

pension income for men than women; and 3) there was skewed budget allocation towards defense expenditures, which were no longer necessary. In order to address these issues, the government amended the Pension Fund Law to make pension contributions of women and men equal, and defense expenditures were reduced from 9.1% of the budget in 1992-93 to 5.7% in 1997-98.¹⁵

IV. LEGISLATIVE STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES IN THE CEDAW SEAP COUNTRIES

A. Initiating and Drafting Legislation – Government Institutions

As earlier mentioned, in parliamentary and some presidential systems of government, members of the executive branch, also sometimes referred to as the “government,” and MPs have the same right to initiate legislation although most of the time, the government introduces the majority of bills. Such is the case in countries like Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia, Thailand and Timor-Leste.

The **drafting of a bill** is a strategic entry point for mainstreaming gender in legislation. Whether the bill originates from government or parliament, most of them have the following structures: 1) **an internal Drafting Board, legal office or legal bureau** composed of legal and technical staff who reviews the purpose of the bill and the issues involved, identifies gaps of existing policies, solicits the views of relevant stakeholders, prepares the narrative and introductory/explanatory note, and writes an initial draft of the bill; 2) **the Ministry of Law and Justice or a Government Working Group** which advises on the legal aspects of the bill and even the use of technical language; 3) **an Inter-Ministerial Committee**, convened if the bill or proposed legislation covers a number of sectoral ministries; 4) a **Council of Jurists or Office of Legislative Support Services** (for both the government and the National Assembly) which may be attached to the Office of the Prime Minister and provides legal assistance to the drafters of the bill. **Table 2** summarizes the structures involved in the initiation and drafting of bills in the seven CEDAW-SEAP countries:

15. Staphenhurst, R. and Nora, L., 'Case Study: South Africa Gender Budget Initiative', Initiative for Inclusive Security, 2006.