



Economic security still among top challenges for gender equality — US VP Harris

By Kaycee Valmonte – November 21, 2022

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MANILA, Philippines — Achieving economic or financial security is still one of the top challenges for equality among genders, United States Vice President Kamala Harris noted.

Harris spoke to civil society leaders, students, and organization representatives in Sofitel Manila in Pasay City on Monday about the role of women empowerment in ensuring the development of a democracy and society. The vice president has a background on working on gender issues as well as advocating for women and girls.

"I think we all know I feel very strongly you lift up the economic status of a woman, her family will be lifted, her community will be lifted, all of society will benefit. Lift up the economic status of women and all of society benefits," Harris said.

According to a Philippine Institute for Development Studies paper released in August, women earn 18.4% less than men even in digital jobs that are seen as more accessible to women who may also be expected to perform house and care work. Authors of the study said "cultural barriers lead women to lower-complexity and lower-waged jobs."

Harris noted the correlation between the economic status of women and gender violence — where women in abusive environments often get stuck in the relationship because of economic dependency, therefore affecting their children as well.

This then hampers women from creating opportunities for themselves, such as in areas like business, she said.

"When we connect these issues, there is the connection between what should be a human right to live free from fear, to live in a safe situation that allows one to then thrive around things like having an idea of being innovative... to be able to start something and grow it," Harris said.

The Office of the Vice President on Sunday previously announced that the US International Development Finance Corp. will be providing a \$15.5 million loan to Citibank through a loan guarantee in a bid to support ASA Philippines Foundation, which is a microfinance institution that helps women entrepreneur with accessing capital.

"That is one of the ways that we must be very targeted in our approach to to measure and assess whether women have equal opportunity to have access to capital to start a business," Harris said.