

Selangor's 30pct women's quota a step the right way

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The All Women Action Society (Awam) welcomes the state of Selangor's initiative to make it compulsory to have 30 percent of members of the local council be women, from the Jan 1, 2014.

This is a necessary step to even out an uneven playing field as women's representation in politics has consistently been poor.

However, Awam would also like to highlight that there still exists systemic obstacles to women's political participation.

Implementing this quota is but one step towards substantive equality.

While laws, policies and programmes need to be in place, formal equality is often not sufficient to ensure that women enjoy equality on the same basis as men.

There needs to be both equality of access to opportunities and equality of results.

We recognise that public and political spaces continue to be hostile towards women.

There must be measures such as training for women in junior or middle management positions to equip women with relevant skills, as well as political will to speak up when women's access to public and political spaces are being curtailed through moral policing and other negative stereotyping.

Diversity in representation is crucial as it makes for better decision-making and helps build a democracy and a political culture that represents diverse interests and values.

A holistic approach in empowering women and providing an enabling environment is required to ensure the equal representation of women in politics.

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