



IN BRIEF



ADVANCING INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC REGION (2022-2027)

Photo: UN Women/Snigdha Zaman

I. Background

Gender equality and women's full, equal and meaningful participation and leadership form the foundation for peaceful and resilient societies. Gender equality is a precondition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and any kind of meaningful and sustained progress.¹

For decades, women have struggled to participate and lead in governance and all levels of decision-making processes. Globally, women take up around 26.5 per cent of seats in parliaments. The Asia Pacific region has some of the lowest rates of women's representation in parliaments in the world, with 21.2 per cent in Asia and as low as 6.0 per cent in the Pacific Islands.² Women's representation remains similarly low in ministerial positions and chairs of permanent committees—particularly in areas such as finance and defence.³ In other branches of government, this bleak picture remains unchanged. While women human rights defenders and civil society are on the frontlines, advocating for social justice, women remain underrepresented in the justice sector, including in law enforcement, the legal profession and the judiciary.

Gender inequality in the region translates into weaknesses in existing governance systems, and may also contribute to a deepening trust crisis between people and the institutions that serve them, with many feeling left behind and no longer confident that the system is

working for them. Women's rights are further impacted by rising authoritarianism and conservatism in all regions of the world. A significant rethinking of women's leadership across all aspects of governance is key to advancing both gender equality and building more just, peaceful and resilient societies.



Photo: UN Women/Satu Bumi Jaya

¹ <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/2322UN%20Women%20Analysis%20on%20Women%20and%20SDGs.pdf>

² <https://data.ipu.org/women-averages?month=5&year=2022>

³ <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/en/news-and-events/in-focus/csw/snapshot-of-womens-leadership-in-asia-and-the-pacific>



II. Our Vision and Approach

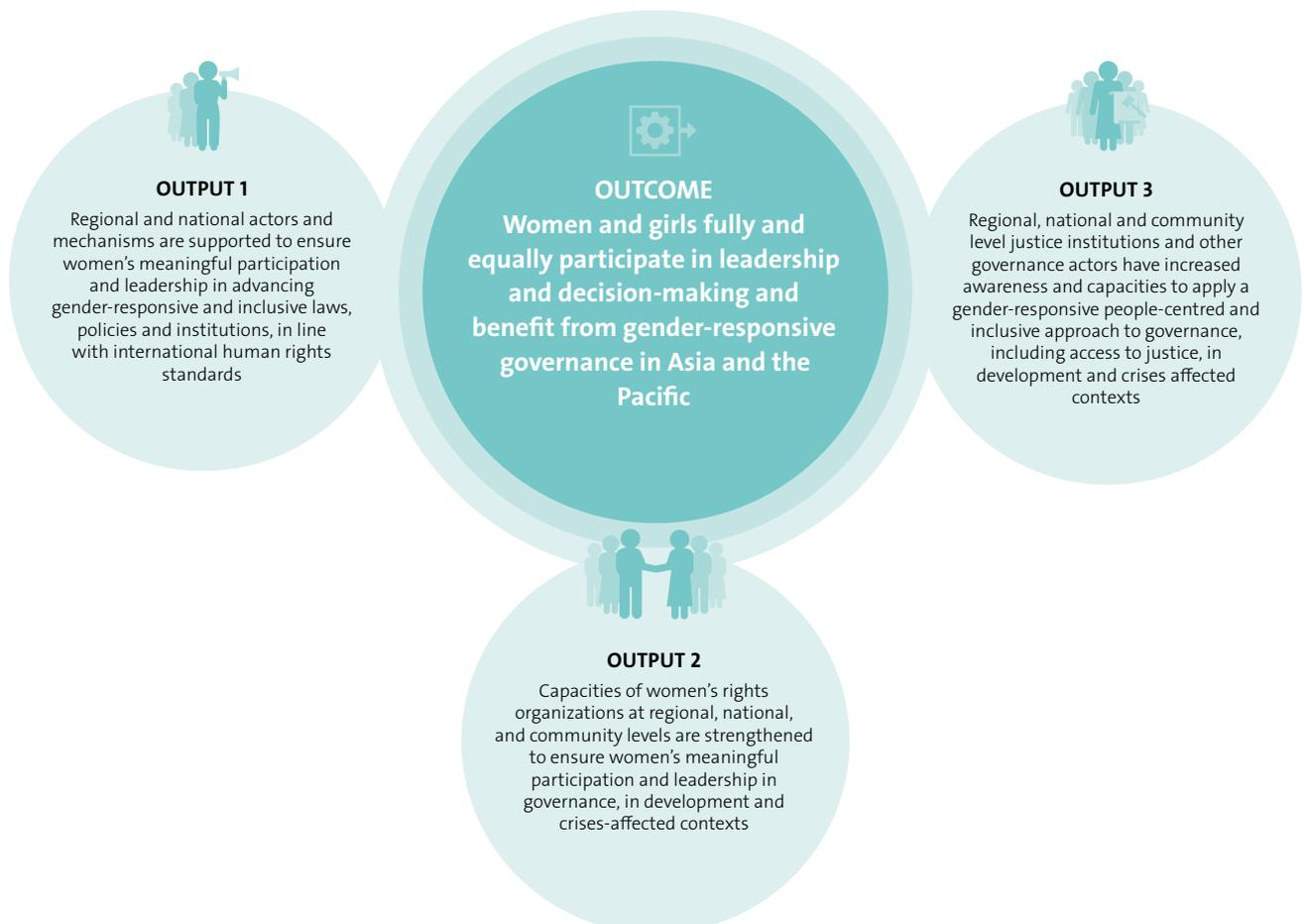
The UN Women Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) promotes equal participation of women and girls in leadership and decision-making and that they benefit from gender-responsive governance in the region. This entails a “whole-of-society” approach to governance and meaningful institutional reforms. This requires consistent engagement among state actors, women leaders, women’s organizations, civil society organizations, marginalized groups such as Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, people with diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics, and the private sector.

UN Women ROAP will support women’s participation and leadership in inclusive governance, provide institutional support to promote gender-responsive and inclusive laws

and policies and support justice institutions in employing gender-responsive and people-centred approaches.

UN Women has a long history of advancing women’s leadership and inclusive governance and supporting Member States and civil society. UN Women is a partner of choice for the provision of technical support, capacity building, research and data and facilitates platforms to convene stakeholders around inclusive governance issues. Drawing from years of lessons learned and coalition building, UN Women is committed to continuing to develop the evidence base and leverage good practices to deliver change. Working as part of an integrated team of governance and peace and security experts, UN Women in Asia and the Pacific will ensure the strong linkage and integration of governance and women, peace and security goals.

Results Framework



III. Building on Knowledge, Expertise and Evidence-based Programming

ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

Launched in 2018, this regional programme ‘Enhancing Access to Justice for Women in Asia and the Pacific’ is jointly implemented by UN Women, the International Commission of Jurists and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The programme’s primary goal is to enhance gender-responsive justice for women in formal and community-based justice systems across Asia and the Pacific and support collaboration among justice providers, women civil society organizations, human rights defenders and communities. The programme adopts a gender responsive and people-centred approach to justice that places women and their justice needs at the centre of judicial systems to ensure fair, inclusive, relevant and timely solutions to their justice problems.

The programme has significantly contributed to the upscaling of both the quality and quantity of justice for women, marginalized groups and those left furthest behind in formal and community-based systems in the Asia and the Pacific region, such as Indonesia, Philippines, Nepal, Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands.



“If we are going to build a just, equitable and sustainable future, we must put indigenous women and our communities at the centre of climate action”

Kamala Thapa, Local Community Manager at the Centre for Indigenous Peoples’ Research and Development, Nepal

WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Promoting women’s political leadership and participation is central to UN Women’s governance work. For example, in Papua New Guinea, UN Women is working with women, youth and national stakeholders to build coalitions, develop capacities and increase the political momentum to improve women’s political participation. In Thailand, UN Women facilitated the sharing of women politicians’ experiences and good practices and in Pakistan, UN Women is supporting women’s participation through the UN Electoral Assistance Framework in the lead up to the 2023 General Elections.

GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

UN Women supports efforts to mainstream gender into all stages of public policy making, particularly in the design and implementation of revenue and spending policies. In many countries, UN Women supported the ministries of finance and other line ministries in making efficient budget decisions by highlighting existing gender gaps and the impact of public expenditures and revenue-raising on women and girls and developed gender-responsive budgeting tools, in particular in the context of public financial management reform. For example, in Timor Leste, UN Women supported the government’s effort with the line ministries, CSOs, private sectors, development partners and academia in pushing forward the country’s commitment to achieve gender equality through assuring gender responsive budget at workplace. In India, UN Women supported line ministries to track public spending and allocations for gender equality and women’s empowerment and strengthened the capacities of civil society organisations to engage with state actors on these issues.

IV. UN Women’s Priorities for 2022–2027

Gender-responsive and inclusive laws, including fiscal laws: support Member States in reviewing laws and policies and provide technical capacities to advance gender-responsive budgeting and gender-sensitive laws and policies that eliminate discrimination against women and girls, in line with international human rights norms and obligations.

Women’s meaningful participation and leadership in governance: promote women’s leadership, including political participation, provide policy support to election stakeholders, including through the UN Electoral Assistance Framework, and support women’s coalitions and movements to advocate for gender equality in public functions. Equip candidates and young women leaders with the necessary skills to advocate and engage in political and governance processes.

Gender-responsive, people-centred access to justice: contribute to the reduction of the justice gap for women by:

- Preventing women’s justice problems by addressing root causes, understanding women’s justice needs and their lived experiences; tackling inequalities and using the law to reduce the risk of injustice.
- Increasing women’s access to justice by decentralizing institutions, ensuring human rights standards and enabling a greater diversity of partners to support women’s justice journeys, including engaging women’s rights organizations and justice defenders in co-designing justice solutions.
- Supporting gender-inclusive justice sectors and developing approaches that can deliver justice at scale for women.

Data and evidence: generate and disseminate data and evidence to inform policies, programming and advocacy, including on gender-responsive budgeting, women’s political participation, transparency and integrity.

Programmatic Areas and Overarching Strategies

