



New Report Exposes Critical Gaps in Burma's National Gender Equality Plan

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[New York, NY] – Women will never enjoy equal rights in Burma without dismantling structural barriers to gender equality, such as limitations in the 2008 Constitution, an antiquated legal system, and the ongoing legacy of a male-dominated military leadership, according to a report released today by the Global Justice Center and the Leitner Center for International Law and Justice at Fordham Law School. The report, [Promises Not Progress: Burma's National Plan for Women Falls Short of Gender Equality and CEDAW](#), concludes that Burma's national gender policy fails to acknowledge or address these structural barriers or to fulfill Burma's international obligations to ensure substantive gender equality and faults the Government of Burma for failing to follow through on the promises it has made to advance women's rights. The report is released in advance of Burma's Universal Periodic Review in November, where the international community can support the fight for gender equality in Burma by exposing the lack of commitment and failures of the Government.

The Government of Burma announced its National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women (NSPAW) in 2013 as a "historic and essential step towards substantive equality between women and men." However, "at best, NSPAW is an inadequate, amorphous effort to improve women's rights without disruption to embedded power structures that insulate Burma's male-dominated elite; at worst, it deceptively pays lip service to Burma's international human rights obligations while actually entrenching gender inequality," said Janet Benshoof, Executive Director of GJC. "Either way, NSPAW suffers from critical shortcomings related to its conceptualization, substantive content, and implementation."

In addition to Burma's Universal Periodic Review, the report also comes on the eve of highly anticipated national elections next month, as well as during the United Nation's assessment of the impact of its Women, Peace and Security Agenda, and in advance of Burma's forthcoming CEDAW Review in July. The report includes specific recommendations to the Government regarding how to implement its international legal obligations under CEDAW. These recommendations include adoption of a legal definition of discrimination, improvements in access to justice for women, greater participation of women in decision-making, eliminating violence against women, and strengthening protections for gender equality during and after armed conflict. "The recommendations in this report represent critically important steps that the Government of Burma must take in order to ensure genuine, lasting gender equality," said Joey Lee, Senior Fellow at the Leitner Center. "Only then can the Government legitimately proclaim NSPAW to represent a 'historic and essential step towards substantive equality between women and men.'"

The full report can be viewed and downloaded [here](#).

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ABOUT

Created in 2005, the **Global Justice Center (“GJC”)** works to achieve sustainable justice, peace and security by building a global rule of law based on gender equality and universally enforced international human rights laws. GJC works by combining advocacy with service, forging legal precedents in venues which have the greatest potential for global impact, such as the United Nations Security Council, while empowering strategic partners – including governments, women leaders, and civil society – with international law expertise and tools to embed human rights and gender equality. Based in New York City, GJC focuses on situations that present the greatest opportunity for systemic change, such as conflict and post-conflict situations and transitional democracies..

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One of the oldest and largest law school–based human rights programs, the **Leitner Center for International Law and Justice**, named in recognition of the Leitner Family, provides education and training to law students, facilitates capacity building and advocacy with activists and grassroots groups around the world, and contributes to critical research among scholars in international human rights. From its base at Fordham Law School in New York City, the Leitner Center develops long-term partnerships with local social justice organizations and other stakeholders across the globe. (Contact: leitnercenter@law.fordham.edu)