

Vital Participation of Women in Civil Society

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Women have long constituted at least half of the population anywhere in the world. Metropolitan areas, ticular, have seen an increasing visibility of women in the recent years. Taipei as the largest city in Taiwan is no exception. An official census shows that as December 31, 2006, the number of women reached 1.3million, 51.27 percent of the Taipei population. While women traditionally are excluded from full participation in the social and economic development in many Asian societies, women's participation and contribution to the vitality of the city has been encouraged and promoted by both the governmental and non-governmental sectors in Taipei since the last decade. This has resulted in a long-team combined endeavor to synchronize the public policy making and civil society participation in the city. Today a decorated list of achievements eliminating major physical and structural barriers to women's participation in civil society has marked Taipei as one of the most gender-friendly cities on the globe. This process has been made possible certainly by the willingness and continuing efforts of the City Government to accommodate the calls for reform and action from the civil society. More importantly it is owed to the relentless persistence of women in the NGO's and the academia to mainstream the gender perspective in all dimensions of policymaking in the city and to monitor the implementation of the newly-established governmental measures vital for advancing womens' participation in the society. The women's initiatives and collaboration with the GO's exemplified here attest to the sustainable model of partnerships between GO's and NGO's as advocated by the United Nations since the 1990s. The challenges and the opportunities derized from this partnership also illustrate the importance of women in building an organic, inclusive, and mutually sharing civil society in the 21st century.