

# Leni to ASEAN: Address gender inequality

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*By Raymund F. Antonio*

Vice President Leni Robredo called on the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) yesterday to strengthen its commitment to address gender inequality amid the “complex” problems faced by women.

Robredo, an advocate of women empowerment, said there was no better time for ASEAN to exert greater effort, stressing that “long-term follow-through strategies” are needed to address gender issues.

“Women have to work twice as hard to be where their counterparts are in society. While more than 70 percent of our men are in the labor force, only half of our women have access to jobs,” she said.

The Vice President even cited the data that showed “large numbers of highly educated women in ASEAN countries remain unemployed.”

“Not only that, women are still vulnerable to indecent working conditions, inadequate social security, and discrimination. In fact, in recent weeks, we have heard a lot of controversies regarding women harassment both in the US and in Europe,” she said.

She noted women’s rights continue to be under attack.

“Catcalling, misogynistic remarks, and even violence are still considered the fault of the woman if her knees show when she sits,” she said.

Robredo delivered the keynote address during the first Southeast Asian Women’s Summit held in Miriam College, Quezon City.

The first day of the forum was held ahead of the activities related to the 31st ASEAN Summit slated next week in Metro Manila and Clark Freeport in Pampanga.

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