vietnamese Americans. She founded SILAKA and continues to lead SILAKA's professional team to implement innovation strategy and support services to partners in government departments and local institutions in Cambodia. She also sat on the Executive Committee of Social Watch International and LDC Watch International to advance the observation of human rights. In 2006, she became the Secretary General for the Committee to Promote Women in Politics in Cambodia, advocating for equal participation of women in the process of development and in decision-making, using CEDAW, and the MDGs. She serves as chairperson and board member in several national organisations and is active among civil society actors in the country.

Chaliya Sophasawatsakul

Global Digital Vision Producer
Oxfam

Chaliya studied business information systems and has worked as a freelance photographer, web designer and technical consultant for a variety of organisations - mostly NGOs. She joined Oxfam two years ago and

works as a Digital Vision Producer. Oxfam's ambition for Digital Vision is to use digital technology to amplify poor people's voices. Chaliya's work ranges from working with the Digital Vision team to conduct workshops across different regions on enhancing programme work with digital technology to conducting research on how to use mobile technology with Oxfam's work.

Sasiya Sophastienphong

Regional Enterprise Development Program
Coordinator
Oxfam

Sasiya (Kim) is leading the Enterprise Development work for Oxfam GB across 11 countries in Asia. Her role is primarily to conduct due diligence on enterprises prior to investment and provide business advisory support to social enterprises, country offices managing enterprise development program, and mentors pre- and post-Oxfam investment. She is also responsible for engaging and negotiating with local financial institutions for credit facilities for social enterprises. She spent seven years in the private sector working across various industries including fast-moving consumer goods, banking, and food processing. Prior to joining Oxfam, she spent four years in Mitr Phol Sugar Corporation working in the business development unit focused on sugar business expansion across the Asian region. Kim holds an MSc. in Financial Analysis and Fund Management from the University of Exeter and a BA in Economics from Thammasat University.

Srisak Thaiarry

Executive Director
National Council for Child and Youth Development,
Thailand

Srisak Thaiarry is the Executive Director of the National Council for Child and Youth Development. She has worked extensively on women trafficking and child rights in Thailand. In the past, she has been

Secretary to the Minister in Charge of Youth, Women, and Elderly Affairs, the First Deputy President of the Asian Youth Council, President of the Women in Politics Institute and Advisor for policy and strategic planning of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. For her work, Srisak was recognised as a Senior Ashoka Fellow and was honored in 2009 with the Outstanding Thai Women award. She holds a Second Class Honours BA from Chulalongkorn University and an MA from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, University of Pennsylvania.

Fern Uennatornwarangoon

Senior Program Associate
Rockefeller Foundation

Fern Uennatornwarangoon joined the Foundation's Asia Office in September 2009. She has been working primarily on the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network, a component of the Global Climate Change initiative, providing support to the Rockefeller Foundation's team in developing high quality grants as well as programme coordination and management support. As part of the Rockefeller Foundation's Asia team, Fern assists in the development and implementation of the Asia Regional Strategy Framework, contributing to idea generation and development of new grants and research that aim at driving large scale positive changes in the region in multiple sectors. She is involved in works that focus on inclusive urbanisation, catalyzing private sector involvement in social challenges, and strengthening the philanthropic field.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Fern worked at IMS Health, a consulting firm that focuses on market access strategies in the pharmaceutical sector, based in Cambridge, UK, for almost two years. During that time, she managed several projects for Pfizer, AstraZeneca, and Novartis, among other companies. Fern has an MPhil in Industrial Systems, Manufacturing and Management from the University of Cambridge, and a BA (Hons) in Philosophy, Politics and Economics from the University of Oxford.

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