

CHAPTER III

THE ACTORS OF ADVOCACY OF WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT IN MYANMAR

In this part, the author specifically describes the actor of the advocacy process on women's representation in parliament in Myanmar. This chapter is divided into four parts of the discussion. First, the author begins with the targeted actor in the advocacy process. Second, the author describes the three major local women's movements in Myanmar that concern in advocating the representation of women in parliament, namely the Women's League of Burma (WLB), Gender Equality Network (GEN), and Women's Organization Network (WON). In the following part, the author discusses the foreign NGOs that create the transnational network with the three women's movements mentioned earlier namely the International Women's Development Agency (IWDA), Trócaire and the Asia Foundation. Fourth, the author describes the international community actors which include foreign states, Australia, the European Union and the United States of America; and also the intergovernmental organization which is the United Nations.

A. The Targeted Actor

This part explains the targeted actor of advocacy process of women's representation in parliament in Myanmar. It is important for the author to define who the targeted actor in this advocacy is. The author argues that Myanmar's Government is the main targeted actor of this advocacy process. According to the aforementioned obstacles in the previous chapter, the author also sees that there is another targeted actor that is a non-state actor, which is the political party in Myanmar.

Myanmar's Government is the most prominent targeted actor as it is the one that hampers the enforcement of women's rights in the country, especially

the women's representation in parliament. As have been stated earlier that the military junta causes the exclusion of women in society; thus military regime must become the prominent targeted actor. By having political reform and change in behavior, Myanmar will possibly include women and taking them into account in every aspect of life. The fact that Myanmar has ratified CEDAW in 1997 and led to the establishment of Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs (MNCWA) which later renamed as Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAFF) did not change anything, but shadow institution.

“The creation of the Myanmar National Committee for Women's Affairs, a committee comprised largely of military men, and the non-independent, non-governmental Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association, have both acted as vehicles for the promotion of national patriotic values rather than the empowerment of women. Programs created to provide services and information to women are afflicted by the same difficulties as other institutions, namely, lack of funding, training, freedom of information, and corruption. No government body or committee specifically dedicated to achieving gender equality exists in Burma. (Women's Organizations of Burma Shadow Report Writing Committee, 1999)”

This shows that the Government of Myanmar did not commit to the accomplishment of gender equality, not even to make women well-represented in the parliament. Other than Myanmar's Government that very clear as the targeted actor in this advocacy process, there is the political party which also becomes the targeted actor.

The political party is the first platform which enables women to run in the election. Although being an independent candidate is also possible, but women more likely than men perceived to be inappropriate from society. It is written in the CEDAW Implementation report by WON together with WLB in 2016.

“Women can be a member of the political party but they are only useful for the opening ceremony to arrange flower and prepare refreshment for the ceremony. Wai Lin, Sagaing Division (Women’s Organization Network, 2016)”

However, it is only with the political party, women can have a better chance to be running the election. There are only a few numbers of political parties that established to support women’s representation in parliament means there is a lot more political parties that do not support women to run in the election. It is based on the finding that in Myanmar, there is only a small number of political parties that have a women wing or department (Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy, 2014). The Women’s Party from Mon State is the first and only all-women party in Myanmar to contest in the 2015 general elections (Myanmar Now, 2015). Not even one out of four candidates who ran in the election was elected in 2015 (Burma News International, 2018).

B. The Local Women’s Movements

This part explains the overview of three women’s movements, WLB, GEN and, WON. The overview covers the establishment of the NGO, the vision and mission, the structure, the program and project and the significance of each NGO to increase the women’s representation in parliament in Myanmar.

1. Women’s League of Burma (WLB)

The Women’s League of Burma (WLB) is an umbrella organization of 13 women’s ethnic organizations founded on 9 December 1999. The member organizations of WLB are Burmese Women’s Union (BWU), Kachin Women’s Association – Thailand (KWAT), Karen Women’s Organization (KWO), Karenni

National Women's Organization (KNWO), Kayan Women's Organization (KYWO), Kuki Women's Human Rights Organization (KWHRO), Lahu Women's Organization (LWO), Palaung Women's Organization (PWO), Pa-O Women's Union (PWU), Rakhaing Women's Union (RWU), Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN), Tavoy Women's Union (TWU), and Women's Rights & Welfare Association of Burma (WRWAB).

The missions of WLB are empowering and advancing the status of women, increasing women's participation, and involving women in peace and reconciliation processes through capacity building, advocacy, research, and documentation (Women's League of Burma, 2011). Besides WLB upholds the values that ensure the work of WLB members must be laid on it, there are:

- Mutual respect: recognition, encouragement, no discrimination
- Prevent and protect women from all forms of violence against women– respect for all human rights and women's rights
- Practice democratic principles and equality
- Responsibility, accountability and transparency
- Belief in gender equality
- Practice peaceful co-existence

Those missions and values of WLB are clearly entitled in the Constitution of Women's League of Burma written in Burmese language (Women's League of Burma, 1999). In running the organization, WLB comprises three governing bodies; the Congress, the Presidium Board, and the Secretariat, which all led by women and the detail as follow:

- The Congress, the highest decision-making body composed of 50-60 women from WLB and its member organizations and includes the Presidium Board, Secretariat, Program Coordinators, and Program Assistants, and representatives.

- The Presidium Board, the second-highest body composed of 13 representatives from each of the member organizations. They meet every eight months to develop strategies, formulate policies and make decisions that later will be implemented by the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat, the body composed of three individuals elected by the congress for a two-year term consists of the General-Secretary, the Joint General Secretary I, and the Joint General Secretary II (Women's League of Burma, 1999).

In 2017, Women's League of Burma has elected the new Secretariat body which is Lway Poe Ngeal from Taang Women's Organization of Palaung Women Organization as the General Secretary, Naw Hser Hser from KWO as the Joint General Secretary I, and Maw Day Myar from KNWO as the Joint General Secretary II (IWDA, 2017).

The commitment of WLB in increasing the political participation of women in Myanmar particularly to increase the women's representation in decision-making is reflected through its program entitled Political Empowerment Program (PEP) (Women's League of Burma, 1999). WLB has two main projects in order to realize the aforementioned objectives of PEP, the Political Forums, and the Emerging Leaders Political Empowerment School (ELPES) which has different objectives for each project. These projects will be further explored in the next chapter.

Besides holding the PEP in domestic level for women in Myanmar, WLB has a well-developed advocacy process at the international level. It positioned itself as the advocate for women and change in Burma as it has a capability in connecting the grassroots, communities, regional, and the international community. The dimension of WLB's advocacy is focusing on

lobbying; gender education, training, and empowerment; and also raising gender issues in programs inside Burma.

2. Gender Equality Network (GEN)

The Gender Equality Network (GEN) is classified as a diverse and inclusive network of more than 130 civil society organizations (CSOs), domestic and international NGOs, and Technical Resource Persons (TRP) for realizing gender equality and fulfilling women’s rights in Myanmar. GEN was first formed in 2008 together with its member organizations under the name of the Women’s Protection Technical Working Group to response the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. For the first time, it is aimed to address multi-sectoral and cross-cutting issues faced by women in cyclone-affected areas. As it began to develop ever since, GEN concerns on building the evidence base in the new emerging context in Myanmar; advocating the issue in national, regional and international forums; conducting innovations in communications and capacity building initiatives. At large, the GEN’s mission is to give facilitation in transforming the norms, systems, structures, and practices to enable gender equality and gender justice in Myanmar to realize its vision which is the gender equality at all levels of Myanmar society.

Due to the large and classified membership of GEN, there are only several GEN member organizations in which involved actively. The member organizations of GEN are classified into three categories, NGOs/CSOs, INGOs, and TRPs which can be seen in table 3.1 (Gender Equality Network, 2008).

Table 3.1 Member of Gender Equality Network

NGOs/CSOs	INGOs	TRPs
Myanmar Ecclesia of Women in Asia (MEWA) Local Resource Centre (LRC)	Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee (BRAC Myanmar)	Dr. Elizabeth J.T. Maber Farrah Kelly

<p>Network Activities Group (NAG) Phan Tee Eain (Creative Home) (PTE) Gender and Development Institute (GDI) Kachin Women Union (KWU) Karen Women Empowerment Group (KWEA) Sandhi Governance Institute Colorful Girls Good Shepherd Myanmar NINU Women in Action Group Colors Rainbow Thingaha Gender Organization Myanmar Women Entrepreneurs Association (MWEA) Action Labor Rights (ALR) Promotion of Indigenous and Nature Together (POINT) Yaung Chi Thit Ratana Metta Organization Myanmar Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) Myanmar Centre for Responsible Business (MCRB) Dawn Action on Women Network (DAWN) Kachin Women Peace Network (KWPN) Ar Yone Oo-Social Development Association (AYO-SDA) Enlightened Myanmar Research Foundation (EMReF) Myanmar Deaf Community Development Association (MDCDA) Equality Myanmar Pyi Gyi Khin</p>	<p>HELVETAS Myanmar International Alert Mennonite Economic Development Associates The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) Trócaire Sustainable Development Knowledge Network (Spectrum) Marie Stopes International Myanmar PSI Myanmar Progetto Continenti Myanmar Swiss Aid Sone Sie Community Partners International World Vision Pact Myanmar Cord Malteser International BBC Media Action Terre des Hommes Italia (TDH Italy) Win Rock International Cuso International Diakonia Christian Aid Norwegian People's Aid CARE Myanmar</p>	<p>Daw Sanda Thant Dr. Nyunt Nyunt Thane Hilay Faxon Yin Yin Min Win Sandy Myint Daw Htike Htike Myint Maung Dr. San Shwe Nang Khan Yone Daw Aye Mya Nandra Soe Kelvin Lynn Na Fa Augusta Nora Pi Daw Kyawt Kyawt Khaing Dr. Ohnmar KhaingPaul Minoletti Choo PhuahJen Clark</p>
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In running the organization, GEN has a unique organization's structure to ensure that all programs and projects are well-organized. The strategies and initiatives

of GEN are determined by the Steering Committee and Coordination Unit. The structure of organization of GEN is shown in figure 3.1 (Gender Equality Network, 2008).

The Steering Committee (SC) of GEN comprises of 11 representatives of each member organization. There are five representatives from NGOs/CSOs, three representatives from INGOs, and three representatives from TRPs, in total there are 11 members in SC of GEN (see table 3.2). They are serving for two years and can be re-elected for more two years. The SC of GEN which is the main board of the organization is assisted by the Coordination Unit that has its structure (see Figure 3.1). Currently, there are 33 staffs in Coordination Unit both female and male staffs. The Director of GEN is May Sabe Phyu and assisted by her deputy named Dr. Kaythi Myint Thein (Gender Equality Network, 2008).

Figure 3.1 Structure of Organization Gender Equality Network

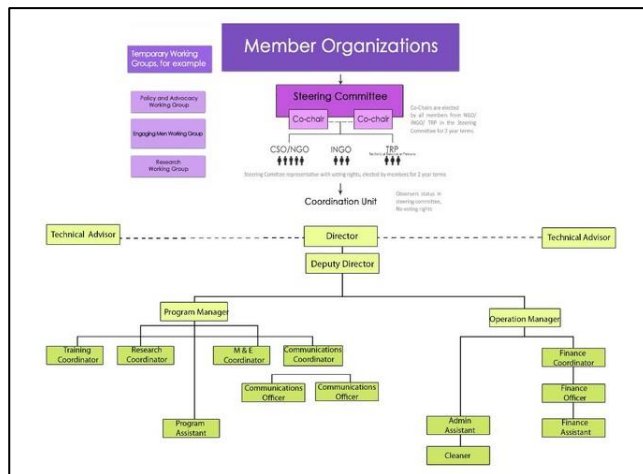


Table 3.2 Steering Committee Members of Gender Equality Network

Category	Name	Position/Member Organization
NGOs/CSOs	1. Daw Khin Hla	Director/Yaung Chi Thit

	2. U Aung Myo Min 3. U Myo Khaing Htoo 4. Daw Nang Win 5. Aung New Zin Win	Executive Director/Equality Myanmar Information Officer/Phan Tee Eain Project Coordinator/Kachin Women Peace Network Executive Director/Pyi Gyi Khin
INGOs	6. Daw Nilar Tun 7. Dr. Htet Htet 8. Chan Myat Thu	National Gender Advisor/CARE Myanmar Monitoring and Learning Manager/Pyoe Pin Programme, British Council Myanmar Senior Programme Officer/Norwegian People's Aid
TRPs	9. Dr. San Shwe 10. Daw Sanda Thant 11. Daw Kyawt Kyawt Khaing	Senior Technical Consultant/Community Partners International Director/Socio-Economic Gender Resource Institute Independent Consultant/Researcher

GEN is a network that really has a strong commitment to realizing gender equality between man and woman in all aspects at all levels. Although implicit, but it is evident to Myanmar's women that GEN has appeared to surface in increasing women's representation in parliament. It has a capacity building program which aimed for developing the capacity of the members to ensure the dynamics and cohesive network of skilled and confident individuals and organizations to effectively working for women's rights and gender equality. Among all projects under this program, GEN conducts the workshop and short courses on leadership and also legal workshop related to policy campaigns. The program and project of GEN will be further discussed in the next chapter.

3. Women's Organization Network Myanmar (WON)

The Women’s Organization Network Myanmar is a network of organizations that concern on women’s rights and gender issue which has 38 member organizations as 2016 (see table 3.3) (Women's Organization Network, 2016). It was established in 2008 after the Cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar which operated in afflicted by armed conflicts and in the post-conflict states across Myanmar, especially in Karen States, Shan State, and Mon State. The vision of WON is to realize peace, justice, and equality for women and men at all levels in Myanmar. WON works by engaging and advocating the women’s issue and gender issue by using its networking. They have three approaches in conducting their program and project, namely women’s rights approach, network-based approach, and women community approach (Campbell, 2016).

Table 3.3 Member Organizations of WON

No	Member Organization	No	Member Organization
1	Akhaya	20	Paku Women
2	Asho Women	21	Phan Tee Eain
3	Association of Myanmar Disabled Women Affair	22	Phoenix Association
4	Ar Yone Oo	23	Precious Stones
5	Chin Women Empowerment	24	Pyi Gyi Khin
6	Chin Women Development	25	Paw Wee Dee
7	Colorful Girls	26	Ratna Mahal Education Care Group
8	Ecumenical Women Work, Myanmar Council of Churches	27	Rainbow
9	Good Sleep	28	Self Support Kayin Baptist Mission Society, Women’s Department
10	Hindu Women	29	Smile Women Empowerment
11	Karen Women’s Empowerment Group	30	Society of Enlightening Quranic Knowledge
12	Kayin Baptist Convention, Women’s Department	31	The Mother’s Union
13	Kindness Women	32	Triangle Women Support Group
14	Mon Women Organization	33	Women Federation for Peace

15	Myanmar Baptist Convention, Women's Department	34	Wimutti Volunteer Group
16	Muslim Women Council of Myanmar	35	Win Win
17	Myanmar National Association of the Blind, Women's Department	36	Yangon Kayin Baptist Women Association
18	National Young Women Christian Association	37	Yangon Young Women Christian Association
19	Pathein Myaungmya Baptist Women's Association	38	Yaung Chi Thit

In running the organization, WON has a steering committee that comprises of the representatives from the member organizations. The most prominent leader of WON named Daw Susanna Hla Hla Soe was recorded as a chairwoman of WON and was awarded the 2012 Humanitarian Awards from InterAction. Her strong commitment to women's rights and gender equality has been brought her to running the election. Currently, she is a member of parliament in the House of Nationalities and never stops to increase the women's political participation, particularly in decision-making process.

WON as the network organization has its own strategy and initiatives in doing such program and project. However, it is not really different with other aforementioned two NGOs. It works in advancing representation of women in parliament through such training and workshop as well as advocacy process at the international level.

C. Foreign NGOs Involved in the Advocacy Process

It is undeniable that those women's movements that the author explained in the previous part are actually depending on the donor funding from other foreign actors in order to sustain their work (Campbell, 2016). More importantly that it is necessary for them to share the information about the actual condition of women in Myanmar so that they are able to run their program and

project right on target. In this part, the author explains the overview of foreign NGOs that have the same objectives and closely work with the local women's movements mentioned in the previous part.

1. International Women's Development Agency (IWDA)

International Women's Development Agency (IWDA) is a Non-Governmental Organization based in Australia that established for supporting women's rights in Asia and the Pacific with the motto "*When Women Benefit, The Whole Community Benefits*". It was founded in 1985 in Melbourne by three founding members, Ruth Pfanner, Wendy Poussard, and Wendy Rose. Wendy Poussard was acting as the first Chair of IWDA. It was established due to the invisibility of women in virtual life as planners and managers of development program where women do less work than men as a group worldwide.

It envisions the gender-equal world, where the diverse girls and women are included in all spheres at all levels. Most importantly that it clearly takes women into account not as a homogenous group and that are vulnerable to every gender-based discrimination which intersect with other sources of discrimination including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, religion, and socio-cultural background (IWDA, 2018). In guiding the organization, IWDA has its guiding principles which are feminist, accountable, collaborative, and transformative. There are five missions of IWDA as the women's NGO such as promote women's leadership and participation, strengthen women's safety and security, accelerate women's economic empowerment, advance systemic change, and ensure organizational sustainability and accountability.

As an international NGOs concerning women's rights and gender equality, IWDA has an integrated and stable organizational structure which lead by a CEO

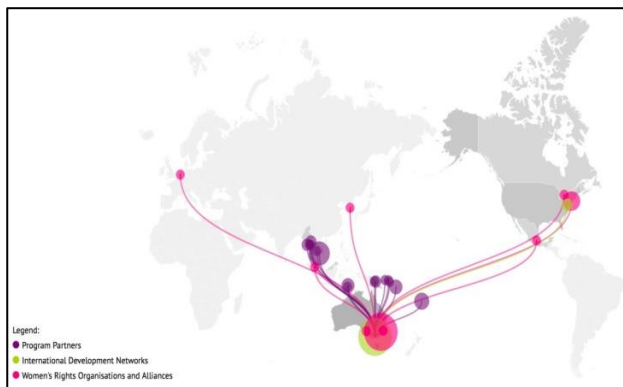
named Bettina Baldeschi since late 2017. She is coordinating the program and project with the Board of IWDA and also the Executive Coordinator & Company Secretary. Since Bettina assumed in office, IWDA has gained 28,000 new supporters across the world. IWDA works closely with the Australian National University (AUN), the Australian Government, through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) (IWDA, 2018).

IWDA works across the region and world, particularly in Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, Myanmar, Papua New Guinea & Bougainville, Solomon Islands, and Timor-Leste (see figure 3.2). Additionally, IWDA joins the global community organization, such as Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) and the Women Human Rights Defenders Forum as well as attends the important global platforms such as the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), and the UN's High Level Political Forum (HLPF). In the last 12 months IWDA has been able to involve 11,777 women across the Asia Pacific in leadership training, 1,278 women in economic empowerment programs, and 21,204 women and men in safety and security services and programs. Specifically, IWDA in its commitment to increasing women's leadership and participation is working with local organizations to run the workshop, and skills training, advocacy, research, evidence, and learning. In 2016, there were 7,014 women received the training to participate in local and national governance, and 717 women benefitted from this program and assumed regional or national leadership roles.

In regard to this research, IWDA has been very contributive for advancing the status of women in Myanmar since 2008 particularly in the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis. The acting program manager of IWDA for Myanmar is Jen Clark. There are four women's organizations in Myanmar that have been working and becoming the partners of IWDA in doing such programs

and projects, namely Akhaya Women, Palaung Women’s Organization (PWO), Shan Women’s Action Network (SWAN), and Women’s League of Burma (WLB). The ongoing underrepresentation of women in parliament becomes the main reason why IWDA enhances its work in the country. The program and project hold by IWDA with its organization’s partners in Myanmar will be further explored in the next chapter.

Figure 3.2 Where IWDA Works



2. Trócaire

Trócaire is a Non-Governmental Organization based in Ireland founded by the Catholic Church in 1973 since the Bishops’ Conference of Ireland as a way for Irish people to donate to the development and emergency relief overseas. It also mandated to support the most prone people in the developing world, all along with raising the awareness of injustice and global poverty in Ireland. The vision of Trócaire is to realize a just and peaceful world where people’s dignity is ensured and rights are respected; where basic needs are met and resources are shared equitably; where people have control over their own lives and those in power act for the common good (Trócaire, 2018). In order to realize the

vision of Trócaire, there are two missions such as realizing a just world and realizing a stronger Trócaire.

William Crean, Bishop of Cloyne is a Chair of the Board of Trócaire. Besides him, in running the organization appropriately and effectively, there are the Boards' members and also the numbers of subcommittees of the Board. Trócaire works in over 20 developing countries together with the local Catholic Church and CSOs (see figure 3.3) (Trócaire, 2018). Trócaire has been given a very remarkable impact overseas. Not to mention, there are 2.8 million people directly benefitted from its programs in 23 developing countries with over than 1.3 million people were reached especially in Syria, Sudan and Myanmar and over 633,700 people in 15 countries were directly benefitted from its sustainable livelihoods programs.

In supporting the sustainable impacts of Trócaire, it has been supported by the donor funding coming from the donor government as well as the public donation. There is Irish Aid through the Department of Foreign Affairs (DoFA), the European Union, and also UK Aid through the Department of International Development (DFID).

Figure 3.3 Where Trócaire Work



Trócaire has been working in Myanmar since 1995 and opened its office in Myanmar in 2008. Prior to 2008, Trócaire focused on supporting the life of refugees who live on the border between Thailand and Myanmar. It was decided to open the country office in 2008 post-Cyclone Nargis which killed over 140,000 people and impacted more than 2.4 million. Its vision to realize a just world is reflected through its concerns in Myanmar which focuses on humanitarian response, peace building, gender equality, and land rights. Trócaire in Myanmar conducts the programs of women's empowerment, justice and human rights, humanitarian response and also peacebuilding. It works through engaging the local organizations, especially in Yangon and Tanitharyi Region, in Mon and Kayah State, as well as in Kachin and Shan State, and all areas of conflict and post-conflicts at large. Regarding the women's representation in parliament, the women's empowerment program has been designated to make the women, particularly young women to be able to participate in formal and informal decision-making at all levels.

3. The Asia Foundation

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organization based in San Francisco, United States of America. It was established under the name of the Committee for Asia in 1951 and replaced by the Asia Foundation in 1954. It was founded by 21 founding members include the 4 presidents of well-known universities in US, 6 heads of major corporations in the US, a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and other prominent figures of the US in foreign affairs (The Asia Foundation, 2018). It is envisioned to improving lives across a dynamic and developing Asia. In order to realize the vision, the Asia Foundation has several missions such as strengthening the governance, empowering women, expanding economic opportunity, increasing

environmental resilience and promoting international cooperation.

Currently, the acting President of the Asia Foundation is David D. Arnold, and David M. Lampton as the Chairman of the Board and Executive Committee. They are supported by the senior staffs who work both in Asian countries and also in the United States. It works in 18 Asian countries since its establishment, including Myanmar. In Myanmar itself, the Asia Foundation's office in Myanmar was opened since 1958 right a decade after Myanmar became an independent country until 1962 before the military regime assumed in office. It assisted the country's political, economic, social and educational institutions. The office was re-established in 2013 working with partners in government, the private sector, and also importantly the local organizations. The acting Country Representative of Myanmar for the Asia Foundation is Matthew Arnold.

In general, 87 out of more than 350 programs held by the Asia Foundation were aimed for empowering women in society across all Asian countries (The Asia Foundation, 2017). Among the outcomes of the women empowerment program, it has an objective to increase participation of women in elections, public leadership, and decision-making by encouraging women to participate in politics and to actively involved in increasing the government transparency and accountability. In Myanmar, despite it was just re-established five years ago, the commitment of the Asia Foundation in empowering women politically can be considered as really meaningful for Myanmar's women by engaging the local community. This will be further explained in the next chapter.

D. The International Actors Involved in the Advocacy Process

The author signifies that the involvement of international actors, including the foreign states and intergovernmental organization is important to the success of the advocacy network. The model of boomerang pattern described that the foreign NGOs will encourage its state to also take part and pressure the targeted actors of the advocacy network. In this case, the author argues that there are some states which are playing important role in the advocacy process itself, which are Australia, the European Union and the United States of America. Besides the encouragement from the NGOs, those states themselves are adopting the gender equality norm which means supporting the equal representation between men and women in parliament.

Australia is a country which committed to CEDAW and BPfA. Various legislations have been adopted in Australia to guarantee gender equality to be realized such as the Sex Discrimination Act 1984, and the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012. Speaking of legislation for granting women political rights, Australia has adopted the Commonwealth Franchise Act 1902 which granted all person rights to vote.

“All persons not under twenty-one years of age whether male or female married or unmarried would be entitled to vote in federal elections (The Commonwealth Franchise Act, 1902)”

Currently, the women’s representation in Australia’s House of Representatives is accounted as 30% of 150 MPs, and women are accounted around 30 out of 76 senators in Senate (Parliament of Australia, 2018). Its commitment in gender equality also not only reflected in its domestic policy, but also in its foreign policy through Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) with the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Strategy and Australian Aid (DFAT, 2018).

The European Union (EU), a supranational organization comprising 28 member countries (include the United Kingdom) also has its own parliament called the European Parliament. The EU is well-known with its strong commitment to human rights, and democracy.

“The European Union seeks to uphold the universality, interdependence and indivisibility of all human rights – civil and political as well as economic, social and cultural. The Union is committed to intensifying the process of “mainstreaming” human rights and democratization objectives into all aspects of EU external and internal policies. It therefore continues to promote the growing international trend towards integrating the promotion of human rights, democracy and the rule of law into development cooperation, trade policies and the promotion of peace and security (Council of European Union, 2001)”

It is apparent that nowadays the European Union is considered as the global leading regional organization based in the European continent in terms of gender equality. It is for the first and foremost initiator of gender mainstreaming strategy in realizing gender equality in BPfA. The Lisbon Treaty, the treaty whereby the EU established per se has already guaranteed the equality between men and women.

“In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women. (Article 8 Lisbon Treaty, 2009)”

Other than that, it has the most vibrant and comprehensive legal framework in terms of gender equality as it has adopted many directives such as, Directive on equal pay for men and women (75/117/EEC), Directive 2002/73/EC on equal treatment of men and women in employment, and many other directives regulating the equal treatment for men and

women. Currently, in the European Parliament, women are accounted for 36.1% of the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2018). In the same manner like Australia, the European Union also adopted the Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations (2016-2020) which deliver the aid on gender equality for external parties (European Commission, 2018).

The United States of America (USA) is the most powerful country worldwide. Its influence in every country is really visible. As a country well-known with its human rights and democracy, the US plays a pivotal role in leading its implementation. The US Constitution does protect and grant women's rights and gender equality for US citizens, including the women's representation in parliament. Women are accounted for almost 20% in the lower house and accounted about 23% in the Senate (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2018). The US also in its foreign policy supports women's rights and gender equality through USAID under the Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (USAID, 2012).

Not only those three states there is some intergovernmental organization which involved in pressuring the Government of Myanmar, such as ASEAN and the United Nations. However, the author only alerts the insignificant role of the ASEAN in pressuring Myanmar's Government to increase the women's representation in parliament due to the ASEAN's lacking power and integration. Therefore, the author only describes the role of the United Nations. The United Nations has 193 member states, which Myanmar is among them. Concerning women's rights and gender equality issue, UN itself has a special agency called UN Women Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) that founded in 2010. A long way before that, UN has committed itself to promote and protect women's rights and gender equality. The CEDAW, the first worldwide convention concerning

on eliminating discrimination against women entered into force on 3 September 1981. The women's political participation is granted specifically in Article 7 of CEDAW.

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right..... (Article 7 CEDAW)”

The convention becomes the cornerstone of other global initiatives adopted in the United Nations to increase the women's political participation, including the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. The conference was resulted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) which recommended the implementation of 30% gender quota system for women to have the reserved seats in parliament.

The gender equality issue becomes one among the important global agenda in the United Nations. The international community had successfully implemented the Millennial Development Goals (MDGs) until 2015 which promoted gender equality and empowered women in its goal 3. In order to achieve a better world, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have been set in 2015, continuing the MDGs until 2030 which gender equality is promoted in its goal 5. Besides adopting the international conventions and treaties, what is the most important to the effective work of TANs is its ability to hold international conferences and forums. Through international conference and forum, the networks will be further formed and strengthened (Keck & Sikkink, 1998).

Those foreign states and United Nations indeed in favor of the situation where women are equally represented in the parliament at all levels. Therefore, anyhow they will give pressure to those countries that are

not in favor to the equal representation of women in parliament, including in Myanmar where women are underrepresented even under the global average.