

**Australian Political Exchange Council
Indonesian Women's Democracy Program
The American Council of Young Political Leaders**

Women in Politics Symposium

August 21 to August 24, 2005 Jakarta, Indonesia



A report for the Australian Political Exchange Council

by delegates Cecile Ferguson and Trish Worth

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Background

The American Council of Young Political Leaders (ACYPL) was founded in 1966 as a bipartisan organisation conducting international exchanges enabling emerging leaders to interact firsthand on political and cultural levels with other countries. The ACYPL has an alumni of more than 6,000 people from over 90 countries.

To commemorate its 40th anniversary, the American Council of Young Political Leaders plans to develop a four-day summit in Bali, Indonesia in April 2006 bringing together international alumni of the ACYPL who have travelled to the United States from the East Asia and Pacific Region, and those from the United States who have travelled to one or more of those countries. It is anticipated that up to 100 participants would attend with more expected as observers and guests.

The *Women in Politics Symposium* in Jakarta was convened to bring together a select group of ACYPL female alumni to workshop agenda issues for this proposed four day summit. Delegates to this *Women in Politics Symposium* came from the United States of America, The Republic of Indonesia, Australia, The Philippines and Malaysia.¹

Objectives

The main objective of the symposium centred around speakers, workshops and debates on:

- encouraging more women to run for public office, and
- how to devise a 2006 summit agenda reflecting the issues that women face in today's political world.

Throughout the world women face obstacles to their participation in politics. These barriers are to be found in prevailing social and economic regimes, as well as in existing political structures. In 2004, female representation was 13.7% in parliaments across the world, with an annual increase of 0.6%. In the Asia-Pacific, women constitute 14.2% of national parliaments.²

In Australia, there are 64 women in the Commonwealth Parliament, 27 in the Senate (Upper House) and 37 in the House of Representatives (Lower House). This brings women's participation in the Federal Parliament to 28.3% rising from 25.4% following the 1998 Federal election and 14% following the 1993 election. This rate is almost double the international average of 16% (IPU figure as at 20 September 2005).³ In the United States there are 14 women in the U.S. Senate, and 67 in the House of Representatives.

¹ Delegates list at Appendix A

² Inter-Parliamentar Union, www.ipu.org (2004)

³ http://ofw.facs.gov.au/leadership_development/national_leadership_initiative/women_in_politics/

Symposium Goals and Concerns

Upon registration delegates were required to nominate goals and concerns:

Goals:

- To see more dialogue between women from different cultures and different parts of the world so that they can gain strength from each other
- To create strong women leaders
- To share cultural, social and political experiences
- To provide an accessible network that can offer practical solutions to real problems
- To understand how we can help advance women in SE Asia
- To learn best practice from women who have experienced public office
- To understand our similarities
- To develop specific action plans
- To encourage and support female political participation
- To devise new ways to assist women in politics
- To establish a new network to sustain existing relationships.

Concerns

- Fear of failure
- That women will not support each other
- That there would not be enough time to understand each other properly
- That there would be a lack of interaction
- That there could be discrimination
- That there would be a failure to produce an action plan
- That there would be communication difficulties
- That there would be a measure of assumptions being made
- That the symposium would not be able to maintain momentum.

Program

The Program Manager for the Symposium was Melissa Hansen. Melissa organises international exchange programs for the ACYPL. She pointed out that this Symposium represented the first time in 40 years that an ACYPL alumni had gathered together. Melissa stated that it was important that the 2006 Bali Summit produced results for women.



Day 1⁴



The opening address to the symposium was given by The Hon. Jane Norton, Lieutenant-Governor of Colorado and ACYPL Trustee and Alumna. Ms Norton talked of her campaign for public office and the trials and tribulations of maintaining that office from the perspective of gender politics.

Ms Norton's status as Lieutenant-Governor of Colorado gave the Symposium delegates strength, credibility and confidence to believe that this workshop could deliver objectives and strategies to help women pursue political careers.

Ms Norton's daughter, Lacey Artist, a young political campaigner also addressed the room describing her mother as being a strong, positive example for young women to follow.

Ms Norton (above) chaired the first session examining the reasons, fears and aspirations of women in politics. Delegates displayed a commonality of philosophies and expressed them well. This commonality was repeated throughout the symposium and cut through cultural and communication barriers so that frank and valuable discussions were had throughout the program.



Mr Charles Silver (left), U.S. Public Affairs Counselor and Acting Deputy Chief of Mission in Jakarta presented the forum with an excellent perspective from the US Embassy's perspective. He has spent nine years in Jakarta and spoke of the country's diversity, both politically and culturally. His experience and comprehension of South East Asian politics was very apparent in his concise and witty address.

In the early afternoon the group was workshopped by Ms Linda Sumayku which brought mixed reactions. It is possible that a meeting of this short length, with hefty decisions to make would still be successful without group bonding of this nature.



⁴ Symposium Program at Appendix B

Panel discussions were held on both days with each panellist giving a brief synopsis and questions following.



Day 1 panel discussed *Common barriers and best practice* and the Day 2 panel discussed *Encouraging women to participate in politics in the U.S.*

Panellists' experiences and tips were valuable and the questions and answers enabled discussion to flow around the room.

Photo: Moderator for Day 2 Panel – Dr Lily Munir, Hon. Stephanie Sharp, Kansas; Ms Jennifer Jones, PAC Director for Congressman Eric Cantor; Hon Serena Cruz, Commissioner, Country of Multnomah, Oregon; Ms Cindy Smalls, Coordinator, EMILY'S List;

An interaction session was conducted during Day 1 afternoon. This exercise was aimed at honing interviewing and response skills of delegates. An interesting session which could be used in training candidates to respond to media.



Photo: Cindy Smalls, EMILY's List with Trish Worth



The delegation attended dinner at the Oasis restaurant for a traditional Indonesian Rijstafel – a tradition inherited from the Dutch during their colonial period.



Day 2



On Day 2 delegates met with the Women’s Caucus of the Indonesian Parliament. This meeting was hosted by the Chairperson, Dr Mariani Akib Baramuli. The Caucus explained the Parliament’s committee system and how Indonesian women Members of Parliament worked within their electorates and the parliamentary system. The delegation was then invited to attend the day’s Parliamentary sitting.



The delegation attended a briefing and tour of Nurani Dunia’s community centre, hosted by Ms Gita Prasodjo, the centre’s Executive Director and co-founder.





Women handcraft cards which are sold to help finance the centre.



Some of the young children who benefit from the Centre's activities.



Ms Prasadijo explained the philosophy of the centre which was to provide refuge, education, and empowerment of approximately 5,000 people who would otherwise be homeless.

All children are compelled to attend school and computers are available for educational purposes; sport and team games are encouraged; and a communal study room is made available for homework to be completed. Community members are encouraged to help each other and there is a strong emphasis on cultural and religious tolerance.

The Hon. Gefarina Djohan, Chair, Women's Political Caucus in Indonesia addressed the Symposium during the final item.

She spoke of the political realities that women in Indonesia face, but that there is definitely a beginning for gender equality and equity, however, there is still a gap between men and women in power sharing and decision making at all levels.



Action Plan and Recommendations

Action Plan from Symposium

- To stay in contact with Symposium delegates so that best-practices can be shared. (this is happening through the Internet).

Some Recommendations for 2006 Summit

- Plenary session should briefly describe the political system of each participating country.
- Papers should be distributed before the summit to delegates
 - Information should contain case studies and relevant articles
 - Information on the role of NGOs and volunteerism in participating countries should also be available
- Sessions on:
 - human rights including human trafficking, equal rights, access to education etc.
 - health care: HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, infant and child health
 - Justice: youth, legislative measures
 - Speech writing
 - Candidate/campaign school

Appendix A: Delegates

The Hon. Jane Norton	Lieutenant Governor, Colorado, USA
The Hon. Gefarina Djohan	Chair, Women's Political Caucus in Indonesia
Indonesia:	
Ms Noor Hani'ah	Deputy Head of Kudus Regency (Central Java)
The Hon. Sri Yuliana	Member, Local Parliament, (South Sumatra)
The Hon. Apriani Hakim Nasution	Member of Commission C, Local Parliament (North Sumatra)
Ms Haeny Relawati Rimi Widyastuti	Head, Regency of Tuban (East Java)
Ms Maria Ulfah Anshor	National Chairman of Fatayat Nahdlatul Ulama (Jakarta)
The Hon. Latifah Husein	Member, House of Representatives, National Mandate Party (MAN)
USA	
The Hon. Stephanie Sharp	Representative, State of Kansas (R)
Ms Jennifer Jones	PAC Director for Congressman Eric Cantor (R-Virginia)
The Hon. Lisa Coletto-Cohen	Councilwoman, Town of Queens Creek, Arizona (R)
The Hon. Alisa Kelli Wise, J.D.	Judge, Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals (R)
Ms Alejandra Ceja	Budget Examiner, President's Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC (D)
Ms Cindy Small	Coordinator, Political Opportunity Program EMILY's List, Washington DC (D)
The Hon. Serena Cruz	Commissioner, Country of Multnomah, Oregon (D)
The Philippines	
The Hon. Mila Lauigan	Provincial Board Member, Province of Cagayan
The Hon. Dina Marasigan	Provincial Board member, Zamboanga del Sur
Australia	
The Hon. Trish Worth	Senior Policy Advocate
Ms Cecile Ferguson	Rural Industries Research and Development Corporation
Malaysia	
Ms Zarina Abu Bakar	Deputy Director of Current Affairs, Promuda and Managing Editor of ProDigi, Promuda's e-magazine
Ms Hazleen Salim	Deputy Director of Human Resource, Promuda.

Appendix B: Program

Tuesday August 23, 2005

- 8:30am Welcome speech from The Hon. Jane Norton, ACYPL Trustee and Alumna, Lieutenant-Governor of Colorado. Ms Norton introduced by her daughter Ms Lacey Artist
Program overview
- 11:00am Address by Mr Charles Silver, Public Affairs counsellor and Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy, Jakarta
- 11:30am Group photo
- 12:00 Lunch
- 1:00 pm Workshop session with Ms Linda Sumayku
- 2:00 pm Panel discussion: Common barriers and best practices
- 4:00 pm Group breakouts
- 5:15 pm Break for evening activities – dinner at Oasis Restaurant

Wednesday August 24, 2005

- 8:15am Hotel Lobby for departure to site visit
- 9:00am Tour of parliament Building, DPR
Meeting with Dr Mariani Akib Baramuli, Chairperson of Women's Caucus, DPR
- 10:30am Briefing and Tour of Nurani Dunia's Community Centre
- 12:30pm Lunch
- 1:30pm Address by the Hon. Gefarina Djohan, Chair, Women's Political Caucus in Indonesia
- 2:30pm Panel discussion: Encouraging women to participate in politics in the US
- 3:45pm Action Plan debate
- 5:00pm Symposium adjournment
- 6:30pm Farewell reception