

From the Margins to the Mainstream: Meaningful Participation, Voices, and Advocacy of Women and Marginalised Groups in the Fight for Gender Equality, Persons with Disabilities, and Social Inclusion in Indonesia's National Policies: RPJPN 2025-2045 and RPJMN 2025-2029

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Manuscript Chronology: received 16 March 2025, revised 30 April 2025, accepted 22 August 2025

Abstract

The participation of grassroots women and marginalised groups in national development planning remains critically low, at only around 10-20 percent. The current mechanism, Musrenbang (Development Planning Forums), has yet to meaningfully accommodate their voices. In response, KAPAL Perempuan, together with INKLUSI partners, initiated the National Women's Deliberation for Development Planning (Munas Perempuan) in 2023 and 2024 as a collective action to enhance meaningful participation and ensure the integration of the needs, rights, and aspirations of women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups in development agendas. This research presents a case study of the advocacy surrounding Munas Perempuan and its role in influencing the formulation of the 2025-2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN). It focuses on three main aspects: (1) the structural causes of low participation among women and marginalised groups; (2) the effectiveness of Munas Perempuan as a model of grassroots advocacy; and (3) the implications of this advocacy for long-term development policy. Data were drawn from field studies in 206 districts/cities, interviews, and over a decade of documentation from civil society organisations. Findings show that limited participation leads to the exclusion of key issues affecting women and marginalised communities. Munas Perempuan has emerged as a strategic breakthrough by integrating nine key agendas into the RPJPN. Furthermore, it has contributed to a paradigmatic shift in national development - moving from Gender Mainstreaming (PUG) to Gender and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming (PUGIS), now formally adopted in Law No. 59 of 2024 on the 2025-2045 RPJPN.

Keywords: Women's Leadership, women's participation, disability, Marginalised Groups, Gender and Social Inclusion Mainstreaming

Introduction

The participation of women in development planning remains much lower than in politics and other strategic roles. SMERU (2019) found that women accounted for just 18.8 per cent of participants in Musrenbangdes (village development planning meetings), a figure which Mitra INKLUSI (2024) revealed to be even lower at 8-18 per cent. Women were generally represented by the PKK (Family Welfare Movement) or village cadres; poor women and women with disabilities were not involved. Participation declines further at the sub-district and district levels, with proposals limited to PKK activities. However, research shows that this figure can rise to 30-50 per cent following education and organisation by women's groups or civil society organisations.

The low level of women's participation is often attributed to a perceived unwillingness or inability to participate despite invitations being extended.

A number of obstacles prevent women from participating, including meetings often being held in the evening, family norms prohibiting attendance and a lack of understanding about the benefits of the forum. Conversely, empowered women are usually enthusiastic about attending and participating in meetings.

PKK's involvement reflects the legacy of state motherism, in which women's representation is more symbolic than substantive (Pitkin 1967). Consequently, the voices of poor and disabled women remain unheard. During the New Order era, gender politics positioned women as wives who served their families and communities. Suryakusuma (2004) referred to this concept as 'State Motherhood' or, more broadly, 'Father-Motherhood', in which men were the primary source of power and women were merely intermediaries. This ideology was implemented through organisations for the wives of civil servants and military personnel, such

as Dharma Wanita, Dharma Pertiwi and PKK, which reinforced women's subordination (Muchtar 2016). The roots of this state control lie in the events of 1965, when anti-Gerwani propaganda was used to deter women away from organising and opposing the government.

Although reform offered new hope, the 1999 Regional Autonomy Law perpetuates subordination through patriarchal religious and customary regulations. Women are confined to the domestic sphere and required to obtain their husband's permission to work and subject to a curfew. It has become increasingly difficult for women to take up leadership positions because public office is seen as synonymous with the male roles of religious or customary leader. This situation demonstrates that women's citizenship remains gendered (Lister 1997), whereby women are recognised as citizens only insofar as they fulfil domestic roles. Within the framework of feminist citizenship, this exclusion shows how women's access to public spaces is systematically restricted, therefore, their representation remains merely symbolic.

Research by KAPAL Perempuan Institute in Gorontalo (2010) shows that following the division of the province and the issuance of Local Regulation No. 10 of 2003 - based on the principle that 'custom is based on Sharia, and Sharia is based on the Book of Allah' — women's opportunities to participate in and lead initiatives have become very limited. According to religious interpretations of customary law, women are prohibited from leading. The *tubo* customary ritual, in which male leaders pay their respects, is not considered appropriate for female leaders, thereby symbolically denying the legitimacy of women's leadership (Rahman 2026). The case of Gorontalo demonstrates that the concept of citizenship remains masculine, rendering women's leadership illegitimate in both custom and religion (Lister 1997).

The marginalisation of women in leadership roles is evident in the case of Reyna Usman, the sole female candidate for regent of Pohuwato in the 2005 regional elections. In the name of custom and religion (Islam), the public immediately judged that women could not become regional leaders. Leadership, especially as a leader of the people, is considered sacred in Gorontalo and unfit for a woman. However, Verrianto Madjowa (2006, pp. 117-118) challenges this perspective by examining the history of leadership in Gorontalo.

Discrimination against women in the public sector is often attributed to tradition. It is unclear whether these customs

are based on *syarak*, the principle that governs life and society in Gorontalo and is rooted in the Holy Book. If this is indeed the case, however, the role of women in Gorontalo customs must be rethought. Ironically, several women held leadership positions, including that of sultan, in the 16th- and 17th-century kingdoms of Suwawa, Gorontalo and Limboto (Madjowa 2006).

Various reasons are used to limit women's participation in development. Feminist critics, such as Mosse (1996), highlight development models that focus on industrialisation and economic growth in the name of modernisation. These models ignore the social dimension, positioning humans solely as consumers and failing to recognise women and disadvantaged groups as subjects. Consequently, gender inequality has worsened, and poverty has deepened. Indonesia has followed this pattern since the New Order era, meaning that development programmes tend to treat women and marginalised groups as voiceless beneficiaries. Therefore, Mosse encourages adopting a Gender and Development (GAD) approach that considers women's interests.

Moser (2003) emphasises that development should be grounded in gender relations rather than merely focusing on the category of 'women', since gender, as a social construct, shapes unequal positions, needs, and power relations. This can be seen in the division of labour, access to resources, and decision-making processes, all of which are dominated by men. Kabeer (2018) adds that gender inequality does not exist in isolation, but intersects with class, ethnicity, race and other forms of inequality, thereby exacerbating losses. Given their position at the intersection of production and reproduction, gender relations are central to the relationship between economic growth and human development, as well as being key to the development agenda. In line with this, Moser (2003) emphasises that the fundamental objective of gender planning is to liberate women from subordination and promote equality, justice, and empowerment. However, this confrontational approach faces two major obstacles. Firstly, despite the existence of specialised ministries and units, development authorities are reluctant to recognise gender as an important issue. Secondly, gender policies remain ineffective in practice because decision-making remains male-dominated and gender-blind.

In order to ensure that development planning incorporates a gender agenda, it is crucial that women

participate in the planning process. Although policies are already in place, such as Law No. 6 of 2024 and Government Regulation No. 45 of 2017 on Community Participation in Regional Government Administration, women's participation has not necessarily increased. In fact, Law No. 7 of 1984, which ratifies the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, ensures women's involvement in decision-making. This law has been reinforced by Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2000 on Gender Mainstreaming in National Development and a 30 per cent quota for women's representation. Other relevant legislation includes Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 114 of 2014 on Village Development Guidelines, which include women, and Law No. 8 of 2016 on Persons with Disabilities, which ensures participation in development planning. However, none of these laws have yet been implemented.

Key aspects of women's participation include empowerment through education and organisation, as well as advocacy at village and district levels. This involves preparing and presenting proposals at the Women's National Conference. The conference aims to ensure that gender planning is incorporated into national development planning. Without gender equality, the 2024 Gender Index Data suggests that 79 per cent of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, including Indonesia's national development goals, will not be achieved. It has been suggested that, between 2029 and 2033, nearly 40 per cent of countries worldwide - representing over 1 billion women and girls - will experience stagnation or regression in terms of gender equality between 2019 and 2022. This would put women in a dire situation.

Research Methodology

This article adopts a feminist case study approach, centring the analysis around the experiences of grassroots women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups. This approach aligns with the objectives of feminist research, which are to reveal unequal power relations, expose mechanisms of exclusion, and amplify the voices of groups that are often marginalised in the development process.

Data were obtained from deliberations conducted by 11 INKLUSI partners in 31 provinces, 102 districts/cities and 508 villages. These deliberations produced aspirations and policy proposals, documented in

various minutes, reports and field notes. This data was supplemented with advocacy documents, policy materials and testimonies from participants of the Women's National Conference (26–27 March and 20 April 2024). All the data were treated as political texts and analysed to reveal patterns of representation, mechanisms of exclusion, and advocacy strategies.

The analysis incorporated the Gender and Development (GAD) framework and the concepts of intersectionality (Kabeer 2018) and feminist counterpublics (Fraser 1990). This approach allows us to view the Women's National Conference not only as a series of advocacy activities, but also as a political practice navigating the power dynamics between the state and civil society. In doing so, it creates opportunities for meaningful participation for grassroots women and marginalised groups.

The National Women's Conference (Munas) for Development Planning and Advocacy Strategies

The National Women's Conference for Development Planning (Munas Perempuan) was initiated by women's organisations and pro-democracy civil society groups campaigning for the enforcement, protection and fulfilment of human rights, women's rights, children's rights, the rights of persons with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, minorities, and other marginalised groups. As a collective action, Munas Perempuan emerged from a participatory and innovative grassroots movement for transformative change, ensuring that the rights, voices, aspirations, needs and interests of women, children, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups are fulfilled fairly and equally. This will help to achieve gender equality, disability inclusion and social inclusion, ensuring that no one is left behind. Munas Perempuan is a strategic policy advocacy forum that opens up space for women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups to participate actively and meaningfully in decision-making processes, particularly in development planning, to which they currently have limited access.

With the support of the INKLUSI programme, the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas), the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, and other ministries and agencies, 11 women's and civil society organisations (including KAPAL Perempuan Institute, Aisyiyah, PEKKA, Migrant CARE, BaKTI, SIGAB, KEMITRAAN, PKBI, PERMAMPU,

YPR, Yakum and Lakpesdam NU) held two Munas Perempuan, in April 2023 and March-April 2024, which were coordinated by KAPAL Perempuan Institute. Over 5,000 people attended the 2023 Munas Perempuan, 85 per cent of whom were women. They represented civil society organisations, women's organisations, disability organisations, and government bodies at local, regional, and national levels from 34 provinces, 136 districts/cities, and 664 villages. The conference produced nine transformation agendas for the realisation of gender equality, disability rights, and social inclusion, which were integrated into the 2025-2045 National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN). The 2024 Munas Perempuan was attended by over 4,000 participants from 35 provinces, 163 districts/cities, and 477 villages. This conference produced nine thematic policy summary documents which were submitted to the government for integration into medium-term development planning documents and strategic plans (Renstra) at national and regional levels.

Organisation and Advocacy Strategy of Munas Perempuan by Women's Organisations

The 2023 and 2024 Munas Perempuan were important events as they coincided with the preparation of the National Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPN 2025-2045), the National and Regional Long-Term Development Plans (RPJMN/RPJMD 2025-2029), and the strategic plans for ministries and institutions towards Indonesia Emas 2045. For women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups, this is an opportunity that must be fought for in order to voice their interests and ensure they are heard, recognised, and included in these documents.

Munas Perempuan's advocacy strategy involved collaborating with two ministries responsible for women's issues and development planning: the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KemenPPPA) and the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas/KPAPO). This collaboration combined the bottom-up approach to development planning initiated by women's and civil society organisations with the government's top-down approach. Based on the principles of equality and inclusive participation, this innovative model of development planning can drive transformative change in line with the Indonesian government's pentahelix approach to preparing planning documents.

Munas Perempuan is a joint effort to ensure that the voices of women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups are represented at every level of the planning forum. This is important because the higher up the planning forum you go, the fewer issues are proposed and the less representation there is. Through Munas Perempuan, it is hoped that women's and civil society organisations can directly oversee proposals from villages that are discussed and considered by national-level development planners.

The process of gathering the aspirations and needs of women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups took place through discussions and deliberations at regional (village/sub-district and district/city) and national levels. All organisations participating in this collective action gathered these aspirations in their respective regions. KAPAL Perempuan collected these aspirations through regional consultative meetings with partner organisations, including LPSDM-NTB, LBH PA-North Maluku, YKPM-South Sulawesi, KPS2K-East Java, PBT-West Sumatra, PEKA PM-NTT, Bali Sruti-Bali and BAKUMDIK-Banten, as well as Sekolah Perempuan in villages in these regions.

The Phases of Munas Perempuan

The advocacy process of Munas Perempuan consisted of six phases that reflect the principles of gender and development (Moser 2003), as well as intersectional awareness (Kabeer 2018).

The first phase, which involves collecting and analysing data, is a form of feminist knowledge production that shifts the development paradigm from statistics based on general population data to knowledge based on women's experiences. Using Moser's framework, this data records not only practical gender needs (e.g., basic services), but also paves the way for strategic gender needs that challenge patriarchal structures. The second phase, the regional deliberation, demonstrates intersectionality (Kabeer) because issues of gender, poverty, disability, and tradition are present simultaneously. This forum can also be considered a feminist counterpublic (Fraser 1990) in which grassroots women create an alternative space to formal state forums and express aspirations that are usually suppressed. The third phase, the drafting of policy recommendations, translates the community's voice into the format of a state document. Here, we observe the gap identified by Moser whereby experience-based

aspirations are often diminished when translated into technocratic development language. The fourth phase, the national deliberation, functions as a political arena in which marginalised groups can strengthen their bargaining position. It is not merely a ceremonial forum; rather, it is a means by which women and marginalised groups can claim feminist citizenship (Lister, 1997) and demand recognition as full citizens in the state planning process. The fifth phase, the drafting of thematic policy briefs, mediates between feminist knowledge and the language of the state. These briefs are political instruments that attempt to bridge the gap between feminist experiences and the logic of development indicators. The sixth phase, the drafting of follow-up action plans, emphasises that advocacy must not stop at symbolic representation (Pitkin, 1967). Kabeer's concept of intersectionality ensures that the voices of poor women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups are not lost in the homogenisation of 'women's issues', but are fairly represented in planning documents such as the RPJPN, RPJMN, and RPJMD.

Meaningful Participation of Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Marginalised Groups in the Preparation of the 2025-2045 RPJPN

Meaningful participation is regulated by Law Number 13 of 2022 on the Second Amendment to Law Number 12 of 2011 on the Formation of Laws and Regulations, as well as Constitutional Court Decision Number 91/PUU-XVIII/2020. The latter emphasises that:

"Strengthening meaningful engagement and participation is carried out in an orderly and responsible manner by fulfilling three prerequisites: first, the right to be heard; second, the right to be considered; and third, the right to receive an explanation or response to the opinion given (right to be explained)" (Law Number 13 of 2022 on the Second Amendment to Law Number 12 of 2011 on the Formation of Laws and Regulations, p. 2).

Munas Perempuan is an important forum that enables women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups to meaningfully participate in the drafting process for the RPJPN 2025-2045. It gives women from different backgrounds and rural areas the chance to express their concerns at regional and national levels, resulting in significant changes to the lives of many women. Munas Perempuan enables these groups to actively participate in the drafting of documents and decision-making processes related to national development planning.

"A mother from Papua, who took part in the Online Munas Perempuan on 26-27 March 2024 from her small village, said that she was very happy because she could convey her suggestions directly to policymakers at the national level (Online Munas Perempuan 2024)."

Armin, a disabled person from Southwest Sumba, who attended the meeting to raise awareness of women's issues and gain knowledge to help women in her community, expressed similar enthusiasm. During the interview, Armin said that women, especially those with disabilities, face many problems:

"In Sumba, many women are degraded in relation to customs. In villages, men hold power and sexual violence is common. Many customs demean women. Many women with disabilities are marginalised and struggle to access places that are accessible. When they are invited to events, they feel embarrassed and uncomfortable having to rely on men for help with things like using the bathroom (Munas Perempuan 2024)."

Munas Perempuan provides a space for women, including those with disabilities and marginalised groups such as Indigenous women, to express their aspirations and the issues they face. It also boosts their confidence and knowledge and gives them more experience in discussing and expressing their opinions. Furthermore, it provides a forum for establishing and strengthening networks between grassroots women, activists, civil society organisations, and the government. This was stated by KEMITRAAN programme staff during an interview with KAPAL Perempuan:

"Participation in Munas Perempuan has boosted the confidence of Indigenous women, as they have gained knowledge and experience in communicating with new people and government officials. When the Regent of Bungo visited the Anak Dalam tribe's fish harvest, organised by the women, they were no longer shy around him. Women who participated in Munas Perempuan expressed their joy and pride at having attended the event and made new acquaintances, including women from PEKKA, and learned about economic empowerment. They hope to participate in similar activities in the future (KEMITRAAN Programme Staff, Interview 2023)."

Munas Perempuan is considered a safe space for women to voice their opinions, and its national reach is recognised by women in government. The head of the East Lombok PPA UPTD said:

"Travelling together by road and sea with women activists and Sekolah Perempuan from two districts in East and North Lombok was a memorable experience. At the event venue in particular, many women from various regions jointly submitted proposals for women's interests in

development planning (Interview 2024, Head of UPTD PPA East Lombok)."

The meaningful participation of women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups in influencing national policy through Munas Perempuan has become an integral part of the public consultation process for drafting the 2025-2045 RPJPN. This indicates a positive

change in the realisation of transformative GEDSI policies in the future.

Figure 1 illustrates the contribution of Munas Perempuan to strengthening the integration of PUG, disability and social inclusion in public consultation activities within the government's 2025-2045 RPJPN drafting process.

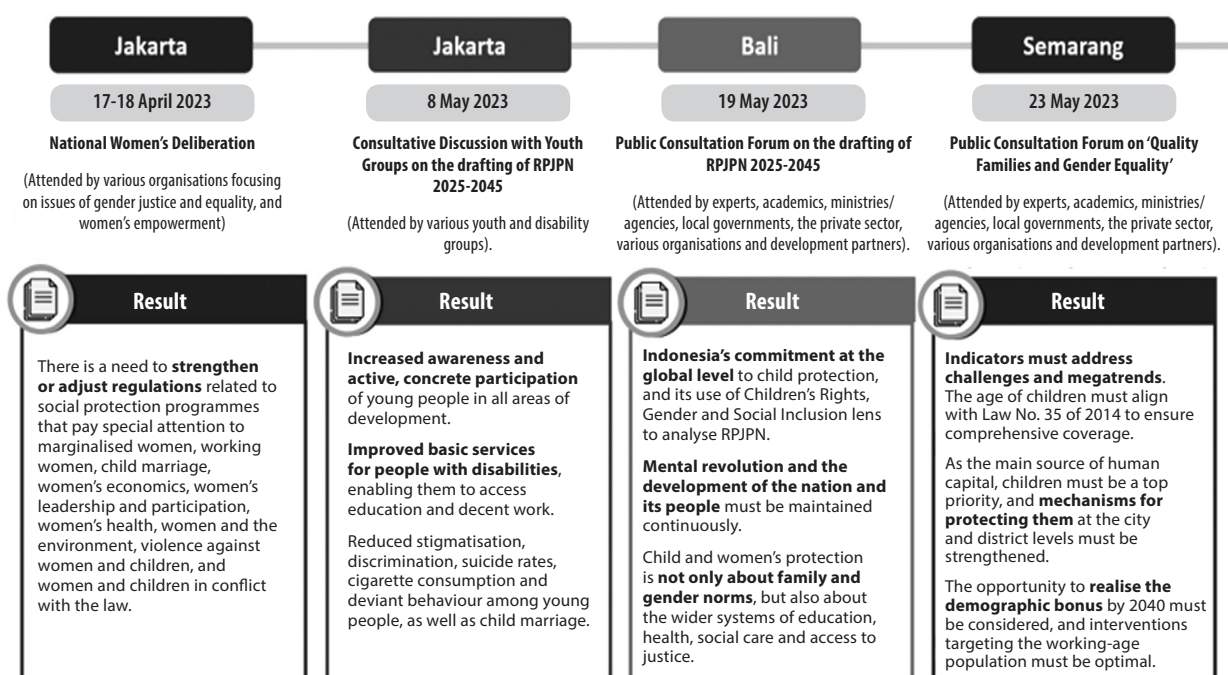


Figure 1. Munas Perempuan and Public Consultation on the 2025-2045 RPJPN

Source: Directorate of Family, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas. Meeting on the integration of the results of Munas Perempuan into the 2025-2045 RPJPN (2023)

As a collective action, Munas Perempuan represents a breakthrough in participatory and inclusive deliberation models. It provides women with ample opportunity to raise issues affecting women from diverse backgrounds, including those working in government. This demonstrates that, in order to open up participation opportunities for women from all walks of life and positions, which remain limited, a forum such as Munas Perempuan is needed. Munas Perempuan has proven capable of raising women's issues so that they can be heard, from remote areas to the national level.

The integration of the 9 Agendas for Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Marginalised Groups in the 2025-2045 RPJPN

The 1st Munas Perempuan resulted in the formulation of the 9 Agendas for Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Marginalised Groups from a GEDSI perspective. These agendas have been incorporated into the 2025-2045 RPJPN (see the image below), thereby reinforcing GEDSI integration and mainstreaming within the five strategic areas outlined in Figure 2.

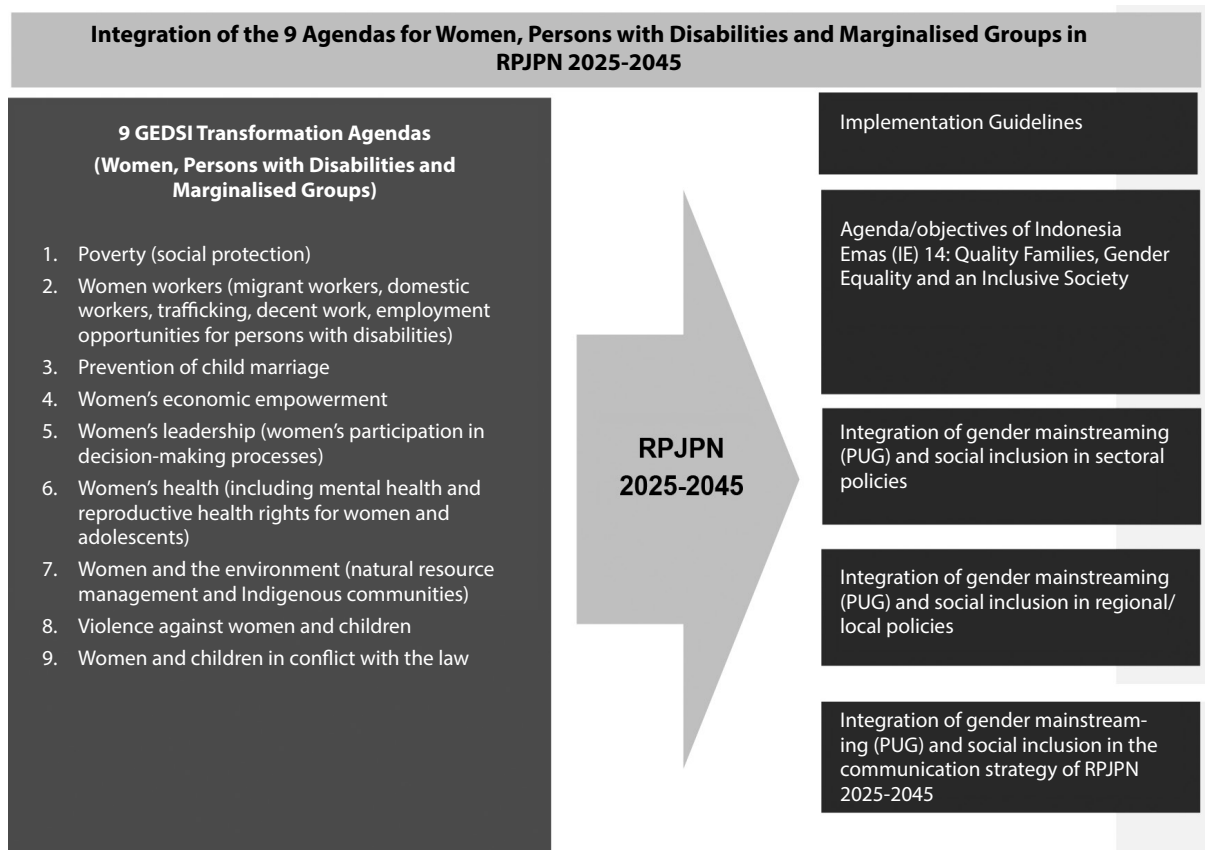


Figure 2. Integration of the 9 agendas for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups

Source: Directorate of Family, Women, Children, Youth and Sports, Ministry of National Development Planning/Bappenas. Lessons learned from Musrenbang, presented at the 'Musrenbang thematic discussion on Migrant Workers' in Depok on 20 December 2023

These nine agendas were subsequently refined for inclusion in the RPJMN and the Ministry's Strategic Plan. They were also discussed at the 2nd Munas Perempuan in March-April 2024. This took the form of an initial two-day online meeting, followed by an offline meeting in Badung, Bali. The agendas were then submitted to the Ministry of National Development Planning (Bappenas) via the Deputy for Human, Community, and Cultural Development at the Ministry of National Development Planning/ Bappenas. They were subsequently reformulated into a policy brief and submitted to the Bappenas KPAPO, who will forward them and follow up with the relevant ministries and institutions in the preparation of a five-year strategic plan (Renstra).

9 Agenda of Munas Perempuan: Voices of Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Marginalised Groups for Transformative Change

The results of Munas Perempuan were successfully compiled into a series of thematic issues. These included efforts to promote gender equality, disability rights and

social inclusion for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups. Based on GEDSI issues identified during data collection in the field and consultations with relevant stakeholders, civil society organisations and participants of Munas Perempuan formulated policy proposals. These proposals were then compiled into the nine agenda items of Munas Perempuan (see Figure 2), which the government will address.

First Agenda: Accelerating Social Protection Transformation for Poor Women and Marginalised Groups

Poverty among women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups remains the biggest challenge to achieving GEDSI and the SDGs. Problems include weak systems for collecting and synchronising data on social assistance recipients from central to village levels; overlapping distribution (inclusion and exclusion errors); potential irregularities by data collection and distribution personnel; and a lack of transparency and participation by women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups in social protection programme

processes. In order to overcome these challenges, reduce poverty among these groups and accelerate the transformation of social protection for poor women and marginalised groups, the government must: (1) expand social protection coverage through improved, integrated data quality; (2) transform social protection policies, institutions, implementation and governance to make them more transparent, participatory, accountable, inclusive and integrity-based; and (3) ensure the increased participation of women, persons with disabilities and marginalised and vulnerable groups in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of social protection policies using an intersectional approach.

Second agenda item: Ensuring the realisation of gender-responsive and inclusive decent work for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups

Women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups still face various obstacles and challenges in obtaining decent and dignified work that is gender-responsive and inclusive. Such work would help them to overcome poverty. Stigma and discrimination, employment policies (including the Omnibus Law on Job Creation) and inadequate social protection further marginalise and exclude them from the employment ecosystem in both the formal and informal sectors. As workers, they often do not receive equal pay and frequently experience various forms of violence. Difficult access to justice, as well as low levels of supervision and sanctions in the labour sector, further weaken their position. The limited availability of gender-responsive and inclusive data makes it difficult for the government to understand and address the issues and needs of these groups with regard to decent work. These issues were the main topics raised and discussed by grassroots women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups at Munas Perempuan. They presented the government with various strategic proposals to ensure decent work that is gender-responsive and inclusive for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups, including: (1) Strengthening gender-responsive and inclusive regulatory governance; (2) Strengthening and expanding access to social protection for women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups; (3) Ensuring the availability of gender-responsive and inclusive data; (4) Provision and improvement of the quality and quantity of GEDSI-oriented facilities, including health and other supporting facilities; (5) Improvement of training and education services that are adequate, measurable and aligned with

the work requirements of female workers, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups; and (6) Improvement of policies that protect female workers, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups.

Third agenda: Prevention and Elimination of Child Marriage

The rate of child marriage in Indonesia, defined as marriage before the age of 19, remains very high and is in fact the highest in the ASEAN region. This was one of the gender issues of great concern at Munas Perempuan. Child marriage can affect the quality of Indonesia's young people, threatening both the demographic bonus and Indonesia Emas 2045. The high rates of child marriage are caused by a complex interplay of issues relating to children's capacity, parenting patterns, social interactions, poverty, traditions and customs, as well as the government's efforts to overcome them. The situation is further complicated by the fact that child marriage is permitted to continue, with religious courts in some provinces granting dispensations for reasons that do not prioritise the best interests of the child. Ninety-nine per cent of marriage dispensation requests submitted to the courts are granted by judges. However, only 55 per cent of the reasons given by judges for granting marriage dispensations were that the two children loved each other and that the children were at risk of violating religious values and social norms (Analysis of marriage dispensation case decisions by AIPJ2 from 2018 to 2019).

The judge's decision, coupled with the non-application of Law No. 22 of 2022 on Sexual Violence Crimes, which imposes criminal sanctions and fines on child marriage, has resulted in the practice continuing. This is reinforced by research conducted by PERMAMPU (2024), which shows that the provisions in the Marriage Law seem ineffective, as child marriage and marriage under the age of 19 continue to occur for various reasons, with loopholes being exploited to facilitate such marriages. Furthermore, the study states that, as the requirements for obtaining a dispensation are complex, not applying for one is the solution as there are no sanctions. Consequently, marriages at that age still take place, albeit according to custom and within the family. The consequence is that social sanctions are accepted for not holding a wedding party.

Grassroots women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups have voiced their concerns and made the following policy recommendations to the government. In the community sphere, they recommended strengthening the resilience of children

and families to defend against child marriage, and fostering a community environment that prevents it. In the governmental sphere, they recommended the following: (1) tightening dispensations for child marriage; (2) the newly enacted Law on Sexual Violence Crimes (TPKS Law), which stipulates that child marriage is considered forced marriage and is punishable by up to nine years' imprisonment (Article 10 of TPKS Law Number 12 of 2022); (3) strengthening supervision of unregistered marriages, whether claimed to be customary or religious; and (4) strengthening supervision of the manipulation of identity documents in the marriage registration system, such as changes to age and delays to registration.

Ongoing PERMAMPU Consortium research on child marriage and the age of 19 suggests that Law No. 6 of 2019 is effective. However, child marriage still occurs for various reasons and uses various loopholes to get the marriage approved. Marriage dispensations, which are intended to prevent child marriage, are not sought because the requirements are considered too complicated, making it easier to avoid applying for one. Under the law, child marriage is not considered a punishable offence. Child marriage continues to take place, even within families, and there are social sanctions for not holding a wedding party. This study proposes that dispensations should only be granted for legal reasons, such as in cases of pregnancy, where a marriage certificate is required to obtain a child's birth certificate.

Fourth Agenda: Acceleration and Strengthening of the Economy of Women and Marginalised Groups

The pandemic has caused women to fall behind in the labour market. SMERU (2021, p. 3) reports that during the pandemic, women-owned MSMEs experienced the following: a) more than 60 per cent experienced a 40 per cent decline in income at the start of the pandemic; b) 19 per cent experienced an increase in unpaid domestic work, compared to 11 per cent of men; c) women-owned MSMEs, especially those with an informal status, received the fewest benefits from government programmes; and d) women-owned MSMEs mostly relied on their own ability to learn independently (87 per cent) and on being taught by friends or family (35 per cent) to develop their technological literacy.

However, the Indonesian government's commitment to economic transformation, as reflected in its tagline 'Inclusive and Sustainable Economy', does not appear to have been widely felt, particularly among women,

people with disabilities, and marginalised MSME groups. Contributing factors include the difficulty women and marginalised groups face in accessing capital and information, their limited involvement in strengthening entrepreneurial and technological capacities, and their exclusion from economic transformation policymaking processes. Additionally, there is limited budgetary commitment to strengthening the value chain of businesses run by women and marginalised groups.

To accelerate the economic empowerment of women and marginalised groups and ensure no one is left behind in economic development over the next five years, grassroots women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups have formulated the following policy proposals and presented them to the government: (1) Strengthening regulations; (2) Developing a single database for MSMEs; (3) Building a sustainable economic system and ecosystem; and (4) Strengthening capital. When carrying out economic transformation, the government should also focus on three key aspects: first, strengthening inclusive economic policies and governance; second, building an inclusive and sustainable economic system and ecosystem; and third, strengthening the capacity of women and marginalised groups involved in cooperatives and MSMEs.

Fifth Agenda: Realising Meaningful Leadership and Participation for Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Marginalised Groups in Gender-Responsive and Inclusive Development Planning

The limited opportunities and access that women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups have in decision-making processes, including development planning, as well as the lack of recognition of these groups' leadership in achieving gender-responsive and inclusive development planning, are some of the biggest challenges to achieving gender and disability equality, as well as social inclusion. The limited availability of disaggregated data for gender-responsive and inclusive development planning and the suboptimal implementation of gender mainstreaming and social inclusion strategies further hinder transformative change and meaningful leadership and participation for these groups in development planning, as revealed at Munas Perempuan.

To address these issues, Munas Perempuan formulated the following policy proposals for transformative change: First, to increase women's representation in development planning deliberations at all levels. Second, to increase the availability of data

on issues relating to women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups. Third is to improve policy governance. Finally, the fourth is to improve the provision and quality of gender-responsive and disability-inclusive infrastructure. Fourthly, empowerment programmes for women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups should be improved to strengthen their capacity and participation in development planning. Sixthly, a forum should be established to monitor the implementation of plans, with women's participation in development planning serving as an indicator of gender inequality.

Sixth Agenda: Ensuring Access to and Quality of Health Services for Women, Persons with Disabilities, and Marginalised Groups

Limited access to gender-responsive, inclusive and acceptable health services remains a major challenge to improving the health of women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups. These factors are believed to contribute to high maternal and infant mortality rates, with stunting prevalence still above 20 per cent. This issue was the main topic of discussion at Munas Perempuan.

Relating to this issue, various problems include a lack of infrastructure, health facilities and health workers for poor women and women with disabilities, particularly in remote areas, on islands, and within Indigenous communities. Furthermore, many people still do not have access to reproductive health services for women, adolescents, the elderly and people with disabilities. Women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups often lack full access to information and knowledge about reproductive health, including reproductive health rights, the vulnerability of the reproductive organs, menstrual management, the impact of unwanted pregnancies and anaemia on adolescents, nutrition, HIV/AIDS, the early detection of cancer and sexual violence. Services for adolescents and the elderly in villages and schools are also not yet optimal, leading to high rates of unwanted pregnancies and adolescents being vulnerable to violence, including dating violence, sexual violence, and online gender-based violence (KBGO).

Women, people with disabilities, marginalised groups and civil society organisations are calling on the government to address this issue seriously and fulfil its commitments by implementing transformative GEDSI policies, programmes, budgets and activities, including:

(1) establishing standards for accessible and inclusive health services, infrastructure, and facilities for all women, including those with disabilities, adolescents, and the elderly, particularly in remote and island communities; (2) improving access to, and the quality of, health and reproductive health services for mothers and children, adolescents, the elderly, and persons with disabilities; and (3) optimising reproductive health services for adolescents and women with disabilities.

Seventh Agenda: Protection and Fulfilment of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Women in Gender-Responsive, Inclusive, and Sustainable Natural Resource Management

As a marginalised group, Indigenous women play a significant role in achieving these goals. The government recognises the importance of gender equality, an inclusive society and socio-cultural and ecological resilience. This includes protecting women's rights and conserving the environment. These are integral to the government's policy direction and priorities for realising Indonesia Emas 2045 and achieving the 2030 SDGs. However, Indigenous communities and women still face many problems and challenges in obtaining protection and the fulfilment of their rights in resource management. These issues include spatial conflicts, the marginalisation of Indigenous communities and women, and the threat of environmental degradation and natural disasters resulting from the climate crisis. These issues must be addressed through mitigation programmes focused on economic empowerment, such as equitable distribution. Furthermore, women's communities still lack legal recognition and protection — a situation requiring careful attention due to ongoing discrimination.

To ensure the protection and fulfilment of the rights of Indigenous peoples and women in the management of natural resources in a gender-responsive, inclusive, and sustainable manner, Munas Perempuan developed several policy proposals for the government to consider. The policy proposals are as follows: (1) Increasing the participation of Indigenous women in development agendas and disaster management; (2) Increasing guarantees for Indigenous communities to manage their land and natural resources, especially for Indigenous women, through the recognition of Indigenous forests; (3) providing legal protection for Indigenous women's communities; and (4) Enhancing economic empowerment and educational equity programmes.

Eighth Agenda: Violence against Women

Grassroots women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups shared their views and aspirations regarding violence against women and girls, including those with disabilities and the elderly. Participants at Munas Perempuan stated that efforts to reduce violence against women through the 2004 Domestic Violence Law (KDRT) and the 2022 Law on Sexual Violence Crimes continue to face significant challenges. The rate of violence against women and girls with disabilities remains high, and services for preventing, handling and helping victims of violence recover still lack adequate coverage, scope, and quality. This situation negatively affects the quality of life and empowerment of female survivors of violence, as well as overall development.

According to the National Commission on Violence Against Women's (Komnas Perempuan) 2024 Year-End Report, the number of cases of violence against women in 2023 was 289,111, a decrease of 55,920 cases (approximately 12 per cent) compared to 2022. Meanwhile, the number of cases of violence against women recorded in the data systems of three institutions throughout 2023 reached 34,682 victims. Data from SintasPuan and Titian Perempuan reveal that violence against women predominantly occurs within the personal sphere. The highest number of cases was sexual violence (15,621), followed by psychological violence (12,878) and physical violence (11,099).

In order to fulfil women's rights and protect them from all forms of violence, participants at Munas Perempuan formulated policy proposals to be submitted to the government, with the aim of making transformative changes that are gender-responsive and inclusive for the prevention, handling and remediation of victims of violence. (1) Strengthening regulations for the comprehensive implementation of the Sexual Violence Crimes Law (TPKS Law), including overseeing the drafting and enactment of TPKS Law derivative regulations; (2) Fulfilment and expansion of the reach and coverage of GEDSI-responsive UPTD PPA (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection) and PPA Unit (District and Sub-District Police) services across all districts and cities; (3) Optimisation of services for victims of violence; and (4) Strengthening of efforts to prevent violence against women.

Agenda 9: Protection of Women and Children in Conflict with the Law

The protection of women and children in conflict with the law remains inadequate. The results of

Munas Perempuan show that prison/ rehabilitation facility occupancy is generally very low. Consequently, overcrowding is an issue. With occupancy at 189 per cent of capacity, there is an excess of 89 per cent (Laoly 2024). This also means that there are disproportionate numbers of correctional officers and service personnel, resulting in suboptimal service quality and availability. Women and children in conflict with the law are placed in various male rehabilitation facilities, which often fail to address their physical and psychological needs, particularly those with disabilities.

Women and children in conflict with the law still do not fully enjoy their rights to education, life skills, health and protection from sexual violence. Furthermore, there is a shortage of experts, such as psychologists and psychiatrists, who can evaluate victims' conditions at trials. Indeed, such experts are required to provide psychiatric assessments of the psychological impact. Furthermore, not all indictments and charges include social analysis, assessment of women, and the perpetrator's children.

Additionally, women in prisons still find it very difficult to access reproductive health services, particularly sanitary products during menstruation. Mental health services for female offenders are generally inadequate and do not accommodate those with disabilities. Counselling and psychosocial services for female offenders are not always available in women's prisons or other detention facilities. In practice, perpetrators are punished by imprisonment. However, law enforcement officials have not considered the physical and psychological impacts experienced by female victims, nor have they considered providing compensation or an integrated recovery process.¹

At Munas Perempuan, participants urged the government to improve the protection and fulfilment of the rights of women and children in conflict with the law. They also formulated the following policy proposals: (1) Strengthening access to services for women and children in conflict with the law (facilities and human resources); (2) Strengthening services and guidance programmes; and (3) Strengthening community empowerment and eliminating stigma against women and children in conflict with the law.

Policy Implications

The 2025-2045 RPJPN incorporates gender equality into the 17 objectives of the Indonesia Emas development plan, forming the basis of social, cultural

and ecological resilience as set out in Indonesia Emas 14 (IE.14) on 'Quality Families, Gender Equality and Inclusive Communities'. This demonstrates that gender mainstreaming and social inclusion are integral to sustainable and inclusive national development efforts. This commitment aims to ensure that all development sectors pay attention not only to the general welfare of society, but also to justice and equality for all, including women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups. However, although gender equality is included in the official goals, Moser (2003) points out that policy clauses often only address practical needs rather than transformative strategies that challenge patriarchal structures.

The 2025-2029 RPJMN states that improving the quality of human resources and human development involves placing people and society at the centre of development efforts. Prioritising human development enables a country to build a strong foundation for sustainable economic, social and political progress. A transformation in development is needed to improve the quality of life throughout the life cycle and create a more prosperous, just and cohesive society.

Comprehensive human development is based on fulfilling basic needs, developing human capital, and developing social and cultural capital. These three pillars are supported by a life-cycle approach, gender mainstreaming, social inclusion, and balanced population growth. One of the RPJMN's five development priorities is gender mainstreaming and social inclusion. Gender mainstreaming and social inclusion strategies (PUG and Social Inclusion) are employed to improve gender equality and strengthen the role of women, young people, and people with disabilities. These strategies provide equal opportunities for women and men, young people, children, people with disabilities, the elderly, Indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups. The aim is to improve access to resources for all groups, encourage their active and meaningful participation in voicing their aspirations and needs, and involve them in decision-making processes so that they benefit from development outcomes (RPJMN 2025-2029, p. 81).

There are various challenges in the implementation process. At the regional and national levels, several issues have been identified, including: 1) Deep social and cultural inequalities, particularly patriarchal norms and cultures that influence individuals, families, communities and even the state. Religion and customs also reinforce the subjugation of women, limiting

them to traditional roles and preventing them from participating in decision-making processes in both the private and public spheres. 2) Budget cuts for gender-related programmes pose a significant challenge to gender mainstreaming. Inadequate budget allocation for gender-based programmes eliminates protection guarantees for vulnerable groups, especially women and children. This also occurs within the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, whose performance in carrying out its duties, particularly with regard to providing assistance, outreach, and rehabilitation services for victims, has been suboptimal. 3) Gender issues have not become a key part of the government's agenda. Various issues affecting women and children, such as child marriage and sexual violence, have received little attention, demonstrating the government's low commitment to gender equality.

This challenge continues to be encountered at various National Policy Forums. The biggest challenge in amplifying women's voices is the lack of access and opportunities for women, including persons with disabilities and marginalised groups, to participate actively and meaningfully in national policy forums. This lack of participation is evident in three ways: first, the small number of participants; second, the absence of proposals representing their interests; and third, their weak bargaining position when it comes to influencing decision-making processes. Although various strategies and initiatives have been developed to address gender issues, many remain unresolved. One of the main causes is the institutionalisation of patriarchal culture, unequal power relations, ableism and discrimination against women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups in perspectives, daily practices and policies in various areas of life and sectors of socio-cultural, economic and political development.

In Indonesia's bottom-up development planning system, which involves a consultative process from village to national level, women, people with disabilities and marginalised groups should have ample opportunity to express their views. In reality, however, a process of domestication occurs. Women are often only present to take care of food and administration, meaning they are given almost no opportunity to participate in decision-making and are automatically represented only by the PKK.

Women with various sensory, physical, mental, and intellectual impairments were almost entirely absent from the deliberation process. This was particularly true of women with psychosocial disabilities in rehabilitation

centres, whose restricted movement limited their access to information and decision-making processes. Additionally, transgender women face discrimination and intimidation, preventing them from participating actively and meaningfully in national policy forums. Transgender women who attended Munas Perempuan from the Riau Islands stated that:

"Many people still intimidate and discriminate against transgender women in the workplace. Our hope is that they will be economically empowered, which will enable them to express themselves and be accepted in society. We are grateful if the government has accepted us. I will continue to educate transgender women and encourage them to stay positive (Munas Perempuan April 2024, transgender participant from the Riau Islands)."

Limited accessible and inclusive infrastructure and inter-island transport facilities remain a major obstacle for women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups when it comes to participating in policy-making forums. The story of a Mentawai Indigenous woman participant who travelled for four days to attend Munas Perempuan illustrates the intersectional dimensions of geographical, cultural, class and gender barriers that reinforce exclusion (Kabeer 2018). However, this exhausting experience transformed fear into political courage.

"The journey to Denpasar to attend Munas Perempuan on 20 April 2024 took four days by land, sea and air. My body felt shaken and broken, but once I arrived at the event, I was amazed. I was amazed by the number of women present who had the opportunity to speak up. This was a far cry from the situation of women in her community, who were in a vulnerable position. Meetings in the village to discuss development plans were considered futile. This experience taught me a valuable lesson: I had just left the village and was flying for the first time, which helped me to overcome my fear of travelling. Attending Munas Perempuan inspired me to share the results with my female friends, encouraging them to find the courage to speak up (Munas Perempuan April 2024, Nubay, an Indigenous Mentawai woman)."

For Indigenous women, travelling long distances from home can be frightening and worrying. However, it also teaches them courage and resilience in the face of adversity. Another challenge they face is that women who want to leave their villages must obtain permission from traditional leaders and their families. Even if they are given permission, they must be accompanied by a man. The journey through the forest can also be fraught with heavy rain, which may force them to cancel their trip. These challenging experiences have made women even more resilient. Leaving their remote villages or regions increases women's mobility, adding to their

experience, knowledge, networks, enthusiasm and courage. It also helps them adapt to new environments. They share these experiences with the women in their communities, inspiring them to voice their interests more courageously.

Despite facing these challenges, women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups from various regions in Indonesia refused to give up and attended Munas Perempuan with great enthusiasm. They viewed it as a strategic forum that brought women together directly with decision-makers at district, provincial and national levels to discuss important issues and express their interests and aspirations in national policy. Women's organisations and their national and regional networks play a vital role in amplifying the voices, interests and aspirations of women from diverse backgrounds, including disabled women, Indigenous women, and marginalised, poor women living in remote areas.

Munas Perempuan is a strategic forum that plays a vital role in addressing the aspirations and interests of women, as well as the needs of various sections of society, particularly grassroots women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups. It provides a platform for excluded groups at local and national levels to express their needs, challenges, and aspirations relating to various aspects of life, including economics, social issues, politics, health, education, and human rights.

It enables women from disadvantaged backgrounds, including rural women, poor women, women with disabilities, Indigenous women, and women from ethnic minorities, to express their experiences and aspirations concerning their daily lives and rights.

Through this forum, the voices of grassroots women, including those with disabilities, children, the elderly, and other marginalised groups, can reach the national level and influence public policies, laws, and regulations that better respond to their needs. It also enables the government, non-governmental organisations, and international organisations to understand better the issues faced by women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups at all levels.

The integration of the nine agendas resulting from Munas Perempuan into the 2025-2045 RPJPN demonstrates that Munas Perempuan is a strategic forum for increasing participation and ensuring that the government recognises and accommodates the voices of women, people with disabilities, and

marginalised groups. This will significantly contribute to bringing about transformative change in realising gender equality, disability rights, and social inclusion in development over the next twenty years.

Closing

To achieve fair, equitable, and inclusive development, the meaningful participation of women, people with disabilities, and marginalised groups must underpin every stage of policy planning and implementation. It is not enough to simply have them present; we must recognise the rights, voices, and experiences that have long been marginalised by masculine development structures and social exclusion.

The 2023 and 2024 Munas Perempuan demonstrate that collective action by grassroots women has the power to transform national development dynamics. Integrating the nine Munas Perempuan agendas into the 2025-2045 RPJPN and ratifying the Minister of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection's Decree No. 138/2024 are examples of feminist counterpublic practices (Fraser 1990). These practices expand the space for democracy and encourage a paradigm shift from PUG to PUGIS. This shift reflects intersectional awareness (Kabeer 2018), whereby gender issues cannot be separated from experiences of disability, poverty and social marginalisation.

To ensure a greater role for women in development decision-making, inclusive policies must be implemented. Several strategic steps include: 1) strengthening women's representation through a minimum quota of 30 per cent; 2) providing critical education to strengthen women's leadership skills; 3) integrating gender and social inclusion perspectives into the planning process; 4) engaging women in gender-responsive budgeting; 5) empowering women economically to achieve independence; 6) implementing anti-discrimination policies within the government; 7) establishing mechanisms to monitor and evaluate women's participation.

The success of these policies depends on collaboration between various stakeholders, including grassroots women, civil society organisations, and the government, based on the principles of equality, transparency, and shared ownership. However, implementation challenges, structural resistance, and patriarchal culture remain obstacles. This is where the Gender and Development approach (Moser 2003) comes in: without changes to decision-making structures,

policies will continue to fail to achieve substantive equality. The achievements of Munas Perempuan are not the endpoint. The challenge ahead is to ensure that the voices and needs of women, persons with disabilities and marginalised groups are truly reflected in policy. Therefore, Munas Perempuan must continue to be supported as a strategic forum that bridges the gap between civil society and the state in promoting the GEDSI agenda.

The success of Munas Perempuan hinged on the following supporting factors: 1) The existence of a common goal to achieve gender equality, disability equality and social inclusion. All parties involved, including women, persons with disabilities, marginalised groups at the grassroots level and the government, agreed upon this goal from the outset. 2) Ownership: A strong sense of ownership of the importance of Munas Perempuan among all stakeholders, including those at the grassroots level and the government. This ownership was demonstrated through the implementation of respective commitments based on the principles of fair, equal, participatory, transparent, and sustainable partnerships. 3) Momentum: Munas Perempuan was held at the right time, in line with the formulation of long- and medium-term development plans and government work plans. 4) Opportunity: Munas Perempuan provided fair, equal and inclusive opportunities and access for all stakeholders to participate in the decision-making process, enabling them to voice their opinions, aspirations and needs through transparent, collaborative and inclusive development planning processes at all levels, both nationally and regionally. 5) Knowledge sharing and capacity development: Munas Perempuan served as an inclusive and participatory forum where all stakeholders could share knowledge and develop their ability to create gender-responsive and inclusive development plans using the relatively new Gender, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) approach.

History shows that women are transformative agents of change who play a decisive role in shaping national policy. The voices and movements of grassroots women, consolidated within Munas Perempuan, have proven influential in shaping long-term development planning documents over the past two decades. Therefore, the meaningful participation of women, persons with disabilities, and marginalised groups must be seen as an integral part of feminist citizenship, rather than merely an addition to policy.

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- 1 INKLUSI. 2024. Policy Brief: Agenda 9: Women and Children in Conflict with the Law. Protection of Women and Children in Conflict with the Law.

