



FREEDOM FROM DEBT COALITION

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Consolidating Consensus, Advancing People's Struggles and Building Alternatives

OFFICIAL STATEMENT OF FDC WOMEN'S COMMITTEE IN CELEBRATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Sa bawat pagguhit ng lila ay yaring pula; ang kulay ng pakikibaka!

In solidarity with International Women's Day, the Freedom from Debt Coalition Women's Committee celebrates all the strong and empowered women. This year's theme is *Invest in Women, Accelerate the Future*, but despite the voluminous laws that cater to women's rights and welfare, the Marcos Jr. administration has yet to fully mainstream women's rights and welfare.

Economic opportunities for women remain limited.

For instance, women continue to dominate the informal economy – making livelihood precarious, vulnerable, and low-income. **Wage disparity** between men and women continues to persist; income of women is only 71.6% than of that men.

Another pressing challenge would be the **unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW)** that is expected to be performed by women. Deeply rooted patriarchal attitudes have relegated women to child-minding, domestic upkeep, caring for the sick and elderly, and other duties that remain invisible and unaccounted for in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Yet the contribution of women to nation-building is undeniable.

It is thanks to the women's movement that women's perspectives and interests are brought to the national consciousness. It is thanks to those who untiringly pushed for the enactment of laws for women from international treaties to local legislation that we have made headway in gender mainstreaming but there is still much work to be done.

Despite these forward-looking developments, appalling inequalities are faced by women day-to-day, both socially and economically. For one, the Philippines has historically lacked cohesiveness, especially in aligning its national agenda and economic policies to be responsive to gender-equitable targets/goals. These conditions, in return, impede HER access and inclusion.

The Philippines' debt-reliant economy is also a major pushback in eliminating all forms of gender-based inequality. As debt servicing consumes a chunk of the National Budget, which is over PHP 1.55 trillion for 2023, women are left with crumbs for social protection and program allocations for gender and development. Tax burdens are also expected to be carried by women with a regressive tax regime. As empty as the government's fiscal bag, the *debt-as-default* policy is a grave threat to providing adequate funding and in expanding mechanisms to engage women in key policy decision-making.

Moreover, untimely attempts in Constitutional Reforms (a.k.a. Cha-Cha) mask the real urgent needs of the country! Instead of prioritizing the people, the Administration is rallying toward Charter Change to consolidate power for the benefit of the few. This is while the marginalized, including the women sector, are confronted with adverse economic conditions such as soaring prices, low purchasing power, and vulnerability to the worsening climate crisis. It is women who bear the brunt of the huge socio-economic costs, tangible and intangible, brought by these drawbacks.

With this, the **FDC Women's Committee lends its voice to the clamor of women across the globe towards gender equality and inclusion! We join all our sisters who persist and continue to push back against historic and systemic inequalities.**

As a coalition, we will continue to anchor our advocacies for economic and tax justice along a feminist economic framework and continue to promote the same to a broader audience.

Let us push for more responsive fiscal policies, tax measures, and an inclusive economy to make it work for the people!

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