



Ủy ban Thường vụ Quốc hội
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Voting for competent and qualified candidates: research

Ha Noi 19 May 2021 – *"The general election is an opportunity for the entire nation to choose talented and virtuous people to shoulder the country's work,"* late President **Ho Chi Minh** said. He continued: *"Anyone who wants to take care of the country's affairs has the right to stand for election, every citizen has the right to vote, regardless of male or female, rich and poor, religion, class, and party, every citizen of Vietnam has those two rights"*.

Seventy-five years later, these principles are still as important and relevant, especially preceding the 2021 Elections of National Assembly Plenum XV delegates and People's Council deputies at provincial, district and commune levels. Moreover, a new Study has confirmed the important roles and significant contributions of women National Assembly delegates and People's Councils deputies during the 2016-2021 term and called on voters to select competent and qualified candidates, regardless of their gender.

The study's findings were shared and discussed today at a virtual thematic discussion, jointly convened by the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (USSH- Viet Nam National University in Hanoi), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Viet Nam, and other partners.

The Study was funded by the Australian Government's Department for Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Irish Embassy, and UNDP in Viet Nam, through the Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) research framework. It provides timely empirical evidence of how women delegates of the National Assembly and provincial People's Council have contributed socially, economically, and politically to the country's progress over the past five years.

The Study was conducted with 248 the National Assembly Plenum XIV delegates (or 50 percent) and 136 provincial People's Council deputies of three provinces and the centrally-governed municipalities of Ha Noi, Binh Phuoc and Can Tho. Based on qualitative and quantitative research data, the research suggests policy responses and actions to promote gender equity in elected bodies in Viet Nam during the 2021-2026 period and towards 2030.

With the gendered economic and social impacts of COVID-19, addressing women's concerns holds the key to a sustained recovery for Vietnam," said Australia's Ambassador to Viet Nam HE **Robyn Mudie** from the Australian Embassy. *"Closing gender gaps within the ranks of elected bodies and in women voters' access to public officials and information is an asset for governance in the pandemic era."*

During the 2016-2021 term, the National Assembly had its first female chairperson and women delegates account for 26.8 percent upon the 2016 Election. Women took up 26.7 percent of seats in the Provincial People's Councils during this term, as a result of the 2016 elections.

The study, "***Roles, Performance and Contributions of Vietnamese Women Representatives During the 2016-2021 Period***", shows that, given that their areas of focuses and strengths are different, both women and men elected representatives noted that the interest of voters in their constituencies is the most important factor influencing their views of a specific issue.

Women delegates more frequently engage with voters via social networking applications than men delegates. Both men and women National Assembly and People's Council were confident that they had promptly responded to voters' proposals and petitions. Both men and women National Assembly delegates noted that their top strength was in performing the legislative mandate. In the meantime, interviewed Provincial People's Council deputies, men and women alike, considered that oversight performance is the top strength.

In their action plans, women delegates pay more attention to the fields of education and training; and health than men delegates. Likewise, women delegates were more responsive to petitions and proposals from voters during this term.

In terms of values, both surveyed men and women representatives from the National Assembly and Provincial People's Councils valued the merits of 'listening', 'having personal viewpoints' and 'having the ability to persuade others'. Women representatives tend to value the merit of 'having the ability to persuade others' than their men counterparts.

"Women's leadership in public sector is an important issue as it is essential to have women's perspectives and voices involved in the decision-making process. Public policies should fully capture the perspectives of both men and women to ensure equity and fairness," reiterated **Ms. Elisa Cavacece**, Deputy Head of Mission/ Head of Development at the Embassy of Ireland upon release of the Studyfindings.

The Study recommends accelerating implementation of the 7th Plenum of the 12th Party Central Committee which put it that by 2030: *"There must be women representatives in the Standing Committee of the Party at provincial level and Party committees at all levels: the proportion of women representatives at all levels should be between 20 and 25 percent. The rates of women representatives in the National Assembly and People's Councils should be over 35percent"*. To do so, the report suggests having at least 45 percent of candidates of either gender enlisted as candidates for the National Assembly and People's Councils, building on the current momentum of having 45.28 percent of candidates for the National Assembly's 15th Plenum.

Prof. Dr. **Phạm Quang Minh**, the Research Team Lead from the USSH, highlighted one key finding from the study: *"The research findings show that elected women representatives performed as well as their men counterparts, and in some areas, the former have even*

outperformed the latter, during the 2016-2021 term. We should confide in and vote for competent women candidates for them to represent 50.2% of women in Viet Nam's population."

The Study also recommends creating favorable conditions for elected representatives to proactively engage with voters via all channels, making use of social networking channels. In addition, it suggests that elected women and men National Assembly delegates and People's Council deputies participate in all fields by introducing gender quota for all National Assembly and all People's Councils committees.

*"The basic premise is that 'both halves of humanity' must have an equal say about issues that matter to them," UNDP Resident Representative **Caitlin Wiesen** emphasized. "All public decision-making - from socio-political issues to labor relations and economic activity - must apply a gender lens to ensure that the specific needs and expectations of women and men, as well as of the persons who identify themselves of non-binary gender, are given full consideration and that conditions are met for harnessing the full potential of every human being and workforce member."*

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