

# Why Women? Why Now? Why You?

## Forum on Women in Leadership, Power and Decision-Making in the Bureaucracy

*organized by the Philippine Commission on Women*

### Background

“The low number of women in politics is detrimental for society as a whole” – this statement from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) during the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Conference on Women in 1985 did not capture much attention. The outcome document of the Conference called the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies say almost nothing about women’s political participation. Only in 1990 did the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women considered equality in political participation and decision-making as a priority issue.

In the Philippines, we have national laws and policies that advance women’s participation in all spheres of society, one of which is the Magna Carta of Women (R.A. 9710) which provides that “the State shall undertake temporary special measures to accelerate the participation of women in all spheres of society particularly in the decision-making and policy-making processes in government and private entities to fully realize their role as agent and beneficiaries of development.”

Yet, despite all the resolutions and quotas given to women in many countries of the world, women still continue to lag behind in terms of leadership and participation. The Philippines is no exception. While there has been significant improvement in the participation and involvement of women in key positions in government, disparities among men and women in elective posts and in traditionally male/female dominated agencies are still evident. There are only six women senators out of 24 senatorial seats (25%) and 79 women legislators out of 289 seats (27%) in the lower house for the term 2013-2016. Women are still a minority in top level positions in agencies like public works, national defense and law enforcement. The 2010 inventory of government personnel of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) shows that the female civil servants outnumbered the males. However, while there is a high percentage of women in government workforce, most of them are in the second level positions (66.3 %). There are still more males occupying the third level or top ranking positions in government (54%).

But the goal of advancing women’s participation and leadership in all spheres is more than just increasing the number of women in policy and decision making positions. PCW believes that more than numbers, the goal is enabling women to meaningfully participate in decision making and effectively influence policies and program development in all levels. The best way to move forward is to make women’s participation in leadership, power and decision-making in a priority issue, starting with women in the bureaucracy/civil service. This necessitates: (1) revisiting how the government, as a sector composed of thousands of women in its workforce has put in place mechanisms and programs to capacitate and encourage women to take on leadership positions, (2) identifying various ways in which women were able to navigate the paths to leadership in their fields, and (3) surfacing the remaining

challenges or roadblocks for women's leadership in the government sector, particularly in the career service.

In this light, the Philippine Commission on Women is holding a one-day forum on women in leadership, power and decision making. This forum shall create opportunities for women, who are about to, or aiming to be leaders to learn strategies in facing challenges and seizing opportunities from fellow women who were able to get to leadership positions. This will also encourage them to appreciate other women and to create an environment supportive of each other.

**Date and Venue of the Forum:**

The forum will be held on March 24, 2015, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM at the Pamantasan ng Lungsod Pasig (PLP) Auditorium (8<sup>th</sup> Floor) located at Alkalde Jose Street, Kapasigan, Pasig City.

**Who may join the Forum?**

The forum is open to all women government employees holding senior level or middle management positions (Salary Grade 18 and above).

**How to join the Forum?**

Government agencies may send up to five participants to the Forum. Each participant must submit her duly accomplished registration form through fax no. 736-4449 or e-mail a scanned copy to [irmd@pcw.gov.ph](mailto:irmd@pcw.gov.ph). Registration is free but on first-come-first-served basis. Deadline of submission of registration forms is on March 16, 2015.

*For further details, please contact PCW-Information Resource Management Division (IRMD) at Tel. Nos. 736-77-12; 736-52-49 loc. 131 or email us at [irmd@pcw.gov.ph](mailto:irmd@pcw.gov.ph)*