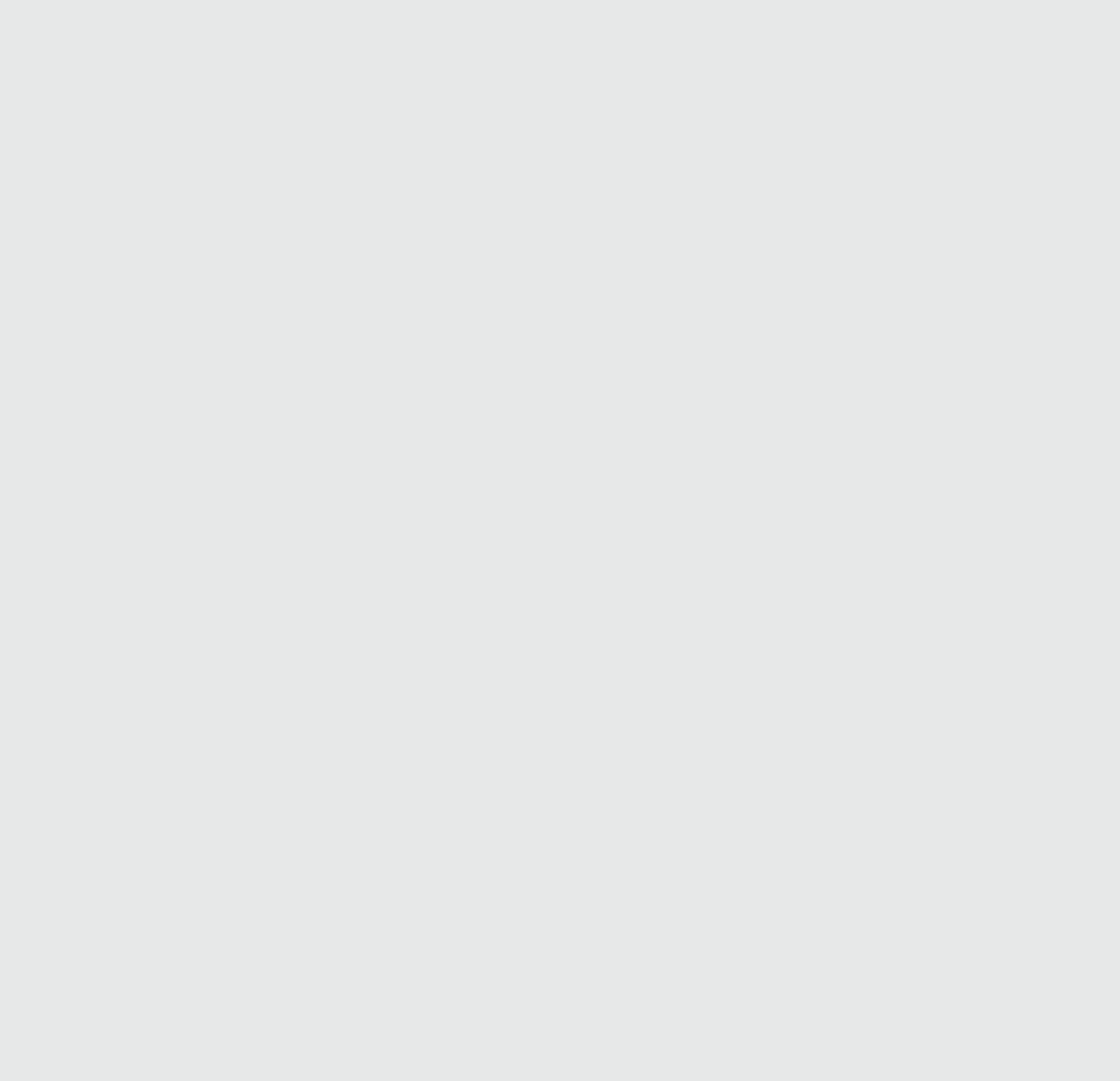




# EMPOWERING WOMEN FOR STRONGER POLITICAL PARTIES

A GUIDEBOOK  
TO PROMOTE  
WOMEN'S POLITICAL  
PARTICIPATION





United Nations Development Programme  
National Democratic Institute  
for International Affairs

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**LEAD AUTHOR**

Julie Ballington

**CONTRIBUTORS  
AND CASE STUDY  
AUTHORS**

Randi Davis

Mireya Reith

Lincoln Mitchell

Carole Njoki

Alyson Kozma

Elizabeth Powley

**COPY EDITOR**

Manuela Popovici

**DESIGN**

Suazion, Inc.

**COVER IMAGE**

UNCDF Adam Rogers

**PRODUCTION**

Graphics Service  
Bureau, Inc.

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# FOREWORD

## UNDP

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights; they are also imperative for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Women's political participation is central to these goals, and political parties are among the most important institutions for promoting and nurturing such participation. With less than twenty per cent of the world's parliamentary seats occupied by women, it is clear that political parties need to do more—and should be assisted in those efforts—to support women's political empowerment.

Globally, although forty to fifty per cent of party members are women, women hold only about ten per cent of the leadership positions within those parties. Ensuring women's equal participation in the decision-making structures of parties is essential for promoting gender equality within them – and, ultimately, within society as a whole.

Over a period of eighteen months, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) compiled twenty case studies of party activities to promote women's political empowerment. Drawing on those and other examples, UNDP and the NDI identified concrete steps which can be taken by political parties to promote women in political life. This publication, *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation*, is the fruit of this research, and provides concise and targeted options for political party reform.

This Guidebook is the first of its kind to identify and categorise the range of actions which political parties can take to support women's participation during different phases of the electoral cycle, including during the pre- and post- election phases.

The Guidebook is targeted to members of political parties, particularly those in leadership roles, and to civil society organizations and gender equality activists. It is also intended to encourage global political party foundations and alliances to embrace gender equality as a norm in their constitutions and their work.

Finally, the Guidebook gives valuable guidance to those international organizations and development agencies which provide programming support to political parties in relation to women's political participation.

When women have a real voice in all governance institutions, from the political to those in the civil service, the private sector, and civil society, they will be able to participate equally with men in public dialogue, and influence the decisions which determine their own future and that of their families, communities, and nations.



Helen Clark  
Administrator  
United Nations Development Programme

# FOREWORD

## NDI

Political parties are the primary and most direct vehicle through which women can access elected office and political leadership, therefore, the structures, policies, practices and values of political parties have a profound impact on the level of women's participation in political life of their country.

Parties that take women's political participation seriously benefit from stronger electoral positions, access to new groups of voters, and stronger relationships with their constituents. Additionally, parties that can produce new faces and ideas maintain a vibrant and energized image in an age of declining voter turnout. Some results are dramatic, some are subtle and some are achieved progressively, but the overall outcome for political parties is a net gain in every case.

Political parties gain when women not only participate in the electoral and governing processes, but also influence them. Superficial efforts to increase the number of women involved in politics that offer no real qualitative influence or decision-making powers are unlikely to produce any new or immediate benefits. Typical examples of such efforts include women's wings without statutory authority or sway; the selection of so-called female place holders on candidate lists; the marginalization of female officials once they are elected; placing women in un-electable districts as candidates; or removing women from viable positions on candidate lists at the last minute.

The universal trend is towards democratic governance based on parity and equality among sexes. Outreach to traditionally under-represented groups, such as women, is now considered a minimum standard for the democratic functioning of political parties and for the legislative bodies within which they operate.

This publication, *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation*, is organized in such a way that political parties and those working with parties to increase women's political involvement can find strategies to use throughout the electoral cycle and across roles in political parties. Women's participation may be promoted not only as candidates, but also as party members, leaders, and office holders.

For more than 25 years, the National Democratic Institute has worked with more than 720 political parties and organizations in more than 80 countries to create more open political environments in which men and women can actively participate in the democratic process. We hope this Guidebook will help contribute to this effort.



Ken Wollack

President

National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

**ACRONYMS**

ANC	African National Congress, South Africa	NDP	New Democratic Party, Canada
ANCWL	African National Congress Women’s League, South Africa	NFDW	National Federation of Democratic Women, USA
ALP	Australian Labor Party	NLWN	National Labor Women’s Network, Australia
ASPARLEXSAL	Association of Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians, El Salvador	NOW	National Organization for Women, USA
BJP	Bhatariya Janata Party, India	NWPC	National Women’s Political Caucus, USA
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action	OAS	Organization of American States
CDP	Congress for Democracy and Progress, Burkina Faso	ODIHR	OSCE’s Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
CDU	Christian Democratic Union, Germany	OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women	PAC	Citizens’ Action Party, Costa Rica
COFIPE	Federal Code on Electoral Institutions and Procedures, Mexico	PAN	National Action Party, Mexico
CPP	Cambodian People’s Party	PDIP	Democratic Party of Struggle, Indonesia
CSO	Civil Society Organization	PPC	Christian People’s Party, Peru
CSV	The Christian Social People’s Party, Luxembourg	PPS	Party of Progress and Socialism, Morocco
DAW	United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women	PR	Party of the Republic, Brazil
EMB	Electoral Management Body	PRD	Party of the Democratic Revolution, Mexico
EMILY’s List	Early Money is Like Yeast	PRI	Institutional Revolutionary Party, Mexico
ERA	Equal Rights Amendment, USA	PSOE	Socialist Workers’ Party, Spain
EU	European Union	PUSC	Christian-Social Unity Party, Costa Rica
FMLN	Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation, El Salvador	RPF	Rwandan Patriotic Front
FRELIMO	Liberation Front of Mozambique	SADC	Southern African Development Community
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union	SDP	Social Democratic Party, Croatia
IDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	SDWF	Social Democratic Women’s Forum, Croatia
IRI	International Republican Institute	SIW	Socialist International Women
MP	Member of Parliament	SRP	Sam Rainsy Party, Cambodia
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
		UNTAET	United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor
		USFP	Socialist Union of Popular Forces, Morocco
		WLCB	Women’s Leadership Coordination Board, Armenia
		WLF	Women’s Leadership Forum, Armenia
		WNC	Women’s National Coalition, South Africa



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



UNDP PAKISTAN

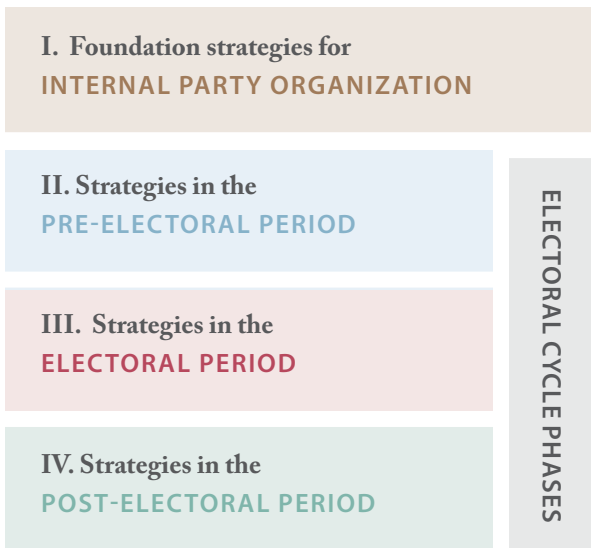
The right of women to participate in political life is guaranteed by several international conventions. But transforming an abstract right into a reality requires hard work on the ground. Political parties are key to women's participation in politics, as it is political parties that recruit and select candidates for elections and that determine a country's policy agenda. However, within political parties women tend to be overrepresented at the grassroots level or in supporting roles and underrepresented in positions of power. Without access to established networks of influence, and with very limited resources, few role models and mentors, and sometimes even limited family and community support, it is understandable that women's participation in political parties has remained well below that of men.

How women participate in political parties – and how those parties encourage and nurture women's involvement and incorporate gender-equality issues –

are key determinants of women’s political empowerment. They are also key to ensuring gender-equality issues are addressed in the wider society. If strategies to promote women’s involvement in the political process are to be effective, they should be linked to steps parties can take across the specific phases of the electoral cycle – the pre-electoral, electoral and post-electoral phases – and to the organization and financing of the parties themselves.

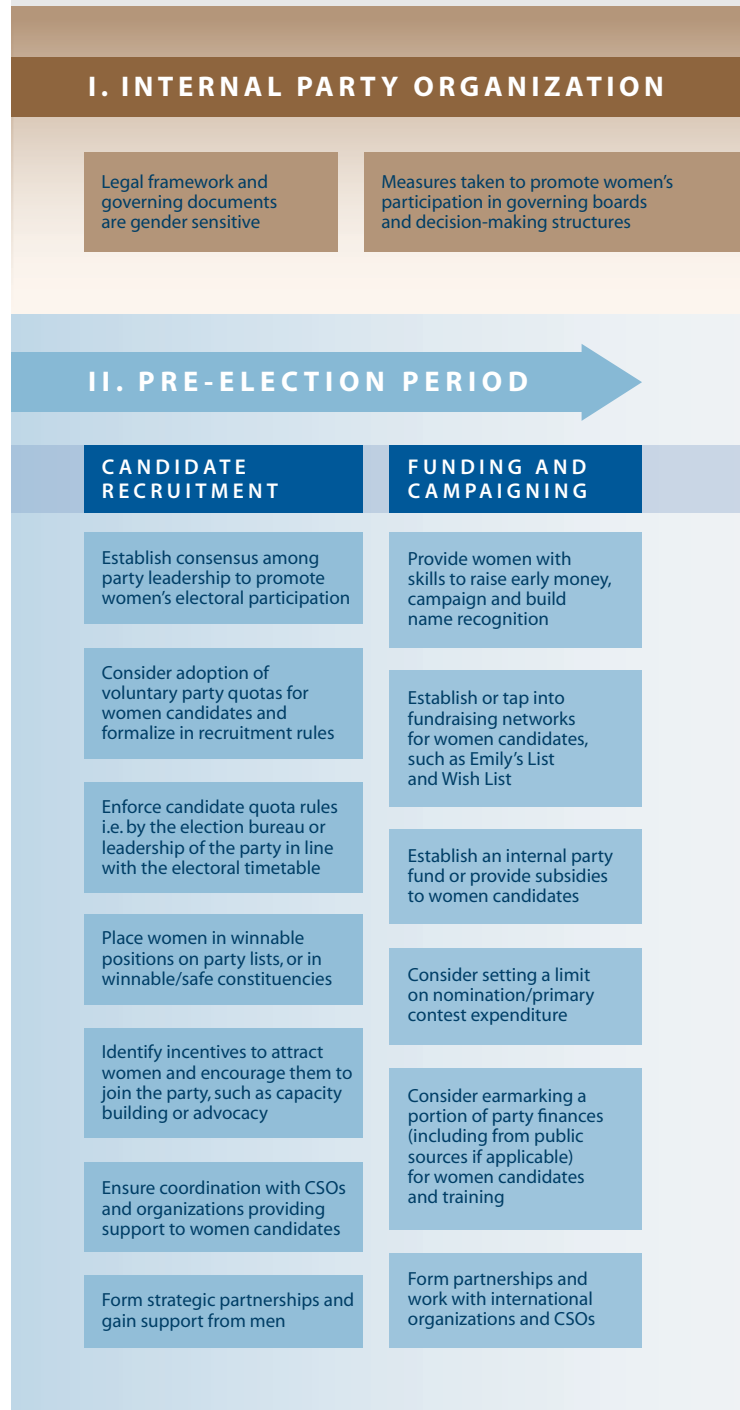
The most effective strategies to increase women’s participation in political parties combine reforms to political institutions with targeted support to women party activists within and outside party structures, women candidates and elected officials. These strategies require the cooperation of a variety of actors and political parties from across the political spectrum.

Part A of this publication, the **GOOD PRACTICES SUMMARY GUIDE**, identifies targeted interventions that political parties can take to empower women. It is structured according to four phases, following an electoral cycle approach (outlined in Figure 1):



Specific actions that political parties can take within each of these phases are summarized.

**FIGURE 1: SUMMARY OF ENTRY POINTS FOR PROMOTING WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PARTIES**



Women's wing or section established are strategically positioned within the party

Targets set for women's participation in party conventions

Gender equality perspective mainstreamed into policy development



UNDP KENYA

### III. ELECTION PERIOD

#### CAMPAIGN PERIOD

Build women's capacities to campaign and consider twinning or mentoring of first time candidates

Ensure women's visibility in the electoral campaign and access to the media

Ensure the party manifesto articulates policy on gender equality and disseminate it to voters

Mobilize women to register and to vote; provide gender sensitive voter information to men and women

Ensure women candidates' safety during campaigning and keep party supporters in line where there is potential for violence

Ensure coordination among CSOs and organizations providing support to women candidates

#### ELECTION DAY

Ensure women are trained and included as party agents in polling stations

Ensure monitoring includes a gender perspective and ensures the safety of women

Women trained and included as election monitors



UNDP PAKISTAN

### IV. POST-ELECTION PERIOD

#### WOMEN ELECTED

Undertake gender equality assessment; develop gender action plan within party

Provide capacity building and strengthen legislative skills of elected women

Promote gender sensitive political reforms to institutions, particularly in parliament

Promote the participation of women in policy making of the party; ensure gender mainstreaming in party policies

Encourage formation of cross-party caucus and support its functioning

Sensitize party members about gender equality and work with men

The **INTERNAL ORGANIZATION** of political parties affects how different needs, interests, and social demands get represented in society. The official documents and statements of a political party are important for providing a gender equality framework – they provide a vision of the party but also entrench the rules for achieving that vision. Internal Party Organization strategies include:

- Addressing gender equality in the party’s legal framework. This can include adopting a statement on gender equality in the party’s founding documents;
- Adopting measures, including internal quotas, that ensure women’s participation on governing boards;
- Setting targets for participation in party conventions. This can include holding separate forums for women delegates at the conventions;
- Establishing women’s wings and sections within parties, which should be formally integrated into the party structure, with defined roles and responsibilities and appropriate funding if needed;
- Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into all of the party’s policies.

In the **PRE-ELECTORAL PHASE**, **recruiting and nominating candidates** is probably the most crucial process for ensuring that women participate in politics. The gender gap widens significantly as candidates for political office move from being eligible to becoming aspirants to finally being nominated by the party. It is important for parties to incorporate rules that guarantee women’s representation. When this commitment is unwritten and informal, it is much more difficult to devise strategies for women to break into the inner circle of power, and harder to hold the party accountable when the commitment is not realized. If a party’s internal organization is weak and the rules for recruitment are not clear, decisions tend to be made by a limited number of elites, usually men.

In recent years, **electoral quotas** have become a popular policy measure to bring more women into politics. Quotas are a way of guaranteeing that members of an electorate group, such as women, are included at a prescribed minimum level in representative institutions, whether as delegates, candidates or elected officials. Some 50 countries have adopted legislation on candidate quotas, which ensure that a certain proportion of candidates for political office are women. Hundreds of political parties in another 30 countries have voluntarily adopted their own quotas for women. But candidate quotas will only be successful if women are placed in winnable positions on a party list, and if the quotas include sanctions for non-compliance.

Actions that political parties can take to address gender inequality in the **candidate-recruitment process** include:

“THE GOAL OF MORE WOMEN IN POLITICS IS NOT FEWER MEN IN POLITICS,  
BUT A MORE EQUITABLE SOCIETY FOR EVERYONE.”

- Galvanizing party support for candidate quotas and incorporating these quotas into party statutes;

- Establishing guidelines for candidate recruitment in party-nomination committees;

- Ensuring implementation and placement of women candidates in winning seats;

- Working with civil society organizations to oversee the implementation of quotas;

- Cultivating strategic alliances with men, since men play a critical role in building internal party support for these kinds of policies;

- Expanding the pool of women candidates and training those candidates;

- Encouraging multilateral relations and sharing experiences across countries and regions.

Women in politics often cite lack of **finances** as one of the main deterrents to their entering politics. Not only do women struggle to raise the funds needed to run a campaign, but they often receive little or no financial assistance from their political parties. It is particularly difficult for women to raise “early money,” the financing required to launch a campaign for elected office. Actions that parties and civil society organizations can take to help women raise the funds necessary for a political campaign include: establishing fundraising networks, which are particularly important where there is no public funding and candidates have

to raise private funds to contest an election; creating funds within the party targeted to support women candidates; providing subsidies to women candidates; limiting nomination and campaign expenditures; providing public funding to political parties, particularly if it is regulated so as to encourage parties to address women’s political empowerment; allocating funds specifically for training women candidates; and examining how party funds are used to support women candidates and women’s issues.

During the **ELECTORAL PERIOD**, candidates need to be aware of effective techniques for **campaigning and communicating** with their constituencies. Political parties can help to educate voters about the rights of women to participate in politics and the importance for all of society in advancing gender equality. Actions that parties can take during this period include:

- Providing training to women candidates in such skills as fundraising, message development, media relations and communicating with voters;

- Training and promoting women in campaign leadership positions (e.g. in campaign management, get out the vote, voter contact, and communications);

- Ensuring women’s visibility in the campaign by providing additional media exposure;

- Identifying and disseminating party positions that are priorities for women, which could also attract more women’s votes for their party;

- Monitoring elections, including by recruiting women as party agents to be present at polling stations, particularly if those polling stations are allocated for women only;



- Providing information to voters that include specific messages highlighting the importance of women's votes and women's right to vote as equal members of society.

Even after the elections are over, political parties continue to play a central role in encouraging women's participation in politics. Actions that parties can take in the **POST-ELECTORAL PERIOD** to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in **governance** include:

- Conducting an assessment of the level of gender equality within the party, with the aim of identifying, and ultimately eliminating, any practices or rules that may directly or indirectly undermine women;

- Promoting gender-sensitive reforms to political institutions, such as changing the sitting times of parliament and the parliamentary calendar to accommodate parliamentarians with families;

- Ensuring gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in party policies, including by supporting gender-specific policy reform, such as combating gender-based violence or targeting parental leave or reproductive rights issues, and by promoting gender equality in areas like access to justice, health, nationality, labour, land rights, social security and inheritance;

- Supporting cross-party networks of women and women's parliamentary caucuses, as these can help channel women's interests and concerns and can help to mainstream gender in policy development and government oversight;

- Ensuring women elected to a political institution are provided with leadership roles within the parliamentary group (e.g. group chairperson) and parliamentary committees (e.g. chairperson or group focal point);

- Forming strategic partnerships with civil society organizations.

The actions suggested are not exhaustive; they are offered as guidance, based on best practices, not as prescription. When taking any action to encourage women's political participation and to advance gender equity more broadly, it is crucial to involve men. Men are essential partners for lasting change. The goal of more women in politics is not fewer men in politics, but a more equitable society for everyone.

Part B of this publication is comprised of 20 **CASE STUDIES** from which the good practices outlined in the first part have been drawn. The case studies generally focus on particular political parties, civil society organizations, or other stakeholders in each of the countries, looking at concrete actions aiming to promote women's political participation. The case studies provide background as to why particular party strategies were selected, how they were implemented and attempt to describe the impact that the reform has had. Each case study attempts to offer lessons learned or good practice to assist political parties and political party assistance providers in developing and advancing reform strategies.

Many of the examples used throughout Part A have been drawn from the case studies now included in Part B. A separate, shorter publication containing only Part A and entitled *A Good Practices Guide to Promote Women's Political Participation* was produced earlier in October 2011 and is now available in five different languages.

# INTRODUCTION

UNCDF/ADAM ROGERS



## WOMEN'S POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT: A DEMOCRATIC IMPERATIVE

Advancing democratic governance requires creating and sustaining an environment of inclusive and responsive political processes and promoting the empowerment of women. The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance.

Political parties are the most important institutions that affect the political participation of women. In most countries they are responsible for candidate recruitment and selection, and decide on which issues are placed on the policy agenda. How women participate in political parties – or how political parties encourage and nurture women's involvement – is a

key determinant of their prospects for political empowerment. Because of the influential nature of political parties on women's political empowerment, civil society organizations (CSOs), international organizations and development assistance providers have heightened their focus on the role of political parties.

Globally, women remain sidelined from the structures of governance that determine political and legislative priorities. In the world's parliaments, women hold 19 percent of the seats – up from 16 percent in 2005.<sup>1</sup> The proportion of women ministers is lower, averaging 16 percent.<sup>2</sup> The proportion of women heads of state and government is lower still and has declined in recent years, standing at less than 5 percent in 2011.<sup>3</sup>

The low numbers continue in the face of three decades of lobbying and efforts by the international community to eliminate discrimination and empower women. In 2000, the United Nations recognized the central role of women in development by including the empowerment of women as one of the Millennium Development Goals, yet no region in the world is on track to achieve the target of 30 percent women in decision-making positions. Although some notable exceptions and good practices in this area are discernible, several bottlenecks remain to women's full and equal participation as contestants.

Stereotyping gender roles and biases are prevalent, albeit to varying degrees, in all the countries of the world and are reflected in social, economic, and political

life. In many countries women continue to be discouraged from direct competition with men and from public exposure and interactions, and are instead assigned roles that steer them away from decision-making and towards support roles such as child and family care and housekeeping in the private sphere. While the formal support of political parties is by no means the only factor that affects women's political participation given these manifold and multilayered gender roles and biases, such support is required to overcome the barriers to women's participation in politics and in political party life.

Research shows that the number of women in parliament does matter; at the very least, the more women there are in parliament, the more likely the parliament is to address women's issues and to change the gender dynamics in the chamber.<sup>4</sup> The proportion of women members of parliament has a great influence on the nature of the debate in politics. Given the low levels of women's presence in parliaments and other decision making bodies, parties need to be proactive in ensuring that gender equality is addressed in governance.

Parties are influential in determining which issues inform the political debate: they formulate policy, set governance priorities and are therefore strategically placed to address the concerns of women. In practice, political parties have mixed records in addressing gender issues in governance and electoral processes. The practices that do exist are not well codified and documented. This Guidebook aims to address this gap.

“THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT HAS  
A GREAT INFLUENCE ON THE NATURE OF DEBATE IN POLITICS.”



## PURPOSE

Part A – Summary of Good Practices – identifies entry points and specific actions that may be taken to promote the stronger presence and influence of women in political parties. The Summary of Good Practices provides some general principles and shares good practices for stakeholders to design and implement projects. It does not prescribe a particular formula, but rather provides options for reform derived from strategies that have been implemented by political parties around the world. Part B – Case Studies, provides more in-depth examples of particular actions undertaken by stakeholders within certain countries.

The entry points and case studies identified are primarily designed to provide guidance to political parties, and also aim to provide ideas for action and inform the programming direction of development assistance providers, party foundations, and CSOs in their work to support political parties. Each case study attempts to offer lessons learned or good practice to assist political parties and political party assistance providers in developing and advancing reform strategies.

This Guidebook elaborates why potential interventions are important, but it does not necessarily prescribe how such interventions should be implemented. Given the multiple audiences for this Guidebook, decisions around how the strategies could be put into action are best left to the respective stakeholders. The programming support provided by an international development assistance agency is quite different to actions that could be implemented by a party foundation, or by a political party directly.

Therefore, the Guidebook is intended as a resource to be used equally by all stakeholders in the electoral process, and specific mentions of individuals, parties, or organizations do not signify endorsement by the



UNDP/MALAYSIA

authors or by UNDP or NDI, and are rather meant to highlight examples of strategies that were brought to the attention of the researchers.

## METHODOLOGY

The strategies presented in Part A are drawn mainly from a series of 20 case studies that were commissioned by UNDP and conducted by NDI during 2009-2010. The case studies are presented alphabetically in Part B of this Guidebook. There are many more examples that could be included. However, this Guidebook does not aim to exhaustively present them all. Rather, the Guidebook limits its scope by presenting the key practices gleaned from the case studies commissioned by UNDP and conducted by NDI. In a few instances, some examples outside the scope of that research are presented to illustrate a particular point.

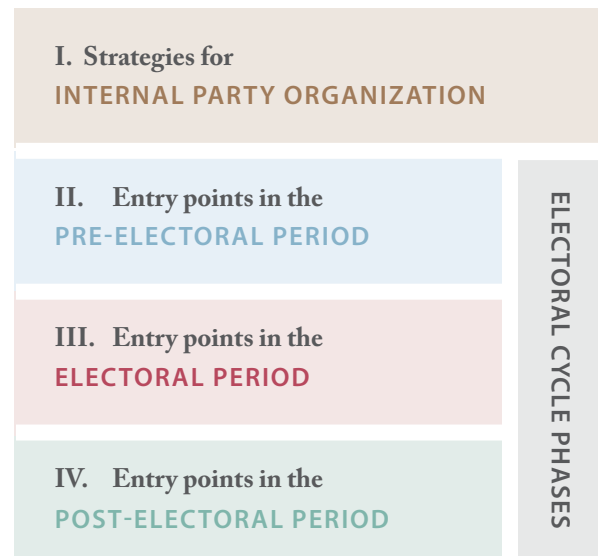
The primary research conducted by NDI combined desk research and a total of 64 in-depth interviews with current and former political party leaders, women party

members and members of civil society, over a period of 18 months during 2009 and 2010. The participants were drawn from all regions and featured political parties of different ideological leanings and from different contexts, including post-conflict, developing and developed country settings. There are also a few examples drawn from civil society initiatives targeting political party reform.

The intent of the case study research was not to examine initiatives undertaken by all the political parties in each country, but rather to review and offer a diversity of examples of actions as part of the larger picture of support for women's political participation. Every effort was made to include diverse examples in terms of geography, party ideology, type of political system and the strategies employed, however there were gaps in documentation by some parties of their efforts to advance women's participation and gender equality. While center and center-left party examples outweigh center-right examples, there are also examples of proactive measures among right leaning parties, several of which are highlighted here.

## STRUCTURE

Part A of this Guidebook synthesizes and presents major findings based on the case studies included (and listed alphabetically) in Part B. The findings in Part A are presented according to an electoral cycle framework; rather than providing a generic list of actions that can be taken by political parties, these findings are grouped together with specific actions using the phasing and timing of the electoral cycle. In each of these phases, a situational overview is provided and several strategic entry points that political parties can adopt to promote women's empowerment are presented. The four main components, based on the electoral cycle, are as follows:



The electoral cycle approach has two elements: timing and stakeholders. First, it encourages international assistance providers and national stakeholders to plan long-term and implement electoral programming within the democratic governance framework. Second, it addresses a number of stakeholders besides the electoral managers, to the extent possible and desirable. The approach is based on the idea that electoral support should be long-term and should seek to address issues such as capacity development and institutional and legal reform in a sustainable manner, with a view to decrease international assistance and increase national capacity and ownership over time. The phasing of the electoral cycle approach is important; by working within a broader democratic governance agenda, it allows for better identification of needs and advance planning, rather than concentrating efforts around the electoral event.<sup>5</sup>

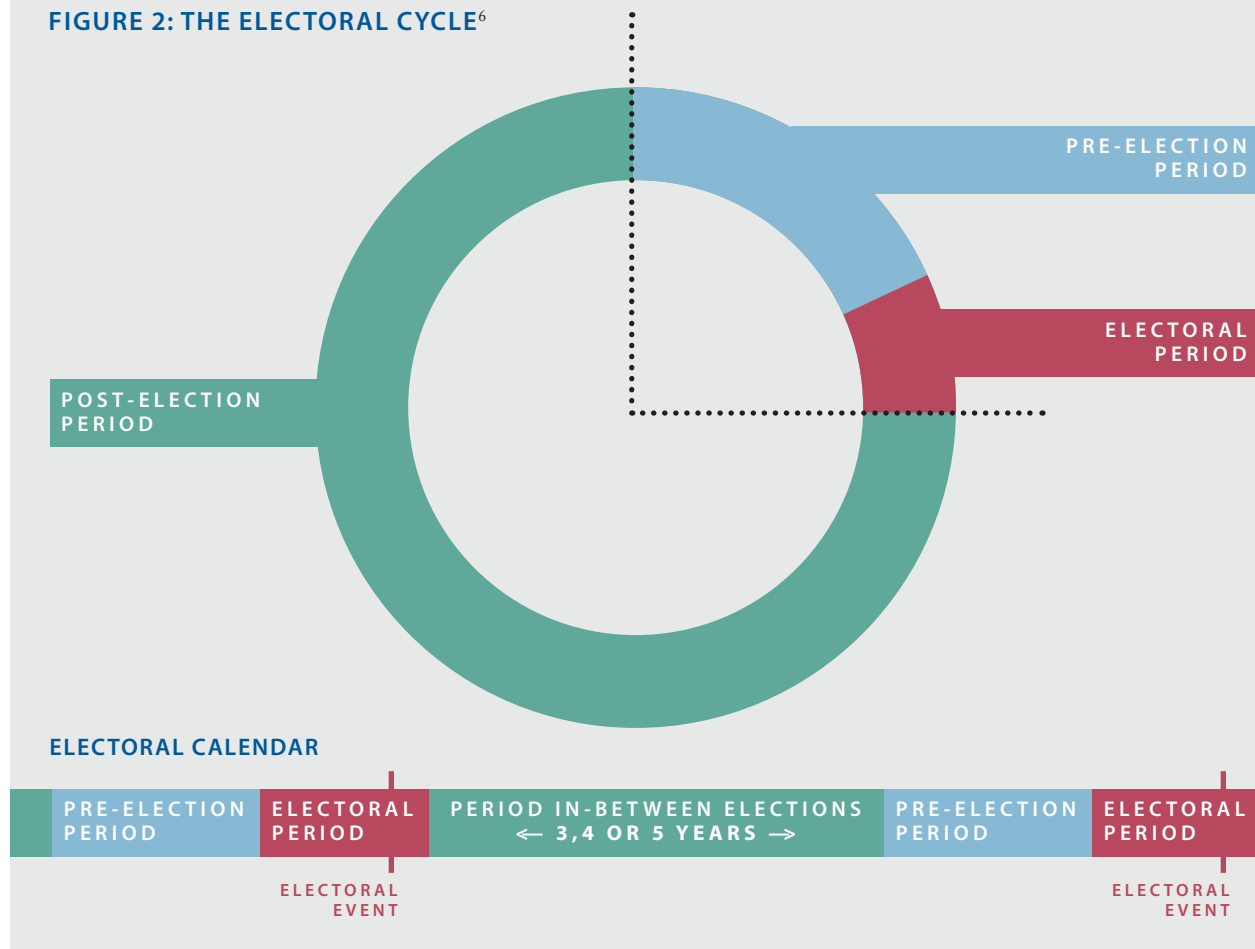
This cycle approach is extremely useful when identifying strategies targeting political parties and women's empowerment. To date, much of the support in this area has been concentrated in the pre-electoral phase leading up to the electoral event, e.g. capacity building of women candidates, lobbying and advocacy around electoral quotas, campaign support and message development.

These interventions are important and must continue, but the electoral cycle approach requires those short-term interventions be but one part of a broader approach to programming. It encourages more focus on the post-election period (the longest phase in the electoral cycle) and the possibilities of implementing reforms and developing capacity in between elections. Where a country is in the electoral cycle will also have an important influence on the types of interventions that are most timely and relevant at any given point.

Timing is a crucial consideration. For example, if the process of candidate selection for election passes without scrutiny, and few women are nominated as

candidates, then numeric targets will not be met come the election. Political parties may also be unwilling to undertake reforms to candidate nomination procedures during an election year, and pushing for such reforms may be met with more success if undertaken between elections. Strategies must benefit from more systematic approaches, coordination and phasing. The pre- and post- electoral periods are important for the implementation of reforms outside of mobilizing around an electoral event. Some interventions may also span different phases. Attracting potential women candidates and supporting capacity development should likely span all periods of the electoral cycle to be most successful.

FIGURE 2: THE ELECTORAL CYCLE<sup>6</sup>



## BENEFITS TO PARTIES

Although the causality between the promotion of women's participation and a party's electoral success has not been well documented, findings from the case studies suggest that political parties have increased their support base and gained electorally after adopting reforms to promote women's empowerment.

There may be many positive spinoffs for political parties that implement reforms:

- Public perceptions can be altered and interest renewed in political parties with waning levels of support.

- Taking the lead on women's empowerment can generate new support bases and attract new members to the party.

- Increasing the proportion of women candidates for elected positions can increase the flow of public funding to the party. If incentives in public finance laws tie funding allocations to parties to the proportion of women candidates nominated, political parties can benefit financially. These reforms could also attract the support of sister parties, party internationals and the international

community to implement new initiatives, such as training and mentoring programmes.

- Women candidates are more likely than men to come from civil society and, therefore, to have stronger relationships with CSOs. These linkages may be beneficial for women candidates, but may also reflect positively on the party for which the woman is campaigning in terms of establishing relations with grassroots and constituencies.

- Ultimately, putting in place strategies to promote women's empowerment can lead to more democratic and transparent political parties. Such strategies may also result in the inclusion of other marginalized and under-represented groups.

This Guidebook has sought to explore a broad and diverse range of strategies that are being implemented to support women's empowerment. It acknowledges, though, that there are many more innovative practices that are being tried and tested by reform minded political parties. It also acknowledges that what works for one political party or organization may not work for another. National contexts must be considered when devising strategies, including the nature of the party system, the electoral system in use and other socio-cultural considerations. Part B gives more such relevant details for each case study.

**TAKING THE LEAD ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT CAN GENERATE NEW SUPPORT BASES  
AND ATTRACT NEW MEMBERS TO THE POLITICAL PARTY.**

# PART A: SUMMARY OF GOOD PRACTICES



UNDP



# I INTERNAL PARTY ORGANIZATION



UNCDF/ADAM ROGERS

## CREATING AN ORGANIZATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

### KEY ISSUES

How political parties operate and function is determined by external regulation and internal rules, processes and culture. External regulation includes the constitution and laws relating to the electoral system, party financing, and party organization. Internal processes depend on the party's ideological foundations, historical influences, levels of regulation and internal bureaucracy, level of patronage, degree of influence of party leaders, and level of decentralization. The degree of internal party democracy is determined through practices like internal information and consultation processes, internal (formal or informal) rules and structures for the organization and

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**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE WOMEN’S EMPOWERMENT OFTEN LEADS TO GREATER INTERNAL DEMOCRACY AND TRANSPARENCY IN POLITICAL PARTIES.**  
 ”

decision-making within the party and transparency in the party’s functioning at all levels.<sup>7</sup> In terms of party organization, an additional consideration is the extent to which the party is inclusive of different societal groups, particularly in terms of candidate recruitment, and how the party reaches out to and includes women in its internal organization.

Women hold only a limited number of leadership and decision-making positions in political parties, and instead tend to predominate in positions and activities supporting political parties at the grassroots level or supporting male party leadership. Positions of power in political parties can often be informal, centralized and supported by well-established relationships and networks of influence that are inaccessible to new arrivals, and particularly to women. Without access to the institutional knowledge and memory embedded in such networks, and with very limited resources, few role models and mentors, and sometimes even limited

family and community support, it is understandable that women’s participation in political parties has remained well below that of men.

The implementation of strategies to promote women’s empowerment in political parties can lead to greater internal democracy and transparency. By developing strategies for women’s inclusion, the participation of party members in decision-making may become more formalized, such as through elections for leadership positions or candidate recruitment for upcoming elections. Many parties also work actively to enhance the role of other marginalized and under-represented groups.<sup>8</sup>

Strategies for increasing women’s participation employed by parties can range from legal reforms, such as the adoption of legislated candidate quotas, to voluntary internal reforms, such as formalizing a women’s wing as part of the party structure or guaranteeing women’s presence in decision-making structures.



UNCDF/ADAM ROGERS

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**POSITIONS OF POWER IN POLITICAL PARTIES CAN OFTEN BE INFORMAL, CENTRALIZED AND SUPPORTED BY WELL-ESTABLISHED RELATIONSHIPS AND NETWORKS OF INFLUENCE THAT ARE INACCESSIBLE TO NEW ARRIVALS, AND PARTICULARLY TO WOMEN.**  
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The most meaningful strategies combine reforms to political institutions with the provision of targeted support to women party activists, candidates, and elected officials. In order to be effective, though, strategies require the cooperation of a variety of actors and political parties from across the political spectrum. This section addresses the strategies that political parties may implement to be inclusive of women and address gender equality concerns in internal operations.

## STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

The following strategies – drawn from the lessons learned and good practice examples in the case studies (see Part B for details) and other research – are primarily designed to provide guidance to political parties on actions that can be taken to address gender equality in the internal organization of the party. These strategies also provide ideas for action and can inform the programming direction of development assistance providers, party foundations, and CSOs in their work to support political parties.

### (a) Address gender equality in internal party regulations

The internal functioning and operations of political parties are informed by legal regulations, such as the constitution or a political party law, and, more commonly, by internal party regulations. The internal functioning of political parties has an impact on how different needs, interests, and social demands in the society get represented in parliament.<sup>9</sup> Like constitutions and national legal frameworks, the official documents and statements of a political party are important for providing a gender equality framework – they provide a vision of the party and entrench the rules for achieving that vision.

The adoption of a statement on gender equality in the parties' founding documents is an important first step in providing the framework for moving toward more

### RULE 6 OF THE AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS' CONSTITUTION (SOUTH AFRICA) STATES THAT:

**With the aim of full representation of women in all decision-making structures, the party will implement a programme of affirmative action including quota of not less than 50 percent of women in all elected structures.**

inclusive and responsive political parties. Several political parties include equality clauses in their vision statements and party bylaws. For example, in **EL SALVADOR**, the mission statement and ethics code of the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) include a clause on political equality for women. Alongside with addressing gender equality in its statutes and regulations, the Citizens' Action Party (PAC) in **COSTA RICA** also established a Prosecutor's Office on Gender Equality, which was mandated to monitor, report, and advise on how the regulations were being implemented.<sup>10</sup>

### (b) Adopt measures for women's participation in decision-making structures

Related to the inclusion of a formal statement on gender equality is the adoption of measures to ensure women's participation in the governing boards and decision-making structures of the party. The level of women's representation in such structures provides insights into the degree to which the political party is committed to gender equality. Globally, women are under-represented in leadership positions within political parties, although they usually constitute between 40 and 50 percent of party members. The proportion of women in party leadership positions is estimated at around 10 percent, although this number increases in parties



that have adopted rules guaranteeing women's participation within internal decision-making structures.<sup>11</sup> The participation of women in governing boards is important for several reasons, notably to ensure that women's perspectives contribute to shaping party policies, priorities, strategies, and platforms.

It is becoming more commonplace for parties to adopt such measures. Examples include:

■ **AUSTRALIA's** Labor Party and **CAMBODIA's** Sam Rainsy Party have adopted internal quotas guaranteeing women's participation in some or all of their governing boards.

■ **MOROCCO:** The Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) has internal quotas for each local branch, which has helped foster women's inclusion at all levels of the party.

■ **MEXICO:** The Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) was one of the first parties to adopt a 20 percent quota in 1990, which was later raised to 30 percent. The National Action

Party (PAN) followed suit, adopting an internal party quota to ensure women's representation in the executive committee and on governing boards.

■ **INDIA:** The national executive committee of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) amended its constitution in 2008 to reserve 33 percent of the party's leadership positions for women and make the chief of the national women's branch a member of the party's central election committee.

■ **GERMANY:** The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) adopted a 33 percent quota for party officials in 1996. If the quota is not met, the internal elections must be repeated.<sup>12</sup>

■ **SOUTH AFRICA:** Rule 6 of the African National Congress (ANC) Constitution<sup>13</sup> states that, with the aim of full representation of women in all decision-making structures, the party will implement a programme of affirmative action including a quota of no less than 50 percent of women in all elected structures.



In addition to leadership positions, political parties can ensure that women are appointed to key party committees, taskforces, and working groups. In some cases, the head of a party's women's section becomes a member of the executive committee or of other structures that relate to party resources, election preparedness, and candidate selection.

Ensuring women's participation in internal structures is central to advancing gender equality in political parties. However, it is important that measures such as quotas be supplemented with other initiatives, including longer term capacity building and skills development, with the aim of ensuring that women are enabled to take up party leadership positions even in the absence of quota mechanisms. Political parties must investigate other processes to include qualified and motivated women in leadership positions, and sensitize members about the importance of opening a supportive space for women among their members, leadership, and internal structures.<sup>14</sup>

### **(c) Set targets for participation in party conventions**

In many political parties, annual party conventions are where policy is set and major party decisions are made. In almost all political parties, conventions provide opportunities for delegates to build the political and financial relationships necessary for successful political careers. Political parties may therefore establish targets to ensure that a proportion of the delegates attending are women. For example, in the **UNITED STATES** the Democratic Party has adopted rules for the participation of women delegates at national party nomination conventions. As a result of internal lobbying by women members and support from party leaders, the party's Charter requires that nominating convention delegates comprise equal numbers of women and men.

In addition, implementing separate forums for women delegates to meet at party conventions offers important networking opportunities. In **AUSTRALIA**, the Labor Party's Women's Organization holds its own conference

every year to provide women with the opportunity to discuss policy, to lobby on specific issues, and to network with each other. In **EL SALVADOR**, the FMLN's Women's Secretariat organizes an annual conference of the party's women leaders, bringing together office holders and members of the party's executive board to formulate gender equality strategies and policies. It is important that the resolutions taken in these women's forums are formally adopted and used to guide the direction of the party on policy matters.

### **(d) Establish women's wings and sections within political parties**

Practical experience and research show that establishing a wing or section for women party members to meet, discuss and deliberate, articulate their priorities, and seek solutions to common problems can be instrumental in placing women's concerns on the party

#### **WOMEN'S WINGS USUALLY PERFORM SOME OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES:**

- Contribute to policy development, promote women's interests in policy platforms and advise party leadership on gender issues;
- Contribute to, or oversee the implementation of, gender equality policies, including the implementation of quotas in the candidate recruitment process;
- Coordinate the activities of women members of the party;
- Serve an outreach and mobilization function, particularly reaching out to women voters during an election and enlarging the party base;
- Provide support and training to newly elected parliamentarians and office holders;
- Contribute to transforming power relations within the party and sensitizing and training party members about gender equality;
- Reach out to male party members.

agenda. Women's wings are internal sections that aim to strengthen women's representation and participation within the party and in the political process in general.<sup>15</sup>

It is important that the women's wings are formally integrated into the structure of the party, with defined roles and responsibilities and, if needed, appropriate funding for running costs. There are several examples of where a strong women's wing has been an effective mechanism for pressuring the party to enact reforms and increase the participation of women in high-level party affairs, for enacting internal quotas, for creating training programs and offering support to women candidates. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that gender issues do not become a 'silo' in the women's wing, or that the wing is sidelined in the party. One way to prevent this would be to ensure that the Secretary or Chair of the women's wing has a seat and vote on the governing board of the party.

Some examples include:

■ **AUSTRALIA:** The rules of the Labor Party specify the role, composition, and powers of the Labor Women's Organization, for the federal branch and for each state branch.<sup>16</sup>

■ **CAMBODIA:** The women's wing of the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) has sought to promote women within the party, lobbied for the introduction of internal quotas for governing boards, provided training for women candidates, and conducted civic education and voter outreach.

■ **MEXICO:** The National Action Party (PAN) transformed its women's wing from a social organization into an effective base for promoting women's leadership positions. For example, during elections, PAN's National Secretariat for the Political Promotion of Women has lobbied local and national party leaders to include more

women as electoral candidates. The party also ensures that draft policy documents of the party are sent to the Women's Branch of the party so that they can be reviewed from a gender perspective before being finalized.

■ **MOROCCO:** Most major political parties have founded women's sections or comparable internal structures that address women's issues and the needs of women party members. For example, the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS) created an equality council to ensure women's representation in the party's decision-making processes.

■ **SERBIA:** The G17 Plus women's wing is recognized in the bylaws as a formal structure of the party. It has advocated for measures to promote women's electoral candidacies and lobbied party leaders to ensure that women candidates were given high positions on the lists. In addition, the women's wing has actively sought funding for trainings and workshops for women candidates and activists, and works to empower women to impact policies at the local level.

### (e) Ensure gender equality perspective in policy development

As mentioned above, one of the functions of a women's wing is to work on policy development within the party. Political parties must ensure that their policies and priorities respond to the needs of women and men, not only in terms of gender specific policy reforms, but also ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into all the policies of the party. This may be achieved through a policy committee that addresses gender mainstreaming and signs off on all policies for compliance, or through the provision of capacity building for party members. This is further discussed in the section on Governance under Post-Electoral Period.

# II

## PRE-ELECTORAL PERIOD



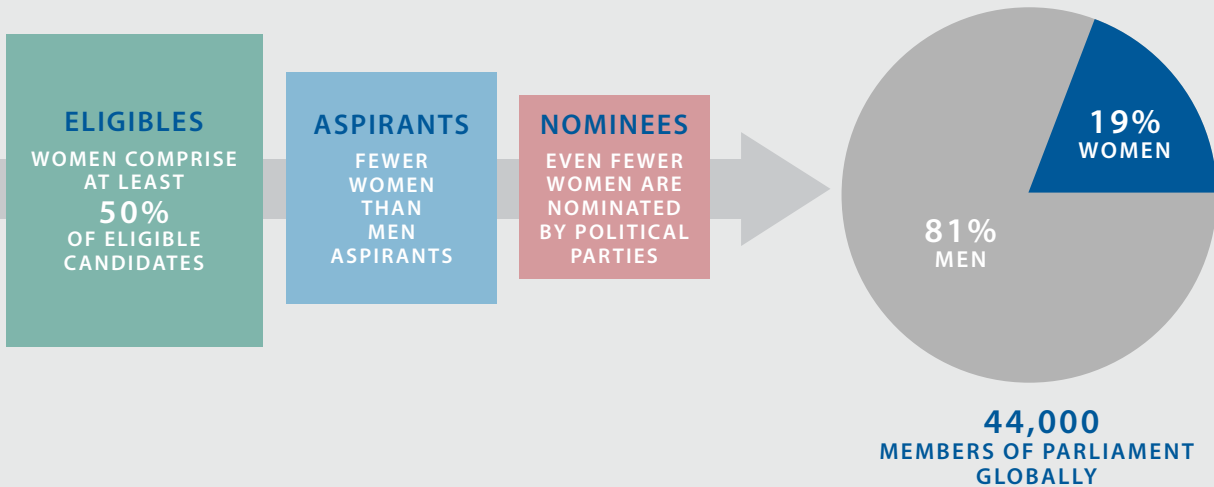
UNDP/CASANDRA WALDON

### CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT AND NOMINATION

#### KEY ISSUES

The process of candidate recruitment and nomination is probably the most important for political parties to address if women's political participation is to be promoted. Parties are the vital link for achieving equality and inclusive participation, given that they maintain firm control over the nomination of candidates for elected office. Political parties vary substantially with regard to how they nominate candidates, the number of women selected, where women rank on party lists, and the proportion of women who make it to elected office. Parties also vary in their breadth of participation and degree of decentralization.

FIGURE 3: STAGES OF CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT



The selection of candidates for election can be understood in terms of stages. Generally, in any given country there will be a pool of ‘eligibles’ (citizens who fulfill the legal and formal requirements for becoming legislators), but only a small group of those would consider putting themselves forward as possible candidates – the ‘aspirants.’ There are many factors that affect a potential aspirant’s evaluation of whether she will campaign for election, including an assessment of the time involved, financial commitments, the likelihood of winning, personal ambition, family and community support and commitments, access to political and moneyed networks, remuneration, status and political power.<sup>17</sup> It is at the stages of moving from eligible to aspirant and eventually to being nominated by the party that there is a large gender gap and fall off of women.

The stage where party gatekeepers nominate ‘aspirants’ is the most crucial for getting women into office. Parties

face both external and internal pressures that affect their decisions about candidate nominations. External pressures that bear on parties include how they will be perceived and evaluated by voters, and they may therefore present candidates believed to maximize the number of votes for the party.<sup>18</sup> Those candidates who are ‘perceived’ as potential liabilities (oftentimes women) will not be nominated by the party. Internally, an aspirant’s track record, activism in the party, and access to funds are important. Incumbents, those with name recognition, or those who are visible in the community through their profession or family relationships also stand a better chance of receiving the backing of the party.<sup>19</sup>

The selection of candidates differs from party to party and can be distinguished by a number of features, including for example, the level of decentralization of the selection process. Party rules and norms will affect the way in which a party carries out the actual process

of nomination. For women, bureaucracy-based systems that have incorporated rules guaranteeing women's representation are a significant advantage. When the rules are unwritten, it becomes much harder to devise and implement a strategy to break into the inner circle of power, and there is no accountability when the rules are not implemented. With weak internal organization, lack of internal democracy, or unclear rules of recruitment, decisions tend to be made by a limited number of elite members, typically men. Women are usually on the outside and excluded from 'all boys' networks. Patronage systems are fairly closed and not likely to promote women's candidacies.<sup>20</sup> Ideally, nomination processes should be both formalized and transparent, which would allow for greater fairness in representation.

It is because of the obstacles that women face in the electoral process and the challenge of winning a party nomination that special measures have been proposed

and in many cases implemented by political parties. Such measures can range from developing incentives to attract women to the party (such as provision of campaign funding) or providing training and skills development for women candidates, to setting a target within the party that a certain number of candidates will be women. These types of measures may also be safeguarded in legislation, but often political parties have voluntarily adopted such measures.

### QUOTAS FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES

Among the various strategies explored in this Guide, some form of an electoral quota – whether adopted voluntarily by political parties or mandated in electoral laws – was used in all cases under consideration. This commonality was not intentional, as this research aimed to present examples of special measures other than electoral quotas in order to capture the diversity of approaches that have been used by parties worldwide to support women. However, it is evident that the most pronounced and widespread special measure in use is electoral quotas, used on their own or in conjunction with other actions. In this way, the frequency of quotas among the case studies supports existing research that quotas continue to be the most decisive, efficient, and preferred means of bringing about greater numbers of women in the political parties and into politics more broadly.

Electoral candidate quotas have become an important policy tool to increase women's access to decision-making bodies. When properly implemented, they



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ensure women's entry into decision-making positions rather than leaving this to the good faith of political party leaders or candidate nomination committees. The introduction of quotas is highly influenced by guidance and recommendations from international organizations. As laid out in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), quotas are a means of guaranteeing that members of an electorate group, such as women, are included at a prescribed minimum level in representative institutions, whether as delegates, candidates, or elected officials.

It is important to note that often quota laws are formulated in gender neutral ways, usually indicating a minimum required percentage for the underrepresented gender, or the minimum required percentage for both genders. However, because women are the underrepresented gender almost without exception, electoral quotas are often referred to as women's quotas. This should not be taken to mean that electoral quotas benefit only women, or give women an unfair advantage; rather, they are meant as measures to redress imbalance in representation.

### Types of quotas

There are two main types of electoral quotas, depending on where they are located in the recruitment process: candidate quotas and reserved seats.

#### CANDIDATE QUOTAS MAY BE:

- **Voluntary:** They are adopted on a voluntary basis by political parties and should be reflected in candidate nomination rules and/or party constitutions.
- **Legislated:** The constitution, electoral or party legislation establishes a minimum target for the inclusion of women as electoral candidates.



UNDP/MARIE FRECHON

**Candidate quotas** seek to affect the supply of candidates, ensuring that a proportion of candidates presented for election are women. These quotas can either be *legislated*, where the law specifies a minimum percentage of candidates who must be women, or they can be *voluntary*, where a political party voluntarily adopts a specified target of women candidates to put forward to contest the election.<sup>21</sup>

**Reserved seats** stipulate that a certain proportion of seats in a legislature or parliament must be awarded to women.

### Candidate quotas

There are now some 50 countries that have legislated candidate quotas for women, several of them implementing candidate quotas since the early 1990s. Where quotas are legislated, political parties have usually had to update their party nomination procedures to ensure compliance with the law. In addition to legislated quotas, hundreds of political parties in more than 30 countries have voluntarily adopted their own policies of quotas for women. In such cases, the party sets its own



target or proportion of candidates it considers should be women for election.<sup>22</sup>

Some specific examples of parties that have voluntarily adopted quotas to ensure that women comprise a proportion of candidates on party lists include:

■ **BURKINA FASO:** The Congress for Democracy Party (CDP) adopted a 25 percent internal quota for women on party lists for the parliamentary elections in 2007.

■ **LUXEMBOURG:** The Christian Social People's Party (CSV) aims for a target of 33 percent women candidates on their party lists.<sup>23</sup>

■ **MOROCCO:** The Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) adopted a 20 percent quota for the representation of women on candidate electoral lists.

■ **SOUTH AFRICA:** The ANC Adopted List Process for National Elections of 2003 established a one-third quota for women on party lists. The quota was raised to 50 percent women candidates in time for the 2009 elections.

■ **SPAIN:** The Socialist Party adopted a policy that 40 percent of all candidates on electoral lists should be women.

■ **AUSTRALIA, CANADA, and THE UNITED KINGDOM:** Political parties have sought to run women in certain winnable constituencies or 'safe' seats, as a measure to increase the proportion of women elected.

## Enforcement

Key criteria needed for quotas to be effective are placement and enforcement. In the first instance, women will only benefit from a quota if they are placed in winnable positions on a party list, and not buried at the bottom with little chance of being elected. Secondly, legislated candidate quotas are more effective when they carry with them sanctions for non-compliance. An indicative quota, either set voluntarily by a party or adopted by law, may set a target that may be difficult to enforce, either because the law does not stipulate how to reach the target, or because political parties ignore it in the absence of enforcement mechanisms. On the other hand, a compulsory quota not only sets a target, but also stipulates how it will be implemented, usually through a placement mandate. The law or regulations of the party can introduce measures so that women are placed in "winnable" positions on party lists, i.e. every second or third place on the list, and the party electoral lists are not accepted by the electoral authorities or party nomination committees until they comply.<sup>24</sup>

## STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

The following strategies – drawn from the case studies and other research – are designed to provide guidance to political parties on actions that can be taken to address gender inequality in the candidate recruitment process. In addition, these strategies provide ideas for actions that could be undertaken by development assistance providers, party foundations, and CSOs in their work with, and support to, political parties.

### (a) Galvanize political party support for candidate quotas and formalize in party statutes

Party constitutions and statutes reflect the official principles and policies of a political party. The adoption of gender equality principles in the party constitution and bylaws is important for articulating the vision of the party and for putting in place the necessary policies

for achieving that vision, such as quotas. Some political parties in **EL SALVADOR**, **INDIA**, and **MOROCCO** have included such statements and provisions supporting gender equality and promoting women's political participation in their vision statements and party bylaws.

### **(b) Establish guidelines for candidate recruitment in party nomination committees**

Candidate recruitment rules differ from party to party. Regardless of the process, however, guidelines that are clear and transparent and incorporate rules guaranteeing women's participation are a significant advantage. When the rules are unwritten and candidate selection is in the hands of a few party leaders, it is very difficult for women to compete on equal footing with men as they are typically excluded from the 'all boys' networks. Opening the process up so it is more participatory can combat the tendency for leaders in some parties to handpick their candidates according to undefined criteria. Rules should set clear targets to be achieved.

For example, in **CANADA**'s Liberal Party, a candidate recruitment committee was created to ensure diversity in candidate recruitment and that the rules regarding inclusion of women candidates were followed. In **CROATIA**, the Social Democratic Party adopted a 40 percent voluntary quota of the "underrepresented gender" for all candidates' lists for parliamentary elections and local assemblies. The reference to the "underrepresented gender" was intended to prevent objections from those who might have been concerned that a quota system was discriminatory, referring only to the election of women.

### **(c) Ensure implementation and placement in winnable positions**

The most effective candidate quotas are those that stipulate the placement of women in winnable positions or districts, and also provide for enforcement mechanisms to ensure their implementation. Several parties not only

specify the proportion of candidates that must be women, but also specify which positions they should hold on party lists. For example, for several years the Social Democratic Party in **SWEDEN** has compiled 'zebra' or 'zipper' lists where men and women alternate throughout the lists of candidates. **INDONESIA**'s Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) sought to place women at the top of their lists in several districts to ensure their success in the 2009 parliamentary elections. In **COSTA RICA**, the Christian-Social Unity Party (PUSC) alternates men and women candidates on electoral lists.<sup>25</sup>

The most effective means of enforcing party quotas is to empower the party's executive committee and candidate selection committee to reject any party list or internal recruitment process that does not adhere to quota rules. For example, the enforcement of the 35 percent quota for women in **EL SALVADOR**'s FMLN party is ensured by the Women's Secretariat. In **CANADA**, the Liberal Party's central party committee will not certify candidate nominations if one-third of the nominees are not women, and will even override nominations by placing candidates of their own choosing. **AUSTRALIA**'s Labor Party quota requires that there are 40 percent women candidates in 'winnable seats'



in state and federal parliaments; if candidate lists do not include enough women, the State and Federal Administrative Committees may call for new primaries or pre-selections.

Where legislated quotas apply, a further measure is to ensure that the electoral management body (electoral commission) oversees quota implementation, and that it has the power and means to ensure adherence to the law in practice. In several countries in Latin America and other regions, the electoral management body will reject the registration of candidate lists submitted by parties until the lists are in compliance with the requirements of the law.

#### **(d) Work with CSOs to monitor compliance**

In addition to electoral management bodies and internal party committees, CSOs have played an important role in several countries by monitoring the compliance of political parties to quota laws. CSOs have been instrumental in exerting pressure on political parties for the implementation of party promises and holding party leaders to account. For example, the Women's Leadership Forum, a multi-partisan CSO in **ARMENIA**, developed a strategy combining private meetings and negotiations with party leadership with public events such as press conferences to pressure parties to honour their quota pledges. In **MEXICO**, women members of the PAN party used strategic alliances with other parties and CSOs to push for the implementation of gender quotas.

#### **(e) Cultivate strategic alliances with men**

In a number of parties, male advocates for policies such as candidate quotas or reserved seats have played critical roles in building internal party support for these policies. If the participation of women is to be understood by party leadership as a benefit to the entire party, not solely to the women members, men must be involved in championing reforms. In the Labor Party

in **AUSTRALIA**, the Liberal Party in **CANADA**, and the Socialist Party in **SPAIN**, women have worked with male party leaders who have championed quota reforms. In **MEXICO**, PAN women members also worked to educate and lobby their male counterparts to support the quota reform and to get the support of the ranks of the party. This support was essential to the passage of the law through parliament. The dual approach of working with political women and men inside the party, together with CSO support from outside, can yield great results.

#### **(f) Expand the pool of women candidates and provide skills training**

Some political party leaders have argued that there is a shortage of willing and trained women candidates with the requisite confidence and experience to stand for election, which in turn can mean that the party does not reach its quota targets. This may be especially pronounced in post-conflict states where women tend to be sidelined from transitional processes unless political parties actively recruit women members to their ranks. It is important that, in addition to implementing candidate quotas, other supportive mechanisms for women's political participation are encouraged. In countries where quotas have not been implemented, such measures take on more significance.

Strategies to expand the pool of women candidates and build their political capabilities include training and support for outreach activities in **CAMBODIA**, or technical advice and guidance on advocacy strategies in **MOROCCO**, where a coalition of women's CSOs and party activists received support from international organizations during their campaign to promote quotas. In **CANADA**, the Liberal Party appointed a Women's Candidate Search Director to help recruit women to the party. In **INDONESIA**, the PDIP's Women Empowerment Department works with the party's

training branch to develop and implement a training program for women candidates to increase their political skills. **BRAZIL**'s Party of the Republic (PR) organized motorcades for gender awareness in some states, which aimed to encourage women to join the party and to identify local women leaders who could become local candidates. Training sessions were offered to interested women on party doctrine, goals, and achievements.<sup>26</sup>

Political parties could also usefully support a network or community of women candidates who have run for election, whether or not they won. Parties could enlist their support to nurture connections with constituencies and encourage future women candidates. In **GHANA**, a group of political parties aim to maintain a database of women who contested elections and were unsuccessful, to retain them in party activities and positions and to nurse their interest in contesting at a future date.<sup>27</sup>

### **(g) Encourage multi-lateral relations and sharing of experiences**

In many transitional countries, political parties value strategic relationships with international actors. Some

parties look to Western European or North American parties for experience and to align themselves with the international grouping of political parties (party international groups). For some parties, for example, adopting a quota sends a message that the party is moving towards becoming more open and inclusive. Parties which seek to affiliate with Socialist International, for example, are encouraged to adopt measures to promote women's political empowerment.

## **FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTION CAMPAIGNS**

### **KEY ISSUES**

Survey research of 300 parliamentarians conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has found that one of the most significant factors that deter women from entering politics is the lack of finances to contest electoral campaigns.<sup>29</sup> Not only do women struggle to raise the funds needed to run a costly campaign, they often receive little or no financial assistance from their political parties. There are two stages in particular where money directly impacts on women candidates: (1) winning the nomination and being recruited by the party, and (2) financing the electoral campaign.

The challenge of funding also applies to men, but women often face greater financial challenges for several reasons. The world over, women's economic status is generally lower than that of men. Gender socialization roles have traditionally positioned men as the "bread-winners" and therefore men are more accustomed to raising money for their own use. Where women are traditionally relegated to the private sphere, they are not typically accustomed to raising funds on their own behalf. When they have raised funds, many women prefer to spend them on immediate family needs.

### **SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL WOMEN POLICY, 2010:**

SIW [women's branch of the Socialist International] encourages "member parties ... to promote measures to gradually reach parity (50/50) of women and men in all decision making bodies, starting by a minimum quota of 30% for women and men in all elected positions, as well as within the leadership of the party, but also setting time bound targets to reach as soon as possible a 50/50 representation with the aim to equally include women's views in politics and therefore endeavour to deliver a socially just, sustainable and balanced development."<sup>28</sup>

### TWO WAYS IN WHICH MONEY IN POLITICS HAS A DIRECT BEARING ON WOMEN CANDIDATES IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS:

(1) In raising funds to win the nomination and be recruited by the party

(2) In raising sufficient funds to finance the electoral campaign

Men may also be able to campaign more effectively outside the party structure because they are more likely to be linked to business and professional networks which can provide financial resources and expertise. The network argument extends into the “all-boys network” within the party, as most party leaderships today remain male-dominated, with women often excluded from the circle of power.<sup>30</sup> The absence of women from these networks hampers their abilities to raise sufficient funds to campaign effectively, particularly when running against entrenched male incumbents. The exceptions to this are often the spouses, daughters, and sisters of well-known politicians who by virtue of their relationship have access to family capital and connections.<sup>31</sup>

In many developing democracies the lack of money to pay even modest candidate deposits can exclude women from the election process. The scarcity of resources is often felt hardest among new parties or those not represented in parliament, as they typically do not qualify for public funding. In these instances women candidates have to finance the costs of transport and campaigning materials themselves, which can be particularly problematic in rural areas where the cost of transport to reach voters is very high.<sup>32</sup>

The funding required will fluctuate over the course of an election cycle. One of the greatest challenges

women face early on is raising early money to gain the party nomination. Early money is the initial financing required to launch a campaign for candidature, such as gaining exposure and building name recognition, travelling and organizing a campaign team, and ultimately winning the party nomination. Much of a campaign’s early money will often come from the candidate him/herself, and this self-financing is often a major obstacle for women in particular. After winning the nomination, party support may increase and greater visibility may attract additional sources of funding.<sup>33</sup>

### STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

The following strategies are primarily designed to provide guidance to political parties on actions that can be taken particularly to address the challenge that women face in raising campaign funds. In addition, these strategies provide ideas for actions by development assistance providers, party foundations, and civil society organizations in their work with, and support to, political parties.

#### (a) Establish fundraising networks

Women’s fundraising networks and organizations have a huge effect on the flow of money to women candidates. Studies from [AUSTRALIA](#), [CANADA](#), [CAMBODIA](#), the [UNITED KINGDOM](#), and the [UNITED STATES](#)



illustrate that fund-raising groups have been very influential in raising and mobilizing funds for women. These fundraising networks can provide important seed funds to women in the early stages of seeking the party nomination. In addition, they are vital sources of funds where there is no public funding and candidates have to raise private funds to contest an election.

The understanding that women need early money in the campaign process to win party nomination was the inspiration behind the founding of EMILY's List in the **UNITED STATES**. Early Money is Like Yeast (EMILY's) List is a funding network that enhances access to funding for progressive Democratic women in American politics. As women were not getting the necessary seed money for their campaigns to be taken seriously as competitive candidates against men, EMILY's List has provided access to early money, as "early money makes the dough (i.e. campaign funds) rise." This network has inspired similar initiatives in other countries, including the Republican Party's Wish List. These networks bundle together individual contributions and distribute funds to their preferred candidates.

#### **(b) Establish internal party fund to support women candidates**

Some political parties have established targeted funds to assist women candidates with campaign costs. In **CANADA**, the Liberal Party established the Judy LaMarsh Fund, which is a party mechanism for money to be raised and spent on women candidates to help them get elected to parliament. The Liberal Party has direct control over how the money is spent and which women candidates are prioritized in receiving funds. The Fund must work within Canada's party finance regulations, and it raises money primarily through fundraising events, direct mailings, and the Internet. The Fund has contributed greatly to increasing the number of women elected in the party's caucus.

#### **SUBSIDIES FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES MAY INCLUDE:**

- Reimbursement of childcare expenses
- Travel costs for campaigning
- Allocation of clothing allowance
- Provision of campaign expenses such as printed materials

#### **(c) Provide subsidies to women candidates**

Active campaigning demands a level of funding, time, and flexibility which few people, particularly women with families, can afford. In many families, women assume primary parenting responsibilities, which are often extremely difficult to combine with long hours of campaigning. In **CANADA**, the Liberal Party has sought to address these challenges by providing subsidies to women candidates for campaign-related expenses. At the national level, a financial assistance program allows women and minority candidates to be reimbursed for up to CAD\$500 for child care expenses incurred in seeking a nomination, and CAD\$500 for travel costs in geographically large ridings.<sup>34</sup> An additional CAD\$500 is provided for costs incurred in seeking a nomination in constituencies where an incumbent retires. In **CAMBODIA**, the Sam Rainsy Party provides women candidates with some basic items, including clothing appropriate to wear while campaigning and a bicycle for moving around. An additional option is for political parties to offer women candidates assistance with membership dues and candidate nomination fees, which can be prohibitively high for some women.

#### **(d) Limit nomination and campaign expenditure**

Even where women are able to raise the funds needed for a campaign, they may not be able to raise sufficient

levels of funding to be successful and to compete directly with men. In several countries, winning the party nomination is an increasingly costly exercise, and the need to run two expensive campaigns (to win the party nomination and to fund the election campaign) in one election cycle makes fundraising a daunting undertaking. Too often, the candidate who raises the most money wins the party nomination. This has been a particular challenge in the **UNITED STATES** and other candidate-centered electoral systems such as **NIGERIA**, where the effects of money on representation are enormous. This has particularly disadvantaged under-represented groups in gaining access to politics. Setting limits on money spent in nomination contests and limiting the campaigning period have been proposed as remedies to provide a more level playing field for under-represented groups.<sup>35</sup>

#### (e) Public funding of political parties

Public funding is one mechanism used to level the playing field in the electoral period, usually directed to parties represented in parliament. Public funding is provided usually without any obligation for the recipients, but it could be regulated in such a way as to encourage parties to address women's political empowerment.

■ **MEXICO:** Article 78 of the electoral code includes a “Two Percent Law” which mandates that two percent of the public funding of political parties be used specifically for building women's capacity as candidates and politicians.

■ **BURKINA FASO:** A 2009 law established candidate quotas and included substantial monetary incentives for parties that elected women candidates. A 50 percent increase in the amount of public funding is provided to parties if 30 percent of the elected candidates are women.<sup>36</sup>

■ **FRANCE:** A 1999 amendment enshrined the principle of parity in the constitution, where inter alia, 50 per cent of candidates nominated for election must be women. For the election of candidates to the lower house, parties face financial sanctions if they do not put forward 50 per cent candidates of both sexes. Parties lose part of the public funding when the difference between the numbers of candidates of each sex goes beyond 2 percent of the total number of candidates on the list.<sup>37</sup>

Some additional proposals have been made in Ireland and Ghana. In **IRELAND**, the General Scheme of the Electoral (Amendment) (Political Funding) Bill of 2011 proposed to cut political party funding by half unless 30 percent of general election candidates representing those parties were women.<sup>38</sup> In **GHANA**, a group of political parties expressed interest to develop a Women's Fund to support women aspirants in parliamentary and presidential elections. In a statement resulting from a multi-party meeting in 2011, several political parties proposed to allocate 10 percent of the public funds to political parties directly to women aspirants, and to reduce significantly the fees for women contestants.<sup>39</sup>

#### PUBLIC FUNDING AND WOMEN CANDIDATES:

■ **France:** public funds will be reduced if 50 percent of party candidates are not women

■ **Burkina Faso:** parties will receive an increase in public funding if 30 percent of its elected candidates are women

■ **Mexico:** Two percent of public funds must be used to empower women




Another way of providing indirect public funding is through access to the state and privately run media. This is an important component of party campaigning, as it establishes a connection between the candidates and the voters. Media time free of charge is a subsidy in kind, and was used in **TIMOR LESTE** as one way to promote women's electoral participation: those parties that had women placed in high positions on party lists received additional media time.

#### **(f) Allocate specific funds for training women**

In order for women to successfully advance in political parties, they must make up for the historic gaps in political experience. A common explanation used by political parties to justify not nominating or promoting women is that too few women have the necessary skills to succeed in politics.

Parties can overcome this by establishing programs and allocating resources aimed at providing training to women, a practice quite common in Latin America:

■ In **EL SALVADOR**, women activists from different parties have joined together to form a multi-party institute that provides training to women. Given that training is often a broader challenge of parties, well-trained women can leverage their skills to replicate their trainings



for other party members and enhance their value to their parties.

■ **MEXICO's PAN** seeks to level the political capabilities of women and men through seminars, workshops, forums and courses directed at women candidates. Trainings address different topics depending on needs, but include motivation, attitude, team work, and topics of concern to women. Courses have been offered for women interested in campaigning or becoming campaign coordinators in an effort to increase their participation.<sup>40</sup>

#### **(g) Apply gender responsive budgeting practices**

Parties can also reflect on how their funds are expended in relation to women, through an analysis of how all of the party's expenditures are going to benefit men and women party activists, and how resources are allocated to women-specific party structures. An analysis of campaign expenditures from a gender perspective would also be a valuable exercise. Parties can initiate gender responsive budgeting practices in government, as in **SERBIA** where parties participate in local level gender equality commissions, which work to ensure that women are benefiting from public funds.



# III

## ELECTORAL PERIOD



UNDP/MARIE PEREON

### CAMPAIGNING AND ELECTORAL PREPARATION

#### KEY ISSUES

Political parties and candidates are the key stakeholders in elections; they compete for public office, conduct election campaigns, and appeal to the electorate for votes. The legal framework for and the administration of the election, together with the political and cultural environment, have a pronounced effect on the outcome of elections.<sup>41</sup> During the electoral period, political party activities are geared towards running campaigns, supporting candidates, and reaching out to voters. In addition, parties may participate in and oversee the administration of the election, including polling and counting processes.

Electoral campaigns are central to a party's chance of winning an election. Campaign rules differ between countries, as do campaign strategies among parties. They are influenced by the legislative framework, social norms and culture, the economic context, the levels of development, and the type of political system. National election campaigns can be very costly, and in several countries the amount of funds raised has a direct impact on the success of the campaigns. All too often, however, women candidates struggle to raise the same levels of resources as male candidates and thereby gain access to the media. Women candidates are often invisible in campaigns, while party leaders and sitting incumbents (usually men) dominate party propaganda, media time, and campaign posters.

In a survey of 300 parliamentarians undertaken by the IPU, half of respondents identified capacity building related to techniques for electoral campaigning, communication with and outreach to constituencies as the most important to support their electoral candidacies.<sup>42</sup> Some noted in particular the usefulness of training conducted by 'sister parties' in other countries. There are several actions parties may take to support the development of women's campaigning skills and promote the inclusion of women in the campaign period. Women's CSOs, party foundations, and development assistance organizations have been involved in preparing and training women to conduct election campaigns. Political parties may therefore seek strategic support and alliances with women's CSOs and international organizations, which in

many countries provide valuable financial and technical resources to bolster the capacities of women candidates during the campaign period. Parties should also ensure their manifesto and campaign messages are targeted to women voters, articulating the party positions on gender equality and women's empowerment.

## STRATEGIES EMPLOYED

The following strategies are primarily designed to provide guidance to political parties on actions that can be taken to provide support during the campaign and electoral period. In addition, these strategies provide ideas for actions by development assistance providers, party foundations, and CSOs in their work with, and support to, political parties.

### (a) Provide training and mentor women candidates

Strengthening the campaigning skills of women candidates and providing women with more educational opportunities are important for increasing women's electoral opportunities. Such training may target fundraising, message development, working with the media, building voter contact and outreach programs, writing campaign plans, and designing targeted methods of voter communication.<sup>43</sup> For example, CSOs and international assistance providers could be good allies in programs that focus on enhancing the campaign skills of women.

In addition, women seeking to advance in politics can benefit from the experience of other women who have previously participated in electoral campaigns.

“WOMEN SEEKING TO ADVANCE IN POLITICS CAN BENEFIT FROM MENTORING PROGRAMMES THAT PAIR FIRST-TIME CANDIDATES WITH WOMEN WHO HAVE PREVIOUSLY PARTICIPATED IN ELECTORAL CAMPAIGNS.”

In **AUSTRALIA**, the Labor Party, through its own EMILY's List, has established a mentoring program where first-time candidates are paired with more experienced politicians for this very purpose. In the **UNITED KINGDOM**, the Conservative Party's Women2Win, which includes a website of the same name, has played an active role in recruiting new women members and providing them with the training, mentoring, and support they need to succeed within the party.

#### **(b) Ensure women's visibility in the campaign**

Women party activists and candidates embody skills and traits that are of use to the political party but frequently go unrecognized and are insufficiently utilized in campaigns. Women are very often absent from party campaigns, as priority is given to party leaders and incumbents with wide name recognition. Political parties can promote the visibility and name recognition of women candidates by actively promoting their inclusion in party campaigns, including in television adverts and campaign posters, or by appointing women as party spokespersons. Women party members in several countries have used new technologies creatively to promote their own candidacies during the campaign, with new social media tools like personal websites and the use of Facebook and Twitter.<sup>44</sup>

Proactive public outreach campaigns can counter cultural and societal biases against women – especially those perpetuated by the media – and highlight the benefits of women's political participation for society as a whole. Incentives can also be provided to political parties to increase women's visibility in campaigns, such as the provision of free or additional media time to parties to promote their women candidates. In **TIMOR-LESTE**, as highlighted above, parties were provided with additional free media time if they nominated women and ensured their visibility in the campaign. In the **UNITED STATES**, the Democratic



UNDP/ANGOLA

Party encourages candidates to include images of women in their television campaign advertisements.

Political parties should also ensure that women candidates have access to the campaign machinery – campaign staff, security, venues, and access to funds – which can greatly enhance their chances of winning.

#### **(c) Identify and disseminate party positions on issues that are priorities for women**

Platforms are a key component of party maturity; they help parties distinguish themselves from each other on issues, rather than on the basis of identity or personality. Identifying women's policy priorities can be a strategy to win the support of women voters and impact favorably on electoral outcomes for parties. For example, women parliamentarians are at the forefront of efforts to combat gender-based violence, they tend to prioritize parental leave and childcare, and they have been instrumental in ensuring gender-equality laws and electoral reforms that enhance women's access to parliaments appear on the legislative agenda.<sup>45</sup> The inclusion of women's concerns into the party platform can aid women candidates because it provides tangible talking points for women to reach out to women voters. Parties that can identify policy issues are able to position themselves better as responsive to the concerns of women constituents, thereby attracting more women votes for their candidates.

■ **CANADA:** The Liberal Party developed and disseminated a series of Pink Books, which identified and explained the party's position on priority issues for women.

■ **INDIA:** BJP women party members attracted a significant number of women voters to the party by introducing a policy to put 10,000 rupees into a savings account for all girls born in the state of Madir Pradesh, to be used for their education once they reached 18.

■ **PERU:** In its pre-electoral campaign, the Christian People's Party (PPC) initiated a campaign to improve the Women and Equal Opportunities chapter of its Government Plan, and in the process also publicize its platform. In alliance with and with funding from the International Republican Institute (IRI), PPC sought public input through public hearings and meetings with targeted organizations.<sup>46</sup>

#### (d) Gender sensitive electoral monitoring and security provisions

Political parties have the important task of undertaking a watchdog function during the electoral period by closely monitoring the voting process and checking for irregularities. Vote buying, intimidation of voters, ballot fraud, and poor organization undermine the integrity of elections. Poor security can affect women voters and candidates in different ways than men, especially in places where there is a high threat of gender-based violence, which may be prevalent particularly in post-conflict elections.<sup>47</sup>

Political parties therefore need to keep a watchful eye, which may necessitate the presence of party agents or monitors during the registration and voting processes to ensure that voters are able to cast their ballots without intimidation. Parties should also ensure the safety of monitors during the counting and transportation of ballot boxes.<sup>48</sup> It is important for parties to include a gender perspective in the monitoring practices employed, such as ensuring that checklists to be completed by monitors include questions related to family voting, violence and intimidation, or other violations that impact on women's free participation in the election.<sup>49</sup>

Political parties have the responsibility of recruiting and training party agents, and parties may actively seek to recruit women to fulfill this watchdog task. This is



UNDP/MARIE FRECHON

#### CHECKLISTS USED BY PARTY MONITORS SHOULD INCLUDE GENDER FOCUSED QUESTIONS, SUCH AS:

Are there any issues in your areas of assignment that appear to affect women's participation as voters and/or candidates, either positively or negatively?

particularly important in polling stations allocated for women only. The presence of men in such polling stations may be prohibited, or may intimidate women voters. The presence of party monitors may also have other benefits; not only do they contribute to ensuring women's safety while voting through their visibility, but they may also keep their own party supporters in check, ensuring they do not engage in intimidation of voters or reporting such incidents.

#### **(e) Gender sensitive voter information**

It is in the interest of political parties to conduct voter education to ensure that their supporters register to vote, and that they are able to cast a legitimate vote on election day. Political parties invest large amounts of money and time into conducting voter information campaigns, and can actively direct messages to women voters and ensure that they understand the processes involved. Voter information campaigns should highlight to women the importance of their votes for society as a whole and emphasize their right to vote as equal members of that society. In **SOUTH AFRICA** for example, the African National Congress Women's League initiated a 60 Days Non-Stop Electioneering Campaign during the 2009 national general elections,

which sought to mobilize women voters to exercise their rights to vote in order to consolidate democracy.<sup>50</sup>

Women should be part of the management, planning, and implementation of voter information campaigns. Organizing such campaigns and educational seminars requires not only tailoring messages and content to the socio-cultural background, literacy levels, and the political situation in each country, but also the careful selection and organization of logistics. Ensuring a learning environment that is safe and where women do not feel intimidated is important, and if necessary, women only trainings may be considered. In traditional communities, women may be segregated from men and have different levels of freedom of movement and education.<sup>51</sup> All voter education teams should include women and, if necessary, could be comprised entirely of women.<sup>52</sup>

Voter information campaigns for the public at large should also include gender sensitive messaging emphasizing the secrecy of the ballot to combat family voting, and highlighting the importance of women's political participation for the consolidation of democracy. Messages may also seek to encourage men to consider voting for women candidates.



## IV

POST-ELECTORAL  
PERIOD

UNDP BRAZIL

## GENDER RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE

## KEY ISSUES

Advancing democratic governance requires creating an environment of inclusive and responsive political processes and the empowerment of women. The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance. Yet globally, women remain under-represented in decision-making bodies. Research has shown that the number of women in parliament does matter; at the very least, the more women there are in parliament, the more likely the party is to address women's issues and to change the gender dynamics in the chamber.<sup>53</sup> The proportion of women members of parliament has a great influence on the nature of debate in politics.



**PARTIES CAN BENEFIT FROM  
A SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF THE  
NEEDS OF AND OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR WOMEN MEMBERS.**

In the absence of women's presence in parliaments and other legislative bodies, parties need to be proactive in ensuring that gender equality is addressed in governance. Parties are influential in determining which issues form the political debate: they formulate policy, set governance priorities and therefore are strategically placed to address the concerns of women. In practice, political parties have a mixed record in addressing gender issues in governance. The examples in this section offer some insights into measures that political parties have taken to address gender equality in post-electoral governance.

### **STRATEGIES EMPLOYED**

The following strategies are primarily designed to provide guidance to political parties on actions to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in post-electoral governance. In addition, these strategies provide ideas for actions that could be undertaken by development assistance providers, party foundations, and CSOs in their work with, and support to, political parties.

#### **(a) Undertake a gender equality assessment**

The post-electoral period is strategically important for parties to conduct a gender equality assessment. Frequently political parties rely on anecdotal evidence when devising strategies to promote women's empowerment, and instead could rely more on internal stock-taking. Parties can benefit from a systematic analysis of the needs and opportunities of women members, based on data collected from surveys, focus groups, public

opinion research, and electoral results. In addition, an investigation into gender equality within the political party may include examining the rules governing the functioning of the party, its policies and manifesto commitments, and the positions held by women in the party. This can be facilitated by keeping updated records of sex disaggregated data.

After the election, political parties may benefit from undertaking an assessment of their own performance and degree of attention to gender issues in the campaign. The party may assess if certain practices or rules disadvantaged women directly or indirectly during the election, such as funding of candidates or recruitment rules. In turn, actions or strategic plans can be developed and tailored to the findings of these assessments. New party policies can be adopted or reforms undertaken at any time, but there is a strategic advantage for undertaking this in the post-election period. For example, in **CANADA**, the New Democratic Party (NDP) completed a diversity audit in one of its provinces post-elections, from which members of under-represented electorates were able to develop an action plan to nominate more women candidates in winnable constituencies. In **KYRGYZSTAN**, a gender analysis of political party manifestos and an assessment of the situation of women in politics at the national and local level were undertaken by development assistance organizations and CSOs.

#### **(b) Provide training to newly elected members**

For most newly elected members, parliamentary work is a new experience. While the secretariat of the parliament often provides induction training to new members, political parties often provide their own training to their parliamentary group members on how the parties function in the parliamentary setting. This training can provide general skills development and can be targeted to women members to assist with navigating rules and procedures.



### (c) Promote gender-sensitive reforms to parliaments

As political groups in parliament, parties can work to change the culture of parliaments. When women enter parliaments, they tend to enter domains which operate along gendered lines, i.e. a political environment where the institutional culture and operating procedures may be biased against them. Conducting a review of the political climate may be necessary to ensure that the conditions in which women operate are conducive to their participation. Giving consideration to issues such as the sitting times of parliament, the location of facilities for women members, and parental leave provisions can lead to positive reforms to promote women's participation. Removing the barriers to women's participation is therefore crucial for creating gender-friendly parliaments that respond to the needs and interests of both men and women.<sup>54</sup>

In **SOUTH AFRICA**, women members of the African National Congress party caucus highlighted the need for reform to the institution of parliament when they took up their seats in 1994. They called for the parliamentary calendar to be aligned to match the school calendar so that parliamentarians are either in recess or have constituency time when students are on vacation. They also pushed for debates to finish earlier in the evening to accommodate parliamentarians with families, and for childcare facilities to be put in place.<sup>55</sup>

IN SOUTH AFRICA, WOMEN PARTY MEMBERS PUSHED FOR CHANGES TO THE PARLIAMENTARY CALENDAR AND SITTING TIMES TO ACCOMMODATE PARLIAMENTARIANS WITH FAMILIES AND ENHANCE THE GENDER SENSITIVITY OF PARLIAMENT.

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### (d) Ensure gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in party policy

Survey research of 300 parliamentarians by the IPU shows that the policies of political parties are key determinants of legislative priorities and agendas. The decision-making bodies of political parties, such as executive committees, are highly influential; yet women remain under-represented in these groups. In practice, not all political parties promote gender equality or uphold their manifesto pledges in practice and few women hold top decision-making positions in their ranks. As would be expected, the support of the ruling party is one of the most important factors in introducing and enacting gender-related legislation.<sup>56</sup>

Political parties can promote women's empowerment through policy development in at least two ways:

(a) By supporting gender specific policy reform, such as combating gender-based violence or targeting parental leave or reproductive rights issues;

(b) By ensuring that a gender perspective is mainstreamed into all policy debates and priorities of the party, including promoting gender equality in areas like access to justice, health, nationality, labour, land rights, social security, and inheritance.<sup>57</sup> Parliaments can also ensure that international commitments, like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) are translated into national legislation and inform government action.

The capacities of party group members, both men and women, should be developed to undertake analyses from a gender perspective. Policy development, review of legislation and resource allocations must be informed by their effects on men and women. This may also include supporting the capacities of specialized committees that deal with gender equality to conduct gender analyses of budgets and have access to data. A related organizational measure is to ensure that resolutions and recommendations from women's wings, internal policy committees, or the women's parliamentary caucus inform policy development within the political party.

■ **SPAIN:** The Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) sponsored the passage of a gender equality law and sought to mainstream gender into the policy-making process. Since 2004, the PSOE has introduced several pieces of legislation, including on agricultural reform, dependent care, and legislated candidate quotas.

■ **MOROCCO:** The USFP has highlighted issues such as the citizenship law and the passage of a gender equality law in Parliament.

■ **RWANDA:** Legislative reform has focused on the law on inheritance and succession (1999), the child protection law (2001), and the gender-based violence law (2009). Women have also been influential in ensuring that other pieces of legislation are gender-sensitive and child-friendly, including the law on national citizenship, the classification of genocide crimes, and the protection of witnesses.

In some cases, parliamentarians may have a limited ability to address gender equality issues because of party discipline. For the most part, the policies of parties

GENDER MAINSTREAMING REQUIRES THAT POLICY DEVELOPMENT, REVIEW OF LEGISLATION AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS MUST BE INFORMED BY THEIR EFFECTS ON MEN AND WOMEN.

determine the way the party group in parliament votes on a particular issue. It is therefore necessary to avoid placing unrealistic demands on individual women members; where party identity is very strong, the space for individual parliamentarians to act other than in line with the party may be limited.<sup>58</sup> This reinforces the importance of ensuring gender mainstreaming in the policies of the party.

#### **(e) Ensure women access to vacancies and retention**

The number of women holding seats in parliament can go up and down during a parliamentary term. Women members may resign or take up a ministerial position and thereby have to vacate their parliamentary seats. In these instances (where no by-election is held), political parties can ensure that women replace women in the vacant seats. A party can also decide that any vacated seat will be filled by a woman as a way to increase the proportion of women members. Political parties may also consider ways in which they can ensure the retention of women members in future elections. There is usually a higher turnover rate of women parliamentarians than men, and asking the women themselves what kind of incentives or support they need might reverse this trend. In **GHANA**, for example, several political parties have stated that they will seek to retain sitting women MPs in future parliamentary elections, and ensure that a woman replaces a sitting woman in the event of a vacancy.<sup>59</sup>

### (f) Support cross-party networks of women and women's parliamentary caucuses

Women the world over have realized that as a minority in parliament, there are strategic advantages to forming alliances and coalitions to affect policy change. Women's caucuses can be effective forums for bringing women together across political party lines to channel their interests and concerns, as well as to mainstream gender in policy development and oversight of government action.<sup>60</sup> Concretely, caucus activities may include providing capacity support to women parliamentarians, conducting analyses of bills, holding hearings with CSOs, convening public workshops on relevant issues, defining common positions on issues so that women members may seek to influence their own party leaders, and overseeing government action on gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment.

Party support for women's caucuses can yield positive results:

■ **MEXICO:** The quota law came to fruition because women from all the major political parties worked together both inside and outside of the congress to pressure their male colleagues to support quotas.

■ **ARMENIA:** A multi-party coalition was able to convince most of the major parties to agree on a quota for parliament; women party members took the commonly agreed messages and tailored them for their own internal advocacy efforts within their individual parties.

■ **EL SALVADOR:** The Association of Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians seeks to strengthen

women's political voices both inside and outside of parliament. The Association offers training and workshops on communication and organizing skills that help women become more effective in their political work.

■ **KYRGYZSTAN:** The Association for Women's Legal Initiatives, which unites women MPs, gender experts, and activists of women's non-governmental organizations, has been instrumental in strengthening women's caucuses including in areas such as capacity development for conducting analyses of bills.<sup>61</sup>

### (g) Form strategic partnerships with civil society organizations

Coalition building between political women and civil society can be effective to advance policy agendas. In many cases, particularly when parties seek to change the constitution or enact legislation to promote women's political empowerment, activists within political parties have worked closely with civil society organizations to achieve their goals. In other cases, CSOs and women's



organizations strategically target women party activists to advocate for their desired policy changes. In both scenarios, the CSOs are able to put pressure on governments and build public demand for reform.

■ **MOROCCO:** Both domestic and international CSOs have worked together to bring women from several political parties together, to build momentum to form a women's caucus, and strategize about how to support a quota law.

■ **PERU:** Building on the wave of new gender quotas in Latin America, a coalition of women's organizations was able to work with women inside parties to advocate for the passage of a candidate quota law.

■ **SLOVENIA:** A cross-party coalition of women leaders and other public figures successfully advocated for a constitutional amendment to incorporate temporary guarantees for the equal representation of women in politics, i.e. a 40 percent quota for all electoral lists in the European Parliament elections of 2004.<sup>62</sup>

### (h) Sensitize party members and work in partnership with men

Institutionalizing gender equality means that policies and procedures adopted by a party are put into practice by party members, particularly the caucus members in parliament. Party ambitions, like establishing concrete targets and articulating policy commitments, mean little if they are not accompanied by support and buy-in from party members, men and women. As men are the majority in most parliaments and dominate leadership structures in parties, they are essential partners for implementing change. This may require internal training processes to sensitize party members, especially men, about gender equality. Orientation training, usually provided to new members of parliament, should include provisions on gender equality.

The support and vision of party leadership is extremely important in this regard. In **SPAIN**, the PSOE leader Zapatero declared himself to be a committed feminist and in doing so has changed sensibilities around feminism in Spanish politics. This has had a ripple effect whereby women are treated as equal with men in the party, with their views given as much consideration as those of their male counterparts.

# CONCLUSION



The inclusion of the perspectives of women and their participation in politics are prerequisites for democratic development and contribute to good governance, and political parties are the primary vehicles for political participation. It can be politically and financially advantageous for political parties to promote women's empowerment initiatives actively throughout the electoral cycle. By openly and formally supporting women's participation through reforms, political parties can alter public opinion, generate new support bases, attract new members, increase the flow of public funding to the party, and improve their standing with other countries, among other political and practical benefits.

The formal support of political parties is required to overcome the barriers to women's participation in politics. Gender biases are prevalent in all

the countries of the world and are reflected in social, economic, and political life. In many countries women continue to be discouraged from direct competition with men and from public exposure and interactions, and are instead assigned roles that steer them away from decision-making.

Such biases fuel and perpetuate women's lower economic status and relative poverty worldwide, which are among the most important and immediate barriers that make women's political participation near impossible at any stage of the electoral cycle. For example, women have control over fewer resources, if any at all, and therefore cannot finance their own campaigns to be nominated or stand for elections. They also have access to fewer resources than men to support their campaigns, such as external funding, knowledge products, networks of influence, role models, and experienced mentors. Within political parties, such biases are prominently reflected in the limited number of women in leadership and decision-making positions.

Instead, women are overrepresented in positions and activities supporting political parties at the grassroots level or supporting male party leadership. Positions of power in political parties can often be informal, centralized, and supported by well-established relationships and networks of influence that are inaccessible to new arrivals, and particularly to women. Without access to the institutional knowledge and memory embedded in such networks, and with very limited resources, few role models and mentors, and sometimes even limited family and community support, it is understandable that women's participation in political parties has remained well below that of men.

The multitude of challenges confronting women who wish to enter politics and join political parties can be addressed through a diversity of measures at various levels

and entry points of the electoral cycle. This Guidebook has illustrated how targeted strategies can succeed in bringing more women into positions of leadership and ensure that they remain in such positions. Successful strategies range from wide-scale change in the political system to internal party reform and capacity building for women. A good number of cases show that reforms to increase women's participation in political parties have gone hand in hand with initiatives to improve the gender responsiveness of party platforms. The most meaningful strategies simultaneously combined reforms to political institutions and the provision of targeted support to women party activists, candidates, and elected officials that addressed the socio-economic and capacity challenges faced by women.

Political parties across the world have demonstrated that no one starting point is better than another as long as there is commitment to gender equality. Successful parties have been creative in their approaches to women's empowerment and matched those approaches to their respective history and contexts. Despite the diversity of strategies and approaches, however, it is important to note that established measures such as quotas have repeatedly been shown to be effective in putting more women into positions of power.

This Guidebook has aimed to provide a concise and easily accessible list of potential strategies, organized according to the stages of the electoral cycle (Part A), together with detailed, practical examples from the case studies (Part B). It is hoped that members of political parties, particularly the leadership of those parties, civil society organizations and gender equality activists are motivated to take action to promote the political participation of women. It is also hoped the Guidebook will be helpful to stakeholders looking for guidance on how to proceed in their efforts to promote women's participation in political parties.

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# PART B: CASE STUDIES

UN PHOTO/PATRICIA ESTEVE



## BACKGROUND

This section contains case studies of actions taken by political parties to enhance women's participation. Many of the examples used throughout Part A have been drawn from the case studies included in Part B. They are studies on different party or civil society initiatives rather than comprehensive situational analyses of all parties in the countries under consideration. It was not possible within the scope of this study to present all such party initiatives and this publication is therefore necessarily selective. The political party case studies are drawn from the following countries: Armenia, Australia, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Canada, Croatia, El Salvador, Mexico, Morocco, Rwanda, South Africa, Spain, United Kingdom and the United States of America. In addition, several shorter case studies are presented as Boxes that summarize information on key issues, covering India, Indonesia, Southern Africa (Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia), Peru, Serbia, and Timor-Leste.

The case studies are organized alphabetically. They draw on a combination of desk research and in-depth interviews with current and former political party leaders, party representatives, and members of civil society with knowledge of the parties or featured initiatives. Effort was made to include diverse examples in terms of geography, party ideology, type of political system and the strategies employed. The case studies provide background on the selection and implementation of particular strategies, and also describes their impact. Each case study attempts to offer lessons learned or good practices to assist political parties and political party assistance providers in developing and advancing reform strategies.

## CASE STUDIES

Listed below are the 20 case study examples which inform a large part of the examples provided in Part A – Summary of **GOOD PRACTICES** (in a few instances, some examples outside the scope of this research were also presented in Part A in order to illustrate a particular point). The following pages provide more details on these case studies.

COUNTRY	TITLE	EXAMPLE	KEYWORDS
<b>Armenia</b>	Coalition building to push for the implementation of quotas	Women's Leadership Forum (civil society organization)	Women's mobilization Legislated quota
<b>Australia</b>	Internal party quotas and fundraising networks to promote women's advancement in politics	Australian Labor Party	Internal party quotas Fundraising networks
<b>Burkina Faso</b>	Voluntary and legislated political party quotas	Congress for Democracy and Progress	Voluntary party quotas Legislated quotas Funding mechanisms
<b>Cambodia</b>	Women's wing organization to promote women within the party and into elected office	Sam Rainsy Party	Women's mobilization Campaign support for women candidates
<b>Canada</b>	Supporting women candidates through funding networks and candidate nomination rules	Liberal Party	Funding networks Candidate nomination rules Party platforms
	Diversified candidate recruitment and subsidies for campaign expenses	New Democratic Party (box)	Candidate nomination Campaign expenses
<b>Croatia</b>	Women's wing support for candidate quotas and capacity building trainings	Social Democratic Party	Women's mobilization Women's wing Internal party quota
<b>El Salvador</b>	Strategies for promoting women's participation in post-liberation politics	Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation Association of Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians	Internal party organization Voluntary quota Women's caucus
<b>India (box)</b>	Quotas, reservations and political parties	General Bharatiya Janata Party	Reserved seats in parliament
<b>Indonesia (box)</b>	Candidate recruitment and political party quotas	Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle	Candidate recruitment
<b>Mexico</b>	Supporting women's representation through quotas and state funds for training	National Action Party	Women's mobilization Funding of candidates Internal party quotas
<b>Morocco</b>	Cross sector activism to promote party candidate quotas	Civil society organizations	Women's mobilization Candidate quota Party policies
<b>Peru (box)</b>	Women's forum advocacy for quotas	General	Quotas
<b>Rwanda</b>	Using the constitution to institutionalize women's post-conflict gains	Rwandan Patriotic Front	Voluntary and legislated quotas Women's mobilization
<b>Serbia (box)</b>	Women's wing mobilization for political change	G17 Plus	Women's mobilization Women's wing
<b>South Africa</b>	Women's mobilization and transformation of the political agenda	African National Congress	Women's mobilization Voluntary party quotas
<b>Southern Africa (box)</b>	Regional lessons on leveraging transition periods and institutionalizing party gender equality practices	Mozambique (Liberation Front of Mozambique) Namibia Mauritius	Party policies
<b>Spain</b>	Working in partnership with men to transform the political environment for women	Socialist Workers' Party	Partnership with men Internal quota Women's mobilization
<b>Timor-Leste (box)</b>	Creating incentives to advance women's candidate recruitment	United Nations Transitional Administration of East Timor	Quotas Media airtime
<b>UK</b>	Nominating women candidates in winnable seats	General Conservative Party	Candidate nomination Party policy reform
<b>USA</b>	Fundraising networks and a gender equity policy for party conventions	Democratic Party	Women's mobilization Funding networks Party organization

## ARMENIA: COALITION BUILDING TO PUSH FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUOTAS<sup>1</sup>

“

THE CASE OF ARMENIA SUGGESTS THAT QUOTAS CAN BE SIGNIFICANT AS PART OF A LONGER-TERM STRATEGY TO BOTH STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY AND BRING MORE WOMEN INTO POLITICS.

”

### KEYWORDS

Women’s mobilization  
Legislated quota

### EXAMPLE

Women’s Leadership Forum  
(civil society organization)

### AT A GLANCE: ARMENIA

Name of parliament	National Assembly
Structure of parliament	Unicameral
Type of electoral system	Mixed Member Proportional
Legislative election	May 2007
Number of women elected	12 out of 131 (9%)

### Background

Since achieving independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia’s democratic development has been slow and has faced several challenges. Armenia’s legislature consists of 131 members elected through a mixed electoral system, combining party lists and single member district elections. There are more than 50 registered parties in Armenia and five are represented in parliament, which is dominated by the Republican Party. The personality-driven nature of most political parties in Armenia is reflected in the highly centralized character of political organizations, which in turn has affected the prospect of women’s participation in politics. In the 2007 parliamentary elections, none of the five women who contested seats in the single member districts won; instead, the 12 women elected came through the political party lists.<sup>2</sup> In all, just 12 of the 131 seats were won by women in the 2007 elections.

This case study focuses on the Women Leadership Forum, a civil society organization that has worked to increase women’s access to politics in Armenia. Although it is not a political party case study, it is a useful example of bringing together women from across the political spectrum to provide capacity building and develop common agendas to influence political parties.

## Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

Historically and culturally, women's roles in Armenian society have been concentrated in the private sphere, with the public sphere largely dominated by men.<sup>3</sup> While Soviet era policies meant women were able to acquire education and enter the workforce in unprecedented numbers, these policies were not matched by similar changes in the strict gender norms, with the result that women carried the double burden of full workloads both outside and inside the home. As with other post-Soviet countries, the transition to a market economy in Armenia was a gendered process through which women lost many of the social and economic advantages gained during the Soviet era, as limited in scope as those had been. This included the elimination of all Soviet quotas for women's political participation after independence in 1991, which resulted in a dramatic decline in women's access to the public sphere. A modified minimum quota was reintroduced in 1999 designating a minimum of 5 percent for women members of parliament.<sup>4</sup> Politics continues to be perceived as largely masculine and as having to do with power struggles and disputes, perceptions which discourage women's involvement.<sup>5</sup>

In 2005, the Women's Leadership Forum (WLF) began to mobilize to increase the representation of women in parliament and in politics more broadly. The WLF is a national civil society organization (CSO) that has worked to bring together women from different professional and political spectrums. The WLF grew out of a series of meetings originally convened in 2005 by international organizations looking to promote women's participation in Armenian politics. The women participating in those discussions agreed that **a multi-partisan CSO** with ties to all of the parties would be the best vehicle to advance women's political interests. This approach was viewed as more likely to succeed because, in the face of male dominated party leaderships, collective mobilization was hoped to yield the greatest results in terms of internal party strategies. Up to 400 women from throughout Armenia participated in the WLF meetings, including representatives from all the major political parties. The WLF was led by a governing body of 16 women called the Women's Leadership Coordination Board (WLCB).

## Strategies Employed

Mindful of the difficulties in gaining formal legal reform within Armenia's political environment, the WLF initially worked to obtain pledges from political parties **to implement a quota**. The WLF's strategy centered on an advocacy campaign that was tailored to the individual parties and drew on strategic alliances with both civic and international organizations to demonstrate a common message for change.

### A. CAPACITY BUILDING

The early efforts of the WLF also aimed to **build the political capacity** of women members in Armenia, and were supported by international organizations. Initial decisions about the form and the direction the WLF that would take were based on assessments completed by WLF members regarding the political challenges faced by Armenian women. In cooperation with international organizations, WLF members received training on leadership, communication, strategic planning and other related areas, and were brought together for opportunities to network and strategize. The organization also drafted a Statement of Intent, indicating its vision to have more women elected to parliament in the 2007 elections.

### B. QUOTAS

Building on debates led by women's organizations, women parliamentarians and political parties, the WLF joined a broader movement advocating for reform to the **legislated quota for elections**. The WLF, together with other domestic civic and political actors, argued that a quota was the most direct strategy to enhance women's participation in politics. Armenia's existing legal quota for women on the party lists had been set at a low five percent, and was observed for the first time in the 2007 elections. Because legal reform to raise the percentage of the quota was very difficult, the WLCB also appealed directly to the political parties to agree to implement a **voluntary party quota** of 25 percent for women in their respective party lists. The WLCB viewed 25 percent as an ambitious goal, but maintained that this was the minimum proportion needed for women to make an impact. The goal was for major parties to sign a pledge

committing to this quota, which, although not legally binding, would have still represented a serious commitment to the goal.

Because of the multi-partisan nature of the WLF leadership and the impartial nature of the organization, the WLF was able to approach all of the major parties for their support on this initiative, drawing on the WLCB members who were active leaders in several of the political parties. At first, many of the party leaders were resistant to sign the pledge, arguing that it would be difficult to find qualified women to fill the lists. The WLF strategy included a combination of private meetings and negotiations with party leadership, as well as public events such as press conferences and roundtable discussions which sought to convince parties to agree to the pledge.

The WLCB also looked to international organizations and other women's CSOs to leverage their influence with the political parties. The WLCB and international organizations argued that signing onto the pledge would demonstrate the parties' commitment to democratic reform, and would gain them recognition both within and outside Armenia. Several parties were persuaded eventually by different arguments. Some parties perceived putting more women on their lists as a way to increase their voter base, while others feared being left behind as parties began to make inroads among women voters.

In 2006, the WLF **succeeded in securing pledges** from most of the major political parties. Although the ruling Republican Party did not sign the pledge, it indicated that the party would be supportive of increasing women's participation in political processes. Significantly, all of the parties that signed the pledge honored it even though there were no legal sanctions attached to pledge violations.

As a result of the combined efforts of the WLF, women's CSOs and parliamentarians, the National Assembly revised the election code to increase the quota from five percent to 15 percent, with at least one woman required to be in every tenth spot on each party list. The new quota demonstrated that the WLF's consensus-building among the parties had successfully drawn attention to

the problem of underrepresentation of women in the National Assembly.

The WLF has indicated its intention to work towards further strengthening the quota by advocating for the application of a "zebra" system that would ensure the placement of women in at least one in every four spots on party lists, as well as replacement of women on the lists by women.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

The case of Armenia suggests that quotas can be significant as part of a longer-term strategy to both strengthen democracy and bring more women into politics. However, negative perceptions about politics remain strong, which acts as a deterrent to enter politics, particularly among women. The WLF's success was a valuable first step in advancing women's participation in a difficult political context, and demonstrates the value of strategic collaboration between parties and civil society and the potential of cross-party women's networks. Armenian women can be part of bringing democratic change to their country, and party strategies that provide opportunities for women to grow as political and civic leaders as well as organize networks can lay an important foundation for enabling women to become agents of change.

### Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives or all the organizations in the country aiming to promote women's political participation, but rather showcases concrete actions of one organization in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
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## AUSTRALIA: INTERNAL PARTY QUOTAS AND FUNDRAISING NETWORKS TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S ADVANCEMENT IN POLITICS<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Australia is a consolidated democracy with two major parties, Labor and Liberal, and several smaller parties with seats in parliament. The Australian lower house, the House of Representatives, elects members through preferential majority vote in single member districts. The same system exists in several Australian state parliaments. Because of the predominance of the single member district electoral system, the Labor Party (ALP) has employed outreach and candidate support strategies for its women members, and has implemented internal party quotas.

Julia Gillard was elected Labor Party leader and thus became the first woman Prime Minister of Australia in June 2010, after former Prime Minister Kevin Rudd decided not to contest a leadership ballot. As Party leader, she headed the party in the August 2010

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the Australian Labor Party to promote women's participation within the party and in the context of elections. It focuses on women's participation in the House of Representatives, although it must be acknowledged that important advances in women's political participation have also been made in the Senate and in several state legislatures.



GETTY IMAGES

### KEYWORDS

Internal party quotas  
Fundraising networks

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Australian Labor Party

### AT A GLANCE: AUSTRALIA

Name of parliament	Parliament of Australia
Structure of parliament	Bicameral (Senate and House of Representatives)
Type of electoral system	Plurality/Majority (House of Representatives)
Legislative election	August 2010
Number of women elected (lower house)	37 out of 150 (24%)

elections. The elections resulted in the first “hung parliament” since 1940, whereby no party secured a majority in the House of Representatives. After much political haggling, Gillard announced that the Labor Party would form a minority government with the support of the Greens and three independent members.<sup>2</sup> This was an unprecedented event at the federal level in Australia, though minority governments have been common at state and territorial levels.

### Rationale for Increasing Women’s Participation

The Labor Party’s strategies to promote women’s political participation originate in the progressive social movement and activism of the 1960s and 1970s and the electoral fortunes of the Labor Government of Gough Whitlam (1972-1975), which was removed in a “constitutional coup” by the Governor General in 1975. As a party representing progressive Australians, the ALP has always attracted and absorbed new progressive political currents in Australia. Sometimes these have been resisted before being incorporated into the structures and practices of the ALP. This was the case with the women’s movement in Australia, which fought a series of campaigns both publicly and within the Labor Party for increased social rights and for representation within the Labor Party.

The wins for women in the Whitlam Government were important and extensive. They included equal pay for women, the modernization of Australia’s antiquated divorce laws and the appointment of the first Prime Ministerial Advisor on the Status of Women. With the defeat of the Whitlam Government and subsequent electoral setbacks in 1977 and 1980, women in the ALP sought explanations for the loss and better ways to cement the gains of the women’s movement. Accordingly, the party established several committees to identify reform areas for the party, including a Status of Women Committee. Women strategists within the Labor Party serving on the Committee drew on public

opinion research and argued that the party suffered from being viewed as dominated by men. The Status of Women Committee suggested bringing more women into the party as a concrete strategy for broadening its voter appeal.

## Strategies Employed

### A. INTERNAL PARTY QUOTAS

In the late 1970s, the Labor Party’s Status of Women Committee recommended the creation of a **comprehensive special measures policy**, called “Affirmative Action” in Australian parlance, which would change the face and decision making process of the party. However, due to resistance from the male-dominated leadership opposed to special measures, the policy was rejected at the 1981 Labor Party conference. The party conference did agree to adopt a 40 percent gender quota for all party committees and other decision-making structures. In 1982, an increased number of Labor Party women were elected to parliament.

However, this trend would not be sustained, and by 1994 there were fewer Labor women in the parliament than before 1982. Even though the internal party quota had been in place for years, the party remained dominated by men. Moreover, few women were being positioned as candidates and women were viewed as less electable than men. Men’s concerns surrounding women’s electoral competitiveness led to a certain level of resistance to the proposed special measures for Labor Party candidates, such as affirmative action.

Women activists in the Labor Party sought to counter negative perceptions of women candidates by raising awareness about the importance and value of women’s participation within the party. This organized group of women, including several high-profile elected women officials, initially focused their efforts on the states of Victoria, Queensland and West Australia. In these states, the women leaders and women’s party committees



organized a series of events under the slogan of “**Half by 2000.**” The public visibility of these events applied significant pressure on the Labor Party leadership to address the demands of its women members. The women activists targeted the then Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating to be an ally in their campaign, pointing to his verbal commitments to expand women’s role in the party leadership. Keating’s support proved particularly valuable because his roots were in the conservative wing of the party, where opposition to special measures and other policies seeking to increase the role and influence of women in the party had been strongest.<sup>3</sup>

A quota-based special measures policy was the backbone of the Labor Party’s efforts to transform its image. Women party activists lobbied for the adoption of **internal quotas** and for an assessment of whether women candidates were contesting “winnable” seats. They also conducted an assessment of the progress of initial quota efforts, in order to provide tangible recommendations to the party regarding the quota’s implementation. Meanwhile, Labor women leaders formed both party and non-party entities to help train, fundraise for and mentor women candidates.

## B. VOLUNTARY CANDIDATE QUOTA

In early 1994, the Labor Party’s women’s conference, an annual meeting of women members in the Labor Party, passed a resolution supporting an Affirmative Action program mandating that the party nominate women for 40 percent of all winnable seats. The women’s conference considered a seat to be winnable based on a number of factors, such as the partisan makeup of a given electorate or district. The participants in the conference also called for penalties against state and territory party branches that did not nominate enough women candidates.<sup>4</sup>

Later that year, the general Labor Party conference passed rules on Affirmative Action for women, stipulating a 35 percent quota by 2002 for all candidates standing for winnable seats in state and federal parliaments.

Passing the **special measures policy** was not an easy task.<sup>5</sup> Some factions of the Labor Party opposed the passing of the special measures rule and two premiers privately opposed the policy, but eventually voted for the rule in solidarity with the prime minister, who was supportive.<sup>6</sup> A majority of the voting members at the conference approved the policy, agreeing to **penalties** if candidate lists did not include enough women and the calling for new primaries or pre-selections. The State Administrative Committees and National Executive of the Labor Party were tasked with ensuring that the Affirmative Action targets were met by all party factions. To date, these committees have never applied the penalties.

In the 1996 elections, the party was unable to meet its newly-adopted Affirmative Action targets, and no significant gains in the number of elected women were made. The Labor Party women quickly ascertained that an Affirmative Action policy alone was insufficient to change the makeup of the various representative institutions in Australia, without equally addressing the other challenges such as the male-dominated party culture and the shortage of ‘early’ money required to be pre-selected by the party to run.

## C. FUNDING NETWORKS

A National Labor Women’s Network (NLWN) was created in 1997. Unlike EMILY’s List, it was not an autonomous organization and was accountable to the Labor Party’s National Executive. In 2000, both EMILY’s List Australia and NLWN noted that, despite substantial progress, the quota target was not reached in all states, and then played a key role in calling for a reassessment of the Labor Party’s Affirmative Action policy. The subsequent special National Rules Conference in 2002 established a new target of no less than 40 percent women or male representation for party positions, union delegations and for pre-selection for public office and positions at the state and federal level by 2012, with the remaining 20 percent open to either sex.<sup>7</sup>

## Outcomes

The Affirmative Action policy has been effective for the Labor Party. In the 15 years since the policy was put in place, the number of women Parliamentarians has more than doubled from 66 in 1994 to 159 Labor women as of May 2009, representing 37.6 percent of the Labor Parliamentarians across Australia. In comparison, Australia's other major party, the Liberals, have 53 women representing 22.7 percent of the Liberal Party's Parliamentarians. The Labor Party has also succeeded in putting forth several prominent women leaders, including the first female premiers of Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria, Tasmania and New South Wales, and the first female Chief Ministers of Australia's two mainland territories. The first woman Prime Minister and the first woman to be directly elected as national president of the Labor Party have now joined the list.<sup>8</sup>

The presence of more women in powerful positions in the party has changed the legislative priorities of the Labor Party. The Labor Party has succeeded in passing reproductive rights reforms in some state legislatures. The party has also fought successfully for women's health programs, adult education for women, anti-domestic violence laws, parental leave practices and pay equity legislation. Where these initiatives had previously been viewed as "women's issues," they are now viewed as social policies with relevance for all of Australian society and treated accordingly.

In this way, the Affirmative Action program and the work done by EMILY's List Australia together have changed the face of the Labor Party. A longtime women Labor Party leader asserted that the national and state parliaments "no longer feel like boys' clubs."<sup>9</sup>

## Challenges and the Way Forward

Looking forward, women activists in the Labor Party are seeking to raise the Affirmative Action target gradually to 50 percent in order to increase and sustain the influence of women over the party's decision-making processes and policy platforms.

In order to meet these new targets, the Labor Party will have to address a growing generational gap among its support base, due to its having greater appeal with younger women between 30 and 45 years than with women over 45 years of age. One respondent speculated that women over 45 might still view the Labor Party as dominated by primarily male unions, while younger women do not have this institutional memory. The Affirmative Action policy and EMILY's List Australia demonstrate how a combination of concerted strategies can bring about increased women's political leadership and gender sensitive policies.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives or all the organizations in the country aiming to promote women's political participation, but rather showcases some concrete actions of one party in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). "Australia: House of Representatives." PARLINE Database. Available at PARLINE Database. Available at [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2015\\_E.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2015_E.htm), accessed January 2012..
- 3 Interview with former elected official from Australian Labor Party, August 2009
- 4 Australian Labor Party. (2008). "Australian Labor's Affirmative Action Campaign." Available at [www.ip.alp.org.au](http://www.ip.alp.org.au).
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- 6 Interview with former elected official from Australian Labor Party, August 2009
- 7 IDEA, Stockholm University and IPU. (2011). "Australia." *Electoral Quotas for Women*. Available at <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=15>, accessed January 2012.
- 8 Interview with former elected official from Australian Labor Party, August 2009.
- 9 Ibid.

## BURKINA FASO: VOLUNTARY AND LEGISLATED POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Since legislative elections were held in 1992, Burkina Faso has used a system of proportional representation to elect its parliament. The Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP) political party dominated politics during this period. More than 140 political parties exist, most headed by strong leaders and with programs generally centered on promoting national development. As such, many parties remain primarily electoral organizations with limited activity when elections are not approaching, and some parties simply disappear when the electoral period ends.

As with many other countries in West Africa, women have had limited participation in decision-making forums in Burkina Faso.<sup>2</sup> Since the 1997 legislative elections, women's organizations have taken action to call for an increase in the candidacies of women in elections, including through the use of quotas. While some parties have pledged their support for a candidate quota for women, they have not fully carried through on its implementation. In the last elections of 2007, women won just 13 of the 111 seats in parliament.<sup>3</sup>

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by political parties, politicians and activists to promote women's participation in Burkina Faso. It examines how the coordinated efforts of politically active women, together with the support of male leaders, led to the adoption of legislated candidates quotas for women.



UNDP

### KEYWORDS

Voluntary party quotas  
Legislated quotas  
Funding mechanisms

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP)

### AT A GLANCE: BURKINA FASO

Name of parliament	National Assembly
Structure of parliament	Unicameral
Type of electoral system	Proportional representation
Legislative election	May 2007
Number of women elected	13 out of 111 (12%)

## Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

In keeping with regional trends, Burkina Faso was influenced by efforts to implement quotas by its regional neighbors and other countries on the continent.<sup>4</sup> During the last decade, women parliamentarians and representatives of women's organizations traveled to these countries to learn about African experiences with quotas and returned to Burkina Faso to advocate for those regional and international standards for women's political participation.

Acknowledging the political dynamics of Burkina Faso, the women's movement realized early on that if their advocacy efforts were to progress and yield results, it would be important to enlist the support of the President of Burkina Faso and of the President of the parliament for a legislated quota. Although there was also an ideological current to the party's support for quotas, increased awareness that generally women voted in greater numbers than men in elections<sup>5</sup> meant that addressing the demands of women's groups could in turn widen the support base of the party.

A law was passed on April 16, 2009 making quotas mandatory for all political parties. According to article 3 of the Law on Quotas, party lists of candidates must include at least 30 percent of either sex or else face sanctions. Parties that do not abide by the law can expect public funding allocation for election campaigns to be cut by 50 percent. If a party reaches or exceeds the 30 percent quota, it will receive additional funding.<sup>6</sup> The law will apply to the legislative and local elections in 2012.

## Strategies Employed

### A. WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

**Women's activism** in Burkina Faso to promote quotas in political parties came from civil society activists as well as women within political parties. At first, political parties adopted voluntary quotas at the national and local level. Women party and civic activists applied advocacy strategies in garnering the necessary support of the political parties to implement these quota initiatives.

In 2003, Burkina Faso laid the groundwork for political efforts to advance women in politics by ratifying the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, better known as the Maputo Protocol, which guaranteed comprehensive rights for women, including the right to take part in political processes and have political equality with men. As such, the women's movement initial advocacy efforts targeted the implementation of the Protocol and the need to honor international and regional obligations.

During those early years, women parliamentarians and civil society representatives were increasingly exposed to training and workshops led by international organizations which presented the pros and cons of quotas in promoting women's participation in politics. Through their enhanced awareness about quotas in other countries in Africa, Burkinabe women who were party and civic activists reached consensus that quotas would be an effective vehicle to gain increased long-term women's representation in decision-making positions.

### B. CANDIDATE QUOTAS

The CDP's first quota initiative was to adopt a **voluntary 25 percent internal quota for women** on party lists for the parliamentary elections of 2002 and 2007. In advance of the 2006 local elections the CDP also adopted an enhanced 50 percent internal quota for its candidate lists for rural parts of the country. With a strong mandate from the party's leadership, this latter quota was applied in the 2006 local level elections, resulting in 6,500 women elected and a doubling of women's representation throughout the country from 18 percent in 2002 to 36 percent of local councilors in 2006.<sup>7</sup>

Galvanized by women's electoral success in the 2006 local elections, women's civic organizations began a multi-year campaign to pass a legislated quota that would be binding for all political parties. The women's organizations in Burkina Faso used a variety of strategies to push forward the quota legislation – including lobbying political leaders, public demonstrations, strengthening

ties with international organizations, media campaigns, and offering workshops for male and women parliamentarians to sensitize them on the need for quotas.

As with the internal party quotas, the proposed quota legislation initially met with resistance from both the opposition and the parties of the presidential coalition. This opposition centered on concerns about attracting enough women to political parties, and the fear that incumbents and sitting parliamentarians would lose their seats. Despite these reservations, when the quota law was voted upon in 2009, many representatives of the opposition parties voted for the quota, in line with the CDP. The bill was supported by 87 of the 111 members of the legislature,<sup>8</sup> and women's organization mobilized to witness the voting session in parliament.

### C. PARTNERSHIP WITH MEN

President Compaoré made his strong support of the quota widely known, which meant that publicly opposing the quota also meant publicly opposing the President. Women managed to **forge alliances with other key male allies** in parliament, including within the Assembly's Ad Hoc Committee on Quotas which reviewed the initiative.<sup>9</sup> These male leaders worked hard to explain and raise awareness about the quota law in order to bring all CDP members to support it as well as inform activists in the various electoral districts.

### D. GENDER NEUTRAL QUOTA LANGUAGE

Initial resistance and a threatened constitutional challenge to the quota were warded off by rewriting the legislation to incorporate "inclusive" language. Burkina Faso's quota law does not specifically mention women and is gender neutral in its formulation: neither "one sex nor the other" shall constitute less than 30 percent of political party lists.<sup>10</sup> This language was purposely used because Burkina Faso's constitution does not allow for discrimination on the basis of sex. The **gender neutral language** eased the passage of the quota.

To promote the enforcement of quotas in future elections, political parties that reach 30 percent of women elected to the National Assembly or local councils will be rewarded with double the financing they would normally receive from the state. Parties that do not respect the quota will lose 50 percent of their allocated public funding for election campaigns. The increase in public financing for any party meeting that standard is designed to keep parties from burying women at the bottom of their candidate lists, which would diminish women's prospects for winning a seat.<sup>11</sup>

### Outcomes

The 2009 quota is broadly viewed as a major victory for women in Burkina Faso and is expected to have a dramatic effect on Burkinabe politics.<sup>12</sup> The relationship between the political parties and women's organizations has been mutually beneficial to both sides. Parties embraced reforms because they saw the potential to strengthen their support bases, and the reforms increased the opportunities for women inside the parties to raise issues and make contributions.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

While the adoption of both voluntary and legislated candidate quotas is a significant accomplishment, the greatest challenge will be the implementation of the law in the next elections. Some of the provisions of the law are vague and open to interpretation. For example, the law does not specify how the election commission should verify which parties meet the 30 percent criterion, what type of information the parties need to submit to prove that they are in compliance, or whether the required 30 percent should be calculated on a nationwide basis or by district. The law will be put to the test for the first time during the upcoming local and legislative elections in 2012.

The greater number of women in elected office is only slowly yielding policy gains for women. An important challenge moving forward will be to provide newly elected women officials with opportunities to develop

their political capabilities in order to become more effective representatives and more competitive incumbents, and to work on influencing the policies of their political parties. Meanwhile, traditional hurdles for women in politics such as the lack of financial resources, fear of political violence, low self-confidence, and lower education rates continue to be applicable in the Burkina Faso context.<sup>13</sup>

Overcoming these socio-economic, cultural and political challenges for women will depend on the sustained political will of the political parties to go beyond the quota. With more women empowered to lead open debate on citizens' issues, provide transparency to political processes, and offer accountability on party platforms, Burkinabe women in politics will be well-positioned to support greater democracy in their country.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study focuses mainly on the implementation of legislated electoral quotas in Burkina Faso. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Compaoré, Nestorine. (2002). "Case Study: Burkina Faso Recruiting Women for Legislative Elections." In Julie Ballington and Marie-Jose Protais. (2002). *Les Femmes au parlement : Au-Delà du Nombre*, International IDEA, Stockholm, Sweden; and Tiendrébéogo-Kaboret. (2002), "Burkina Faso: Les obstacles à la participation des femmes au parlement," in IDEA, *Les femmes au parlement*. Available at <http://www.idea.int/publications/wip/upload/CS-Burkina-Kaboret.pdf>, accessed January 2012.
- 3 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). "PARLINE Database of National Parliaments." Available at <http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parline-search.asp>, accessed January 2012. The proportion of women has increased to 17 members since the election (2010).
- 4 Tripp, A. (2003) "The Changing Face of Africa's Legislatures: Quotas and Women," a paper presented at the International IDEA Conference, *The Implementation of Quotas: African Experiences*. Pretoria, South Africa.
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- 6 IDEA, Stockholm University and IPU, *Global Database of Electoral Quotas for Women*. Available at [www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org), accessed January 2012.
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- 8 NDI. (2009). "Women Gain Political Ground in Burkina Faso." Available at <http://www.ndi.org/node/15464>, accessed January 2012.
- 9 Powley, E. (2009) "Burkina Faso's Proposed Quota Law: Implications for Implementation." Unpublished report developed for the *National Democratic Institute for International Affairs*.
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- 13 Powley, E. (2009). "Burkina Faso's Proposed Quota Law: Implications for Implementation." Unpublished report developed for the NDI.

## CAMBODIA: WOMEN'S WING ORGANIZATION TO PROMOTE WOMEN WITHIN THE PARTY AND INTO ELECTED OFFICE<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Cambodia has a bicameral parliament consisting of the National Assembly and the Senate. The National Assembly is elected by a proportional representation system with closed lists, while the Senate is indirectly elected by commune councilors.<sup>2</sup> Cambodia is governed by the dominant Cambodian People's Party (CPP), which maintains political control over the national and most local governments. While CPP leadership remains largely male-dominated with few women in decision-making positions, the proportion of women in parliament under the CPP regime has nevertheless increased from 3 percent in 1993 to 22 percent in 2009.<sup>3</sup>

Cambodia's second largest and major opposition party, the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP), has sought to increase the number of women in its parliamentary caucus. Since 2006, the SRP has had two consecutive women secretaries general, making the SRP the first major party with women heading its party leadership. After the July

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the Sam Rainsy Party to promote women's participation, although it is not the only party to have done so in Cambodia. It focuses on women's participation in the context of elections, the support that is provided to women candidates, and the role played by the women's wing in the party.



UNDP

### KEYWORDS

Women's mobilization

Campaign support for women candidates

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Sam Rainsy Party (SRP)

### AT A GLANCE: CAMBODIA

<b>Name of parliament</b>	Parliament of Cambodia
<b>Structure of parliament</b>	Bicameral (National Assembly and Senate)
<b>Type of electoral system</b>	Proportional Representation (National Assembly)
<b>Legislative election</b>	July 2008
<b>Number of women elected (lower house)</b>	20 out of 123 (16.3%)

2008 elections, six women from the SRP were elected to parliament, constituting 23 percent of the SRP's members of parliament. Additionally, women leaders represented 15 percent of the party's senior decision-making body.

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

SRP's strong women leaders valued the inclusion of other women in politics and, through strategic relationships with various organizations, were able to gain technical and financial support for their women's political participation initiatives. The efforts of the women's wing to support women were popular among voters and party members, and both male and women SRP leaders identified such strategies as key to the modernization of the party.<sup>4</sup>

### Strategies Employed

#### A. WOMEN'S WING MOBILIZATION

SRP's **women's wing** played an important role in the advances made by women within the party and has been a source for innovative strategies to strengthen the role of women in Cambodian politics. The SRP was founded in 1995 by Cambodian workers, many of whom were women. Founding members of the SRP, including influential individuals like Saumura Tioulong, recognized the benefits to the party and to Cambodian democracy of opening the SRP to increased women's participation. As such, the women's wing was one of the SRP's early party structures, established with a **mission to engage and support women**. The women's wing Chair is elected by its women members.

The SRP's women's wing introduced progressive party policies to involve and empower more women in the party, including a quota for the governing board, trainings for women candidates, women candidate campaign packages, a civic education radio program (Women's Voices-Women's Choices), and coordination efforts with SRP women parliamentarians to introduce legislation on policy priorities for women. The women's wings also advanced the needs of women in the party by developing

synergetic relations with domestic and international organizations, including the Cambodian Diaspora.

The women's wing advocated to the party leadership for a **15 percent quota for the party's governing board** in order to ensure at least a minimum representation for women in the party's highest decision-making bodies. Also originating from the women's wing were policy proposals urging the party to give preference to qualified women candidates and for ties in candidate balloting to be resolved in favor of women. These policies were ultimately adopted by the party. Later, the SRP women's wing worked to make training available for women party activists and candidates for local and national legislatures. These trainings helped provide women candidates with necessary political skills including canvassing, media, message development and communication. The women's wing's trainings represented a valuable source of information and capacity development for women, particularly given Cambodia's low education and literacy rates.

The women's wing of the SRP sought synergetic relations with international organizations in order to finance, design and implement their women's training programs. These programs were popular and well received by the participants, and the SRP party leadership asked the women's wing to continue and expand its training efforts. The leadership of the women's wing indicated that future funding for their programs was contingent on their ability to show concrete results, namely increased participation from women. Thus, the women's wing ultimately used the party leadership's interest in the training programs to leverage the leadership's approval for the internal 15 percent quota.

The male leadership of the SRP was broadly supportive of the women's wing's activities. The SRP leaders had established relationships with international organizations and European political parties, and many had been educated overseas, distinguishing the SRP from the other major parties in Cambodia and contributing to a party culture that valued gender equality in politics.



## B. CAMPAIGN ASSISTANCE FOR WOMEN CANDIDATES

Funding has been a consistent problem for women seeking elected office in Cambodia. In advance of the 2007 commune council elections, the women's wing distributed support packages to each woman council candidate, including a suit of clothing appropriate for campaigning, a bicycle for getting around the district and other resources. The party provided these items in lieu of money in order to address directly the campaigning needs of their women candidates, most of whom were poor with few resources of their own. The SRP women's wing has also taken steps to set up an **internal party fund** to provide additional financial support to SRP women candidates.

With assistance from international organizations, the SRP women's wing helped establish a non-partisan **radio program** called "Women's Voices - Women's Choices" that focused on why and how women could participate in politics and run for office. The radio program consisted of a drama depicting problems women faced in their daily lives and the inability or unwillingness of elected officials to solve those problems. The purpose was to demonstrate the need for women to get involved in politics themselves. The second part of the radio program was a call-in show with guests, including prominent women associated with the SRP. The party viewed this program as very effective and indicated its desire to seek additional resources to continue it.

The women's wing played a **key coordination role** between several high profile women leaders in parliament and the SRP party leaders in order to present policies in the legislature on priority issues for women, such as employment, inflation and other basic economic concerns. In order to bolster their position outside the party, the women's wing reached out to the labor unions and worker's organizations from the garment industry where women predominated, and worked to engage leaders from the Cambodian Diaspora in their activities.

The SRP women's wing has **developed a strategic plan** to pursue more ambitious quotas throughout the party's internal decision-making bodies and for candidate selection. The opposition to quotas within the party remains strong and has prevented the introduction of additional internal quotas. The women's wing has anticipated and responded to internal criticism of women candidates by building awareness of the reasons behind quotas and by investing in capacity building for women party members, in order to create a pool of strong women leaders to advocate for and help meet the quotas.

### Outcomes

The training strategies used by the SRP's women's wing in the 2007 local elections were instrumental in helping women win seats: the number of SRP commune councilors elected jumped from 46 to 273, representing an increase of more than 600 percent. The women's wing radio program was similarly successful in reaching women voters despite the government's influence over mainstream media. More broadly, the SRP's women's wing activities have been credited with fostering respect for, and increasing the influence of, SRP women members of parliament, institutionalizing women's presence at the highest levels of party leadership, and helping hundreds of women develop the skills necessary to compete for and serve in public office.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

The SRP has implemented a variety of activities to support Cambodian women in politics and have done so within the context of a restricted political environment where they are the minority party. The political space in which the SRP women's wing can move is limited, which in turn limits the impact of their efforts. Within SRP, the women's wing has also had to struggle against strong traditional views regarding how political power should be distributed among men and women, as well as gendered disparities in education and literacy rates. Nonetheless, the SRP women's wing has laid critical

groundwork for the increased involvement of women in political parties in Cambodia. In the short term, women in SRP are gaining valuable political experience and building their networks, while the party is building a diverse base of supporters.

Other parties have also registered success in terms of women's participation. Women representatives from the governing CPP party are represented in higher numbers in parliament than from the SRP.<sup>5</sup> The CPP has also sought to reach out to women and has adopted trainings and other programs, such as reserving seats for women on CPP national, provincial and commune level internal committees. The CPP's Deputy Prime Minister, a woman, was given the internal party responsibility to liaise with national women's organizations and encourage women's participation in the party.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives or all the organizations in the country aiming to promote women's political participation, but rather showcases concrete actions of one party in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). "Cambodia Parliamentary Chamber: Constituent Assembly (1993)." Available at [http://195.65.105.150/parline-e/reports/arc/2051\\_93.htm](http://195.65.105.150/parline-e/reports/arc/2051_93.htm), accessed January 2012.
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- 5 Ibid.

## CANADA: SUPPORTING WOMEN CANDIDATES THROUGH FUNDING NETWORKS AND CANDIDATE NOMINATION RULES<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Canadian politics operate within the framework of a constitutional monarchy and a federal system of parliamentary government with strong democratic traditions. Many of the country's legislative practices derive from the unwritten conventions of, and precedents set by, the United Kingdom's Westminster Parliament. The political parties represented in the House of Commons elected in 2008 include the Bloc Québécois (the Quebec nationalist party); the Conservative Party of Canada; the Liberal Party of Canada; and the New Democratic Party (NDP, a social democratic party).<sup>3</sup> In contrast with other political party systems, federal Canadian parties are loosely connected with their provincial counterparts, despite having similar names. The exception is the NDP, which has a shared membership with and is organizationally integrated at the various political levels.

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the Liberal Party to promote women's participation within the party and in the context of elections. It also references some of the initiatives undertaken by the NDP (included in a separate box). This case study focuses on women's participation in the House of Commons, although some important advances in women's participation have also been made in the Senate and at the provincial level.



UN PHOTO/ EVAN SCHNEIDER

### KEYWORDS

Funding networks  
Candidate nomination rules  
Party platforms

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Liberal Party

### AT A GLANCE: CANADA

Name of parliament	Parliament of Canada
Structure of parliament	Bicameral (Senate and House of Commons)
Type of electoral system	Plurality/Majority (House of Commons)
Legislative election	October 2008
Number of women elected (lower house)	68 out of 240 (22.1%) <sup>2</sup>

In the 2008 election women comprised 22 percent of elected representatives in the House of Commons and 23 percent in provincial and territorial legislatures and municipal councils.<sup>4</sup> While these numbers are record figures for Canadian women, especially at the federal level, the proportion of women in politics has only advanced by one percentage point over a period of 17 years, with women first gaining 21 percent of the House of Commons in 1993.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the socio-economic challenges of garnering the funds needed to run for office and balancing care-giving demands, women also confront many structural obstacles under Canada's single member mandate district electoral system in both winning their party's nomination and contesting general elections. As a result, over the last 30 years, the Liberal Party and NDP have pushed to implement unique programs and policies to help bring women into their respective parties and elected office.

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

Canadian women political activists draw inspiration from Emily Murphy and four other prominent Alberta women's rights activists, now known as the Famous Five, who won the fight for women to be legally recognized and have the same political and legal rights as men had under the British North America Act (BNA Act 1867). From 1916 to 1929, women challenged the Supreme Court of Alberta, the federal Senate, the Supreme Court of Canada and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in England to allow Emily Murphy to serve as the first woman police magistrate in Alberta and a federal senator. The Privy Council deemed, "that the exclusion of women from all public offices is a relic of days more barbarous than ours. And to those who would ask why the word 'persons' should include women, the obvious answer is, 'why should it not?'"<sup>6</sup>

However, by the mid-1980s, there was growing recognition that the impetus of the Famous Five case did not usher in the significant gains in women's representation and participation that could be seen in other countries.<sup>7</sup>

Canadian women party and civic activists lobbied political party leaders to adopt initiatives that would increase the number of women members and elected officials. Leaders in the Liberal Party and NDP acknowledged that the half-century old feminist movement had resulted in enhanced receptivity to gender equality practices as well as pointed to an electoral opportunity in given their main competitor's, the Conservative Party, poor track record in nominating and electing women.<sup>8</sup> For example, Gerard Kennedy, special advisor to Liberal leader Stéphane Dion for the 2007 elections, justified the Liberal Party's internal quota by noting: "The party in general agrees that this [low representation of women] is an inconsistency that has to be remedied... it is just way overdue."<sup>9</sup> As parties began to observe that the inclusion of women gained them favorable press and rallied women voters, the parties became more open to exploring additional strategies that would give women increased influence in the policy-making process at different levels.

### Strategies Employed

Liberal Party women were amongst those activists in the 1980s calling for greater numbers of women in parliament. Wanting to foster a broader momentum for change, Liberal Party women organized to create networks and institutions that aimed to overcome the funding hurdle that many women were confronting in getting their foothold into the political arena. Later, high-profile women in the party were able to ascertain the support of the party leadership to integrate the policy priorities of women into the party platform as well as put in place an internal quota for candidates.

#### A. FUNDING VEHICLES: THE JUDY LAMARSH FUND

Recognizing the need to improve their support to women candidates, the Liberal Party brought women into their formal fundraising structures and sought to ensure that women had sufficient funds for their campaigns. Women in the Liberal Party built **fundraising networks**

that served the dual function of bringing powerful and affluent women leaders from other sectors into the party and allowing the women involved in the party to demonstrate their value as party activists and supporters.

In 1984, the **Judy LaMarsh Fund** was founded by women leaders in the Liberal Party who were frustrated at the low numbers of women in elected office and their lack of political power.<sup>10</sup> The Fund was named to recognize the leadership of Judy LaMarsh, the first woman from the party to become federal cabinet minister, who worked to usher in progressive legislation for women such as a publicly-funded universal health insurance system and the creation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The founders of the Judy LaMarsh Fund sought to create a party mechanism for money to be raised and spent on women candidates to help them get elected to parliament. As the Fund grew more successful, some in the party also began to view it as a tool for building the party and expanding the party base to include more women.

The Judy LaMarsh Fund primarily **raises money from donors** through fundraising events. The Fund must work within Canada's party finance regulations, which restrict individuals to an annual contribution cap of CAD\$1,000 to any political party, CAD\$1,000 to electoral district associations, and CAD\$1,000 per contest to leadership contestants of a registered political party (amounts adjusted annually for inflation).<sup>11</sup> The Judy LaMarsh Fund program is structured in a way that puts it in direct competition with the party for individual contributions. This factor limits its general fundraising capacity; nonetheless, the Fund has been reasonably successful in bringing more women donors to the party and mobilizing larger numbers of women as party contributors, volunteers and activists.

## **B. INFLUENCING PARTY PLATFORMS: THE PINK BOOKS**

In addition to its fundraising efforts, the Liberal Party has undertaken other strategies to mobilize women within the party. Building on the success of the Judy

LaMarsh Fund and the key positioning of women in the party leadership, the Liberals introduced a new **party document called the Pink Book**, which presented a vision of gender equality for the party and outlined public policy proposals focused on priority issues for women. Released in 2006, the Pink Book "recommends a series of policies to deal with the most pressing social and economic issues facing women in Canada, particularly working women and their families, caregivers and seniors."<sup>12</sup> The policy proposals reflected pressing concerns for women, especially related to education and employment. The Pink Book was started by the Liberal Women's Caucus, which sought to develop a platform that the party could use and refer to when talking to constituents about women. Subsequent women parliamentary candidates were also early supporters of the Pink Book and used it in their campaigns.

Building on the positive reaction of both women and men in the party, a second volume of the Pink Book was released in 2007 with an expanded policy focus, including issues such as "violence against women, housing, Aboriginal women, immigrant and refugee women, and rural women."<sup>13</sup> In 2009, a third edition of the Pink Book was released. The Pink Books were written primarily by women in the Liberal Party through an inclusive process that involved consultations with women's organizations and policy experts in order to ensure that the needs and interests of Canadian women were broadly reflected. In this way, the Pink Books helped the Liberal Party **strengthen its ties to women's organizations** and increase its responsiveness to citizen's concerns. One former Liberal MP described the Pink Books as "a terrific vehicle to be able to connect with women's organizations and their members."<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the substance and process behind the Pink Books demonstrated to some civic organizations that the Liberal Party was serious about women's issues, helping the Liberal Party expand their women's base and attract talented and politically astute women to the party.

### C. INTERNAL CANDIDATE QUOTA

As the Liberal Party was a leadership-driven entity, women recognized that greater party buy-in for promoting women's political participation would not be possible without strong support from the party leaders. The Liberal women finally gained this key support in 2007, when party leader Michael Ignatieff and his predecessor, Stéphane Dion, called for **one third of the party's**

**nominees for parliament to be women.** Their backing of the internal quota and public statements regarding the value of women's participation to the party fostered the acceptance of the initiative. Given Canada's single mandate electoral system, the Liberal Party sought to enforce this quota by passing a party policy that required each district to make a "strong effort" to recruit women candidates for parliamentary primaries. If district party

## CANADA, NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP): DIVERSIFIED CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT AND SUBSIDIES FOR CAMPAIGN EXPENSES

Alongside the Liberal Party's innovative initiatives to support women, the NDP in Canada has also implemented several important policies to enhance the role of women in their party. In the 1980s, NDP women organized to conduct an audit of the party's diversity in order to demonstrate the gap between the party's mission of gender equality and the reality of women's representation, as well as to usher in a party policy to commit putting women in winnable seats. Also, the NDP worked to address the funding challenges of women through subsidies to women candidates for campaign-related expenses.

### DIVERSIFYING CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

After the 2005 provincial election, the party's provincial leadership in British Columbia reflected on the NDP's commitment to political equality and found that electoral outcomes did not match the party's stated support to women. After consultations with thousands of party members, the NDP produced a party report with recommendations for practical steps **to open the party's nomination process to a more diverse pool of candidates**, detailing how the party would set and meet goals to put more women and other under-represented candidates in constituencies where they could win. Particular note was made of the need to acknowledge and accommodate the "double disadvantage" faced by women of color and others who embodied multiple underrepresented demographics.<sup>1</sup>

By leveraging the party's stated commitment to women, women party activists were able to present and gain approval for the report at the 2007 British Columbia NDP convention. The report, referred to as the Equity Mandate, contained three main recommendations:

- 30 percent of all non-incumbent, "type one" constituencies would be designated for women candidates;
- 10 percent of non-incumbent, "type two" constituencies would be designated for candidates from other under-represented demographic groups beyond gender;
- women candidates would automatically be designated for districts where the incumbent NDP representative did not seek re-election, putting women in "type three constituencies" where the NDP had proven it could win.<sup>2</sup>

### NOTES

1 Interview with NDP party activist from British Columbia, February 2010.

2 Ibid.

organizations did not meet this requirement, the central party office would not certify the candidate and a primary would not be held. Moreover, the central party office could override the nominations of up to 25 parliamentary districts in an election and put in candidates of their own choosing.

Although these recourses facilitated the enforcement of the quota, both the central party and local offices struggled with the ambiguity of the phrase “strong effort.” The Liberals appointed a Women’s Candidate Search Director to recruit women to run. The party also created green-light committees at the local level to help the party meet its 33 percent target. These committees were designed to compile personal information and to interview, evaluate and scrutinize potential candidates.<sup>15</sup> Recruitment often occurred at the local level, where the amount of effort party committees put into recruiting candidates varied by district and region.

### Outcomes

The adoption of a **funding mechanism** within the Liberal Party has raised the proportion of women elected. When the Judy LaMarsh Fund was founded, the proportion of women in the Liberal Party’s delegation to parliament was low: seven percent of Liberal Parliamentarians elected in 1980 and 13 percent in 1984 were women. By 1993, this figure had jumped to 20 percent. The proportion of women among the elected Liberal Parliamentarians has not fallen below 20 percent since that time, and reached 25 percent in the national elections in 2008.<sup>16</sup> In those same 2008 elections, the Liberals followed through on their internal party quota with 113 women running in 307 federal ridings, or 36.9 percent of their candidates.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the public conversations about supporting women candidates and the fundraising taking place in the Liberal Party resonated within the broader political landscape in Canada, and the now-defunct Progressive Conservative Party began its own comparable fundraising initiative for women, called the Ellen Fairclough Fund.

The **Pink Books** have similarly impacted the policy arena, with key issues such as domestic violence becoming part of the Liberal Party platform. In 2004, efforts were made to introduce a National Child Care Program, which had been advocated for in the Pink Books.

Overall, through an active women’s branch, fundraising, supportive leadership, a policy vision inclusive of women’s priorities, and a clear connection between these tactics and an electoral strategy, women gained positions of influence in the Liberal Party, including the nomination of a woman senior national policy advisor.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

While the Liberal Party’s Judy LaMarsh Fund and one-third internal party quota for women candidates have brought more women into the political institutions, the scope and ensuing impact of these initiatives has been limited to the parliament. The Judy LaMarsh Fund is exploring assistance to women candidates running for office, but any expansion of its efforts could further increase competition for limited individual campaign contributions.

Similarly, the political reality of being a minority party in parliament has impeded the Liberal Party’s ability to follow through on the policy proposals from the Pink Books. The Books have had minor impact on legislation, described by one interviewee as “nothing sweeping.”<sup>18</sup> Meanwhile, the Liberal Party leadership, while supportive of bringing women into politics, remains largely male.

Despite the Liberal Party’s and NDP’s efforts to support women’s path to elected office, the parliament as an institution continues to present challenges to individuals with primary care responsibilities. Canada is a large country with many parliamentarians representing districts that are thousands of miles away from the capital city of Ottawa. Because of the amount of time that parliamentarians are required to be in the capital as well as the parliament’s late evening sessions and votes,

it is difficult to balance family and political life. Women are more frequently the primary caregivers, which have proven to be a greater barrier for women parliamentarians than men. Several women leaders interviewed indicated that their parties could introduce reforms to help the parliament become more gender sensitive, such as changing sitting times to match the school calendar in order to accommodate Parliamentarians with young children, the use of videoconferencing to replace selective committee meetings and hearings, and the development of safe software to allow parliamentarians to vote without being physically present. The innovative strategies already implemented by the Liberal Party and NDP suggest the will and capacity exist to address the remaining barriers to the equitable participation and influence of women in Canadian politics.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of some parties in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 The case study was written during 2009-2010, and information contained refers to the 2008 elections. An election was held in May 2011 in which women won 24.6% of the seats.
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- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Former Liberal MP, July 2009.
- 15 Jolly, 2007.
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- 18 Interview with Liberal Party activist, November 2009.



## CROATIA: WOMEN'S WING SUPPORT FOR CANDIDATE QUOTAS AND CAPACITY BUILDING TRAININGS<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Over the last two decades, Croatia gained independence and became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and a candidate country for membership in the European Union. Croatia's early years of independence occurred in the difficult context of the wars surrounding the breakup of Yugoslavia. Since 2000, Croatia has had a multi-party system with two major parties, the Croatian Democratic Union and the Social Democratic Party (SDP), dominating the seats in parliament. The members of Croatia's unicameral parliament are elected by a party list proportional representation electoral system. At least six other parties feature in Croatian politics, and they generally join in coalitions with one of the two major parties.

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the Social Democratic Party to promote women's participation, although it is not the only party to have done so in Croatia. It focuses on women's mobilization within the party and the adoption of internal party quotas.

Pressure from civil society organizations (CSOs) and activists pushing for gender equality legislation has helped to increase women's participation in parliament. In 1990, women made up just 4.6 percent of members of parliament, a proportion which rose to 7.9 percent in



### KEYWORDS

Women's mobilization  
Women's wing  
Internal party quota

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Social Democratic Party (SDP)

### AT A GLANCE: CROATIA

Name of parliament	Croatian Parliament
Structure of parliament	Unicameral
Type of electoral system	Proportional Representation
Legislative election	November 2007
Number of women elected	32 out of 153 (20.9%)

1995 and 17.8 percent in 2000. In 2011, women held 23.5 percent of parliamentary seats.<sup>2</sup> CSOs, in partnership with leading women politicians, have been advocating since the mid-1990s that lists of party candidates for election should include a minimum representation of 30 percent women. They have also kept alive the debate on the pros and cons of quota systems.

Partly in response to this pressure, Croatian legislation and government policy have promoted women's participation. The 2003 Law on Gender Equality requires that gender balance be promoted through the use of special measures in legislative and executive bodies and the judiciary, including the civil service, so that the underrepresented sex can gradually achieve representation on par with its share in the total population.<sup>3</sup> The law also requires registered political parties to adopt action plans to achieve gender balance in candidacies for election.

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

The SDP Democratic Women's Forum (SDWF) was formed in 1995 as an internal organization within the party. Women activists in the SDP sought to create a **women's wing** primarily to address the low rates of women's participation in the party. One woman from the SDP described the early years of independence as a time when women were "expected to stay home and make babies."<sup>4</sup> Several of the women who founded the SDWF had experience working in other European social democratic parties and sought to have the Croatian SDP emulate those parties with regards to gender equality.

During the last 15 years, the SDWF has helped make the SDP a leading political voice for Croatian women. Women occupy leadership roles in the party structures as well as in various legislative bodies throughout the country. In 2010, more than 40 percent of the SDP's executive committee and one of its two vice presidents were women. This success can be attributed to the introduction of internal party quotas, support from prominent women in the party, and the development of legislative programs and policies on priority issues for women.

## Strategies Employed

### A. WOMEN'S WING FORMATION

Motivated to enhance their party's outreach to women, SDP activists promoted the creation of a **women's wing** in the party, with sub-national branch offices at various levels. After its creation in 1995, SDWF worked to develop strategic relations with CSOs and unions, implement an internal party quota, offer skills development opportunities to women party members, and develop local level platforms on policy priorities for women.

In the 1990s, the SDP was a small party: from 1992 to 1995 it had six parliamentarians, two of whom were women, and from 1995 to 2000 it had nine, including three women. Given the size of the party at that time and the small number of women members, women activists realized that they could not meet their goal to create a party forum for women if they did not broaden their appeal to a larger pool of women. As such, the SDWF did not require women to be party members before joining, making it possible for non-party women from the non-governmental and labor sectors to participate in SDWF activities.<sup>5</sup> This approach not only opened the women's wing of the party to a greater number of women and helped recruit women civic leaders into the party, it also resulted in strong ties between the SDWF and women's CSOs and labor unions. These ties benefited both the SDWF and civil society, which has been a dependable party ally in the development of key legislation.

### B. INTERNAL PARTY QUOTA

One of the early initiatives of the SDWF was to pass a **40 percent internal party quota** for the "underrepresented gender" in all party structures, including candidate lists for parliamentary elections and local assemblies. The reference to the underrepresented gender was intended to curb any objections from men who might have been concerned that a quota system was discriminatory or could impact on the participation of men. This quota was energetically promoted by the SDWF to counteract

a conservative attitude towards women's participation in politics and as a means to distinguish the SDP from other Croatian parties. Women in the SDP raised awareness of the best practices already established in many European social democratic parties in regards to gender equality. Accordingly, the SDWF used examples of other European parties in their efforts to convince the political leadership of the need for quotas. Ultimately, in 1996, the SDP voluntary quota was accepted without significant resistance from any factions in the party and passed unanimously at the party conference.

The SDWF augmented the quota policies through extensive **training programmes for women** members. During these trainings, the SDWF took advantage of their relations with European political parties and foundations that were able to provide assistance and conduct the trainings. These training programmes were effective in supporting women as both candidates and office holders to develop useful skills. There was a specific emphasis on political communication, which was an area in which few women had practical experience. These programmes and workshops were effective also in helping develop a broad network of women politicians. The existence of this network made it possible for the quotas to be filled by experienced women.

In advance of the 2007 national elections, the SDP took **policy positions** on a number of issues that were priorities for Croatian women, including domestic violence, equal pay, child care and reproductive rights. In May 2009, the SDWF similarly supported the development of a platform paper on gender equality for the local elections, which was distributed throughout the country and widely adopted by local SDP candidates. These local platforms were aided by the SDP's extensive network of women's wings at the municipal, city and county levels, which originated from a party strategy to create women's wings at all sub-national levels and locations where other party branches were present. At one time, the SDP had as many as 200 women's branch offices.<sup>6</sup>

## Outcomes

The SDP's share of seats in parliament has grown in recent years, and with that the number of women in its parliamentary caucus has increased. The internal quota has contributed to a greater representation of women in parliament: women constituted 32 percent of the SDP parliamentary group after the 2007 elections. Several women have held influential positions within parliament, including deputy leaders of the SDP caucus, and there have also been several powerful women's committee chairs and vice chairs for agriculture, family and youth, social services and gender equality. In turn, the SDP women parliamentarians have played a key role in promoting several important pieces of legislation, such as the Law on Gender Equality, the Anti-discrimination Act and the Law on Domestic Violence.

According to several SDP activists, women are also genuinely involved in the party's decision-making process. Women who serve on the SDP's Main Board are involved in the approval of the party's candidate lists and provide oversight of the quota's compliance. At the local level, women represented 29 percent of SDP elected officials to local governing bodies, and, drawing on the 2009 platform paper on gender equality, have gone on to spearhead meaningful social policies, such as the hiring of additional health care professionals, speech therapists and psychologists to be part of the full-time staff of every primary school in Croatia.

## Challenges and the Way Forward

The SDP quota could be strengthened by addressing the issue of placement of women on the party list. The party leadership continues to have considerable discretion in the final compilation of the candidate lists. The SDWF has called for a more bottom-up process for selecting candidates that would involve ordinary party members more directly in the candidate selection process.

The SDP has an active women's board seeking to increase the participation and influence of women. The party

perceives that this has helped them develop a reputation amongst voters as the party most representative of women and issues of importance to them. The legislative work and programme development that the SDWF has done contributed to this perception as well. Moving forward, the challenge to the SDP and SDWF will be to work with its coalition partners to build on past efforts to address the political, social and economic factors that may be impeding women's political participation so that it can make further gains toward the gender parity that it is seeking.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives or all the organizations in the country aiming to promote women's political participation, but rather showcases some concrete actions of one party in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2011). "Women in national parliaments, situation as of 31 July 2011." Available at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>, accessed September 2011. In December 2011, parliamentary elections were held in which women took 23.8 percent of the seats.
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## EL SALVADOR: STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POST-LIBERATION POLITICS<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Since the conclusion of the 1979-1992 civil war, El Salvador has made significant strides towards consolidating its democracy, although recent elections have occurred under the shadow of potential violence. In the 2009 legislative elections, the Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN) won a plurality of votes with 43 percent, with the Republican Nationalist Alliance (ARENA) coming a close second. Three minor parties, the Christian Democrat Party, the National Conciliation Party and Democratic Change, also won seats in the national Legislative Assembly. In the 2009 presidential election, the FMLN won for the first time since the party's creation, following 20 years of an ARENA-majority government.

This case study presents some of the measures undertaken by the FMLN to promote women's participation within the party structure and in the context of elections. It also presents some of the work done by the Association of Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians (ASPARLEXSAL), a nonpartisan organization that aims to strengthen women's political voices both inside and outside of parliament.

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IN EL SALVADOR, WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS REALIZED THAT THEY COULD ACCOMPLISH MORE TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN THE POLITICAL ARENA BY WORKING ACROSS PARTY LINES RATHER THAN IN ISOLATION.

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### KEYWORDS

Internal party organization  
Voluntary quota  
Women's caucus

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Farabundo Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN)

### OTHER EXAMPLE

Association of Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians (ASPARLEXSAL)

### AT A GLANCE: EL SALVADOR

Name of parliament	Legislative Assembly
Structure of parliament	Unicameral
Type of electoral system	List Proportional Representation
Legislative election	January 2009
Number of women elected	16 out of 84 (19.1%)

The record of representation and involvement of women in politics in El Salvador is mixed. The parliament comprises 19 percent women members, which places the country in the middle range both globally and for the region, based on women's representation.<sup>2</sup> However, the cabinet remains male-dominated, as 13 out of 15 cabinet ministers are men. Moreover, at the local level around 11 percent of the country's mayors are women.<sup>3</sup>

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

The roots of the influence of women in the FMLN go back to the party's history as a guerilla movement during the civil war and its political philosophy at the time, which included gender equality as one of the party's "essential objectives." As described by an FMLN woman party activist: "During the war, women had the opportunity to be bosses, we had a recognized authority; we weren't just compatriots or combatants or nurses."<sup>4</sup> Women were present in the leadership of the FMLN throughout the civil war. Even during the negotiations around the peace agreement, women represented 35 percent of the FMLN's delegation.<sup>5</sup> When the FMLN transitioned into a political party at the conclusion of the civil war, the role of women generally, and of some individual women specifically, had already been established, which set an important benchmark for women's participation as the party developed. Although this did not guarantee that women would remain represented in the leadership of the FMLN, it provided a starting point for women seeking to assert their rights within the organization. Meanwhile, the political will of male leaders to keep that space open to women coupled with the broader ideological commitments of the party allowed women to sustain some level of leadership after the transition to peace.

In the early post-war years, women political leaders realized that they could accomplish more to address the challenges of women in the political arena by working across party lines rather than in isolation. Given that women still did not have a critical mass within the

Legislative Assembly, they sought to create a nonpartisan association of women parliamentarians and ex-parliamentarians that could bring together women political leaders both across the various parties and across legislative cycles.

### Strategies Employed

The FMLN, based on the proposal of women members, created a framework for women's political participation by addressing gender equality in their bylaws, instituting an internal quota, and building party structures aimed at better supporting their women members, such as a women's branch, women's policy advisory committee and an annual women's conference. Meanwhile, Salvadoran women across party lines joined forces to train the next generation of women political leaders.

#### A. INTERNAL ORGANIZATION: VOLUNTARY QUOTAS

As a reflection of the work that had been done by women in the guerilla force, gender equality was written into the FMLN's early mission statement and ethics code, which took strong positions against discrimination of and violence against women. The FMLN further institutionalized the role of women by passing an **internal voluntary quota** calling for women to be represented at 35 percent or more in all party activities. The quota includes all candidate lists as well as all internal party boards, committees and other party structures. This quota was proposed in 1993 and agreed upon in 1995, based upon the recognition that during the civil war women constituted 35 percent of the FMLN armed forces. Although the FMLN had a long history of women being involved and participating in significant ways, the proposed quota was initially met with opposition from some men in the party, but was imposed eventually with the support of the male party leadership.

Internal party quotas alone are rarely enough to ensure meaningful participation by women, but in the context of the FMLN's political history, the quota formalized trends that were already clearly present. There are no

formal sanctions for the party structures if they do not reach the quota, but the Women's Secretariat (the party's women's wing) and other women leaders in the party oversee the implementation of the quota. The party statutes formally give the Women's Secretariat this enforcement role.

The statutes of the Women's Secretariat also call for an annual **conference of the party's women leaders**. This conference brings together the party's top women elected officials, members of the executive board and others to discuss and formulate strategies on policy issues that are important to women in the party. The annual conference also provides the Women's Secretariat with the opportunity to assess the needs of the women, and the Secretariat has built on this to provide campaign training to women party members. The FMLN provides direct funding to the Women's Secretariat for these trainings and other comparable programs, guaranteeing some autonomy for the Women's Secretariat activities.

The FMLN has also implemented strategies to provide improved attention to how the party's platform and policy development process impact women. The party has created an **advisory committee** that looks at proposed platforms with an eye towards women and their policy priorities. Additionally, women are present on the platform committees, and representatives of the Women's Secretariat are included in platform deliberations.

#### B. THE WOMEN'S CAUCUS: ASPARLEXSAL

The success of the FMLN in promoting women in politics has been buttressed by other non- and multi-partisan efforts in El Salvador. One of the key organizations working to increase women's participation in El Salvador is the Association of Salvadoran Women Parliamentarians and Ex-Parliamentarians (ASPARLEXSAL). ASPARLEXSAL is a nonpartisan organization that seeks to strengthen women's political voices both inside and outside of parliament. The initial idea of forming an **association of women**

**political leaders** was introduced by international actors working in El Salvador who raised the issue with women Parliamentarians. Key women politicians, most notably from ARENA, who recognized the potential of this idea, worked to bring together, at first informally and then formally, all the sitting and former women Parliamentarians from the major parties to persuade them of the benefits of working across party lines.<sup>6</sup> Since its founding, ASPARLEXSAL's leadership has consisted of women leaders from ARENA, FMLN and some smaller parties.

The goal of ASPARLEXSAL is not only to get women more involved in politics, but also to make them more effective in government. Accordingly, ASPARLEXSAL, through its partner the Business Foundation for Educational Development, offers **training and workshops on communication and organizing skills** that help women become more effective in their political work, as well as on topics more directly related to governance, such as the relationships between the different branches of government and policy making.

ASPARLEXSAL is committed to its nonpartisan status and seeks to offer equal opportunities to women across the various parties. Although the women in ASPARLEXSAL are all party activists, a conscious decision was made in those early years not to consult with their respective party leaderships or ask the parties' permission to form the group. Instead, as part of the framework of the association, all members were asked to put their identity as women above their party identities, so that regardless of which party took action on issues of concern to women, all of the women in the group would be supportive and acknowledge that all women would benefit from such efforts. While ASPARLEXSAL works to remain nonpartisan, the group requests that parties identify participants for their various programs in order to ensure that program recipients will be able to use their skills in the party after they have completed the training.

## Outcomes

Women in the FMLN have benefitted from the recent electoral success of the party: in 2009, 75 percent of the women elected to parliament came from the FMLN. That is, 13 of the 35 FMLN members of parliament were women, representing the highest women to men ratio for the parties in parliament.

Meanwhile, ASPARLEXSAL's nonpartisan approach has helped them gain and maintain access to all the relevant political parties. ASPARLEXSAL, recognizing the importance of visibility for the organization, secured formal office space in the Legislative Assembly office building. This location provides easier access for current parliamentarians to utilize office resources and for ASPARLEXSAL to be more involved in legislative decision making, particularly when it affects women. The precedent set by ASPARLEXSAL for women working across party lines has resulted in an effort to create a permanent women's caucus in the Legislative Assembly to be able to impact the legislative agenda directly.

ASPARLEXAL has also trained 160 women in intensive six-month programs as well as hundreds more in one- or two-day courses. A number of women who have completed ASPARLEXSAL's programs have been elected to various offices, including in the parliament and municipal governments, and women participants in their programs have gone on to spearhead the creation of new women's multi-party networks.

## Challenges and the Way Forward

There are several challenges that the FMLN and all other parties in El Salvador still confront with regards to the involvement of women. The FMLN quota for party candidates is applied most strictly at the national level, resulting in women being better represented in the parliament than in state or municipal level boards. At

the state and municipal level, reports suggest that the quota has been applied unevenly. Currently, states and municipalities that submit lists that do not meet the gender quota requirements do not necessarily face repercussions from the party leadership. This has contributed to the lower number of women elected to office at these levels. For example, only 11 percent of the country's mayors are women.

The post-war transition in El Salvador represented an opportunity to create a more enabling environment for women's political participation. While women were important participants in the transition period, more needs to be done to ensure that women also have an equal footing in the political arena today, especially in the Legislative Assembly where policies are debated and decided. The new generation of women politicians does not come with a strong record of leadership from the war times, unlike their predecessors; this will present additional challenges and require new and creative strategies to promote women's participation. The strategies highlighted from the FMLN and ASPARLEXSAL have been important steps for fostering political space for women. However, further work needs to be done to ensure the equal participation of women in politics in El Salvador.

## Endnotes:

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of some parties and organizations in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2010). "World Average: Women in National Parliaments." Available at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>, accessed January 2012.
- 3 Interview with FMLN party activist, September 2009.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Interview with founder of ASPARLEXSAL, July 2009.



## BOX

INDIA: QUOTA, RESERVATIONS AND POLITICAL PARTIES<sup>1</sup>

Despite its status as the world's largest democracy, India has historically placed in the lowest quartile with respect to the number of women in parliament. The 2009 Lok Sabha elections delivered a record 58 women among the 543 elected members of parliament, the highest since independence, raising women's parliamentary representation to 10.7 percent.<sup>2</sup> Seventeen of the elected women Parliamentarians were under the age of 40, suggesting promising prospects for young women. Additionally, women have gained access to the highest positions of political leadership, with the first women president, Pratibha Devisingh Patil, elected in 2007 and with women represented at the head of four political parties, including the governing Indian Congress Party.

The progress observed in these statistics builds on the more notable gains achieved by women through a legally-mandated reserved seat system at the local level. In 1993, Amendments 73 and 74 to the constitution strengthened the *panchayat raj* institutions – India's system of local government – and designated that one-third of all *panchayat* seats and one-third of all *panchayat* presidencies would be reserved for women. It is estimated that in the 15 years since the constitutional amendment, more than two million rural women have served in these decision-making bodies of local government.<sup>3</sup> Some states, like Karnataka, inducted women into rural politics even before it was mandated by the constitution. Several states, including Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and Uttarkhand, have increased the

“WHILE MOST INDIAN POLITICAL PARTY POLICIES NOW APPEAR TO SUPPORT A QUOTA OF ONE-THIRD WOMEN, FURTHER ACTIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN BY POLITICAL PARTIES IN REGARDS TO THE MEANINGFUL INCLUSION OF WOMEN IN CANDIDATE-SELECTION OR DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES.”

required percentage of *panchayat* seats for women to 50 percent.

Political parties are also recognizing the benefits of opening their structures and reaching out to women. In June 2009, the Indian Congress Party nominated Meira Kumar to become the first woman speaker of the lower house of parliament. This has boosted the party's image as a “pro-women” party, following up on its comparable role in helping Pratibha Patil become the country's first woman president.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, as Meira Kumar is a member of the Dalit class, this may help the party strengthen its base with both women and men from the low-caste Dalit community. As early as 2005, the Congress Party implemented a 33 percent quota for women at all levels of the party, following the election of Sonia Gandhi as party president.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has also worked to urge greater representation of women from the various caste levels in its party leadership. The BJP efforts to promote women have benefitted from the leadership of a woman, who was involved in





founding the party in 1981 and espoused an early vision for women's role in the party. BJP strategies to better position women in the party have included a women's leadership program, a leadership academy for young women ages 18 to 35, targeted workshops for women students, ICT professionals and women in rural communities; and provision of financial assistance and fundraising programs for women candidates.<sup>5</sup> In 2008, the BJP national executive committee also amended its party constitution to reserve 33 percent of the party's leadership positions for women and make the chief of the national women's branch a member of the party's central election committee. BJP women leaders have gone on to introduce innovative policies, especially at sub-national levels.<sup>6</sup> In Rajasthan, a BJP woman governor employed campaign tactics to target women voters, which increased her support base and allowed her to sweep the state elections.

While most Indian political party policies now appear to support a quota of one-third women, further actions need to be taken by political parties in regards to the meaningful inclusion of women in candidate-selection or decision-making processes.<sup>7</sup> At the local level, where women are increasingly present in the panchayats, men continue to dominate the local party structures, pitching themselves as the ones who can win elections for their party. Within the

parliament, male-dominated party benches continue to determine who can speak and which policy issues are addressed, impeding progress on the 1996 Women's Representation Bill for a national quota and other, broader contributions from women.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of some parties in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 The Lok Sabha is the directly-elected lower house of the Parliament in India (<http://loksabha.nic.in/>, accessed January 2012).
- 3 The Hunger Project. (2009). "Two Million Women Leaders and Counting: Indian Women Participate in Their Local Government." International Museum of Women: Women, Power and Politics Online Exhibition. Available at <http://www.imow.org/wpp/stories/viewStory?storyId=100>, accessed January 2012.
- 4 Pasricha, A. (2009). "India's Parliament Chooses First Woman Speaker." *Voice of America News*. Available at <http://www1.voanews.com/english/news/a-13-2009-06-03-voa11-68826467.html>, accessed January 2012.
- 5 Interview with BJP party activist, July 2009.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Interview with the president of an Indian women's organization, July 2009; Nagpal, S. (2008). "BJP Reserves 33% of Party Posts for Women." *TopNewsIndia*. Available at <http://www.topnews.in/bjp-reserves-33-party-posts-women-217313>, accessed January 2012.

## BOX

## INDONESIA: CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT AND POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS<sup>1</sup>

During the last decade, Indonesia has made great strides in its democratic transition. Women constitute 18.2 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives. Women party and civic activists in Indonesia successfully advocated for a 30 quota for women on party candidate lists to parliament with a placement mandate, only to see their efforts undermined by the introduction of an open list system in the months leading up to the April 2009 elections. Women candidates were forced to campaign actively within their parties for meaningful placement on the candidate lists.

The Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) proved to be one of the more successful parties in bringing women into elected office, with women constituting 20 percent of the PDIP's 2009 parliamentary delegation. As early as 2000, before the electoral quota was first passed, PDIP women activists successfully lobbied for the revision of the party bylaws to include a 20 percent quota for women in all party structures. PDIP women members further worked to ensure that their internal quota would be extended to party staff and the sub-national levels of the party. Women brought attention within the party to the benefits of getting women into staff positions that were frequently dominated by men. By 2009, women in the PDIP occupied three of the 47 high-level positions within the party, including chair, vice chair of women's affairs, and vice secretary general; however, the women members also raised awareness about the fact that having women in leadership

“WOMEN CANDIDATES WERE FORCED TO CAMPAIGN ACTIVELY WITHIN THEIR PARTIES FOR MEANINGFUL PLACEMENT ON THE CANDIDATE LISTS.”

positions was not sufficient for women to impact important decisions, strategies and policies. Building on the popularity of the internal quota, in 2010 the PDIP leadership reformed its bylaws to increase its internal quota to 30 percent, hoping that the new quota would encourage more women candidates to run and be elected in the 2014 elections.

In the lead-up to the 2009 elections, the **Women Empowerment Department**, the PDIP women's branch, enlisted the support of the party's leadership board to promote the placement of women in winnable positions on the party lists. Both women members and the party leaders recognized that placement still mattered in open list systems, as many voters in Indonesia were still inexperienced with the particular electoral system and tended to vote for the first person on a list when choosing their party. Women in the party leadership therefore played a key role in advocating for the high list placement of women candidates. In determining individual candidate placement on party lists, the PDIP had established a scoring system for candidates that took into consideration issues like the length of service to the party, civic activities, awards and training received, and education. This system helped demonstrate to the





party that PDIP women were already meeting their criteria and earned them consideration in what was described by one interviewee as a “strongly patriarchal” political environment.<sup>2</sup>

The PDIP Women Empowerment Department similarly reached out to the party’s training branch to develop and implement a training program for women candidates, which was established in 2003. These trainings sought to increase the political skills of women in the party and were considered successful in helping women learn to “defend their own interests at the local level.”<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, women activists continue to express concerns that some political parties in Indonesia are meeting their internal quotas by placing women in positions where they are unable to impact the party’s decision-making processes. A member of one party noted that most women are often assigned the positions of “party branch secretary or party branch book keeper, sometimes internal party inventory keeper.”<sup>4</sup> A number of women politicians also commented that while capacity-building work is valuable, women’s new leadership skills have little

meaning in a political system that remains influenced by money and patronage. One respondent said that in order to win an election, the most important variables were, in order: “money, [being in first] position on the party list, family connections and, lastly, the campaign.” The open list system is considered to further exacerbate funding hurdles for women candidates as it makes members of the same party compete directly with each other.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 This box does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives or all the stakeholders in the country aiming to promote women’s political participation, but rather showcases some concrete actions of one party in detail.
- 2 Some international observers in Indonesia suggested that it would not have made a difference if the lists had remained closed in the 2009 elections because no party would have won more than one or two seats in each province, since there were on average six seats per district and several parties contending for those seats. Even with the 30 percent zipper quota, it is likely women would have been listed in third place and thus not get elected anyway. Therefore, the legal quota as written would not have guaranteed increased representation of women in Parliament.
- 3 Interview with party activist, August 2009.
- 4 Ibid.

## MEXICO: SUPPORTING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION THROUGH QUOTAS AND STATE FUNDS FOR TRAINING<sup>1</sup>

### Background

The Mexican Congress is bicameral, consisting of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. Both chambers are elected through a mixed system combining proportional representation and single mandate seats. There is no re-election in Mexico, which results in stronger allegiances to the party than to individual candidates and puts greater pressure on elected officials to implement their platforms within their one-term mandate.

Mexico has a competitive multi-party system with three major parties: the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and the National Action Party (PAN). In addition, there are several minor parties vying for power at all levels which, despite elements of patron-client relations, sustain platforms based on party ideology. Compared to some of its Latin American neighbors, Mexico has tended to lag behind in terms of women's participation in parliament. However, political parties are increasingly taking measures to promote women's empowerment.

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the PAN to promote women's participation within the party and in the context of elections. Although it is not the only Mexican political party that has sought to expand its voter base by appealing to women, it is one of few right-leaning political parties that have adopted internal party quotas. The case study focuses on women's participation at the federal level.



COMSTOCK IMAGES

### KEYWORDS

Women's mobilization  
Funding of candidates  
Internal party quotas

### AT A GLANCE: MEXICO

Name of parliament	Congress of the Union
Structure of parliament	Bicameral (Senate and Chamber of Deputies)
Type of electoral system	Mixed member proportional system (Chamber of Deputies)
Legislative election	July 2009
Number of women elected	141 out of 500 (28.2%)

## Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

The pressure to increase women's participation arose from women in the major political parties as well as from civil society actors and women's organization who were carefully monitoring the successes of their Latin American neighbors with gender quotas. In the wake of the historic 2000 elections and the transfer of power from the PRI presidency for first time in over seven decades, political parties found it hard to ignore the increasingly competitive Mexican political environment. In the case of the PAN, the political leaders recognized the importance of women voters in consolidating the party's newly found gains.

With unified support for a quota bill among PAN women, and from women from the other parties, the necessary critical mass to convince PAN party leaders to support the bill on quotas was fostered. Political women worked with civic actors to get a **legislated gender quota** incorporated into Mexico's electoral law, *The Federal Code on Electoral Institutions and Procedures* or COFIPE by its acronym. The quota is captured in Article 219 of the COFIPE, and stipulates that political parties are required to guarantee that women constitute at least 40 percent of candidates, which applies both to lists of candidates for the PR election and to candidates for constituency elections.<sup>2</sup> Article 220 of the COFIPE also requires that at least two out of every five candidates on the party list be women, with alternating men and women.

Although the quota was a positive step with stronger enforcement mechanisms than previous legal or party policies, in Mexico's mixed electoral system quotas have proven inadequate as a sole solution to the multitude of challenges facing women as they seek equality in politics. The right of center PAN is one of the political parties which strongly advocated for the national quota and sought to implement complementary party initiatives to address the various barriers to women's political participation.

## Strategies Employed

### A. BUILDING STRATEGIC ALLIANCES FOR REFORM

Building on a strong foundation of women's activism in the party, PAN women leveraged **strategic alliances** with other party and civic actors to obtain PAN's support for the national gender quota and party public financing law, which would enable the training of women candidates, as well as to establish internal quotas in order to better position women members to take advantage of these national reform opportunities.

The national quota law in Mexico was the product of a **multi-partisan campaign** by Mexican CSOs as well as women activists and legislators from the major parties that extended from 1991 to 2008. This alliance was united around the priority to elect more women to Congress. The advocacy efforts of these women reached critical junctures in 1992, 1996 and 1998, and saw moderate initial results with a weak series of reforms in 1993 and 1996. The 30 percent gender quota finally gained teeth under Article 175 of the 2002 COFIPE, and was strengthened in 2007 to its current form of 45%.

Women legislators across party lines from the Parliamentary Commission on Equity and Gender Issues were involved in the 2007 electoral reforms and played a key role in putting the issue on the table. Many of the same women party activists that helped generate the 2007 COFIPE quota were involved in advocating for internal party quotas in their respective parties, and were aware of the need to **put in place enforcement mechanisms** that would prevent women from getting buried at the bottom of party lists, as had happened with the 1996 and 2002 laws. As a result, the 2007 law states that parties that have not filled their quota of women candidates have 48 hours to rectify their lists before they are publicly reprimanded; 24 hours after the reprimand, the General Council of the Federal Electoral Institute (IFE) would refuse to register the list (COFIPE, Article 221) if changes have not been made.

PAN women leaders worked hard to educate and lobby their male counterparts to get behind the 2007 reforms, enlisting the support of German Martínez Cázares, the then-president of the PAN, who played a significant role in bringing together the ranks of the party. Having already achieved high-profile positions in congress and in the party's leadership, the PAN women leaders were well-positioned to gain the ear of Cázares and demonstrate credibility in lobbying for the party's backing.

Paving the way for **building internal party support** for the quota, PAN women activists drew on the long history of the activism of women in the PAN. The role of women in the party has evolved substantially over the years. During the party's early years, the PAN's Commission for the Promotion of Women included responsibilities like organizing the food and lodging at party events and volunteering in various political campaigns. More recently, the younger women in the party are part of "a new generation of young PAN members, who are aggressive, fresh, and without hesitancy to assume roles of power."<sup>3</sup>

## B. INTERNAL PARTY QUOTAS

The PAN has also established several policies to help ensure that women are represented throughout the party structures. The party's two most powerful decision-making bodies are the National Council and the National Executive Committee, both of which have 30 percent or more women members. The PAN implemented a **40 percent internal quota** for their CEN, state committees and municipal committees, but has confronted challenges in fully meeting this benchmark. Other parties in Mexico have also implemented internal quotas, including the PRI and the PRD. In 2001, the PRI reformed Article 38 of the party's bylaws to include gender parity in candidate nomination, and in 1993, the PRD adopted a voluntary internal party quota.

The PAN's direct election of its municipal committee by local party members has also facilitated the involvement of more women in the party's local level structures. Women who have demonstrated leadership in

their communities have had greater success in gaining the attention of other local party members than of National Executive Committee or state committees, whose members are appointed by the PAN state and national councils.

While the quota and direct election practice do not guarantee equal representation for women at all decision-making levels, there are women present in the PAN's decision-making bodies that exert influence on party policies, platforms and decisions. Furthermore, the draft of the party's platform is given to the secretary of the party's women's branch so that she can review it with a gender lens before it is finalized, ensuring that issues of concern to PAN women are reflected. According to one official, "Women are important in the platform, in the projects, policies, opinions and public consultations... (and) are consulted about how things are done."<sup>4</sup>

## C. PUBLIC FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES

The PAN and other parties were involved in passing, and have sought to take advantage of, Mexico's "Two Percent Law" stipulated in Article 78 of the COFIPE. This Article mandates that **at least two percent of the public funding of political parties** be used specifically for programs aimed at the training, promotion and development of women's political leadership. While the amount of money is insufficient to meet all of women's political needs, the law forces parties to commit some resources to training women and helping them strengthen their positions within the party. The state funds can be appropriated for a range of women's needs, such as the implementation of training workshops or the purchase of equipment for women's branches. The decision about how to use this state funding is made initially by the central party office and then by the women's branches of the state parties. However, the central party office can implement additional measures to ensure that the money is allotted and used in appropriate ways, such as requiring PAN state committees to submit training work plans. Some PAN state party treasurers who did not use this money appropriately have been removed from office.

## Outcomes

The quota provisions in the COFIPE have been instrumental in bringing women into Mexican politics. In 2000, prior to the passage of the quota, 18 percent of both chambers of the Mexican Congress were occupied by women; in the 2009 elections, 28 percent of the elected legislators were women.<sup>5</sup>

Within the PAN, women's participation in the municipal party offices has also helped build the confidence and political skills of women party members, having a gradual impact on women's participation at the state and national levels. Women currently constitute 24.3 percent of the PAN state legislators, which is higher than the national average of 21.4 percent.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, one party activist perceives that more women volunteer activists at the local level are running for local elected office, helping women transition from "being just volunteers to learning how to make decisions." The Two Percent Law is also expected to foster a pipeline of trained women from the various sublevels of government into the national political scene; however, as this is a new law, its effectiveness has yet to be fully determined.

## Challenges and the Way Forward

The COFIPE quota law applies only to the party lists portion of the election and not to the nomination of candidates in districts. There has been an additional trend in the Mexican Congress whereby women have ceded their congressional seats to male substitutes after taking up their seats. In the weeks following the July 2009 elections and before taking the oath, 11 women resigned from Congress and had their seats replaced by men. This practice of substitution of elected women officials was documented and denounced by women activists, academics and nonpartisan public officials from across Mexico. These external actors have called for stricter regulation and monitoring of both the quota and the Two Percent Law.

As of 2009, 18 of 32 Mexican states had also enacted quota laws for the state legislative bodies, with Chihuahua, Oaxaca, Sonora and Sinaloa leading the way in 2000. However, various shortcomings were identified with the sub-national quotas and, in 2006, the state of Sonora went as far as to abandon its quota, acknowledging that the way the law was written was hampering women's representation.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, women who have gained a foothold in municipal party offices have not experienced comparable success winning local public office, with women continuing to represent less than five percent of mayors in Mexico.

Mexico's internal party quotas have produced the most inconsistent results for women. Although the PRD was the first political party in Mexico to adopt a quota, it has only achieved the quota once, in 1997. The PAN state committee for the State of Mexico has only seven women members out of a total of 107.<sup>8</sup> The absence of women at this level in turn restricts women's opportunities at higher levels in the party. One respondent also mentioned another trend, namely that the women who are most active in the PAN are either "single, widowed or divorced."<sup>9</sup> This suggests that the PAN has not implemented sufficient gender sensitive practices to allow primary care givers to adequately balance family and political life, thereby impeding women from pursuing political careers.

The various quota laws have also not guaranteed the diversification of the pool of women that is drawn on to fill those quotas. In Mexico, most women politicians have tended to come from cities and be well-educated, while rural women of lesser resources and education still confront great barriers in gaining entry into the formal political realm, and as a result, their talents are largely absent when crafting solutions to local and national problems.

Furthermore, the current gender quota laws and policies need to align with Mexico's 12 million indigenous people. The "Uses and Customs" laws in place in Mexican states



with high indigenous populations protect traditional indigenous governance structures and practices and present an additional challenge to women, as their role in indigenous societies are frequently defined as being outside of decision-making structures.

Overall, the Mexico case demonstrates that quotas are only an entry point to addressing the representation of women. They require both enforcement mechanisms that are meaningful and complementary party measures that address the human and financial resources necessary for women to get elected and govern effectively, individually and collectively, especially in light of the lack of re-election.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of some parties in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 IDEA, Stockholm University and IPU. (2010). "Mexico." Global Database of Electoral Quotas for Women. Available at <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=157>, accessed January 2012.
- 3 Interview with PAN party activist, August 2009.
- 4 Interview with PAN party official, August 2009.
- 5 Globalis. "Mexico: Seats in Parliament Held by Women." Available at [http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator\\_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=63&Country=MX](http://globalis.gvu.unu.edu/indicator_detail.cfm?IndicatorID=63&Country=MX), accessed January 2012.
- 6 Statistics provided by a PAN party activist.
- 7 IDEA, Stockholm University and IPU, 2010.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Interview with PAN activist, August 2009.

## MOROCCO: CROSS SECTOR ACTIVISM TO PROMOTE PARTY CANDIDATE QUOTAS<sup>1</sup>



### KEYWORDS

Women's mobilization  
Candidate quota  
Party policies

### AT A GLANCE: MOROCCO

<b>Name of parliament</b>	Parliament of Morocco
<b>Structure of parliament</b>	Bicameral (Chamber of Counselors and Chamber of Representatives)
<b>Type of electoral system</b>	Proportional Representation (lower house)
<b>Legislative election</b>	November 2011
<b>Number of women elected (lower house)</b>	67 out of 395 (17%)

### Background

Morocco has a hybrid political system with a relatively strong monarchy coexisting with parliamentary politics. The lower house is elected through a proportional representation system, and the upper house is indirectly elected from local councils, professional organizations and labor unions. There are 18 parties represented in the lower house organized into several parliamentary groupings. Six of these parties have 25 or more seats in the parliament.

In 2002, political parties signed a charter that reserved 30 seats in the lower house (10% of the total membership) for women, to be filled from national lists.<sup>2</sup> As a result, women comprised 10.7 percent of the parliamentarians elected in 2002 and 10.5 percent in 2007. This proportion was doubled to 60 seats for women ahead of the 2011 election, and as a result, women now hold 17 percent of seats in the assembly. In the upper house, where no such agreement exists, women comprise just two percent of the membership.

This case study presents some initiatives undertaken by civil society organizations and political parties to promote women's participation within the parties and in the context of elections, although these are not the only such initiatives in Morocco. The case study focuses on women's participation at the national level, which is much higher than at other levels of governance.

## Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

At the 2004 Arab Summit, state leaders expressed their commitment to "...widening women's participation in the political, economic, social, cultural and educational fields and reinforcing their rights and status in society."<sup>3</sup> In Morocco, the prospects for women's political positions and involvement have improved alongside with Morocco's overall institutional reform process towards democracy over the last decade. The Moroccan government committed to promote women's representation in elected structures and to combat all forms of gender-based discrimination.<sup>4</sup> Though such express commitments exist, and progress has been made in recent years, women's participation in political life continues to face challenges.<sup>5</sup>

## Strategies Employed

### A. WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

Moroccan women for many years strove for increased social and political participation, including in women's sections of political parties, and through independent associations connected with parties. Their combined efforts were a crucial factor leading to the reform of the Family Code (*Mudawana*) in 2003, which addressed the cultural and judicial discrimination women faced due to inferior judicial status in the previous code.<sup>6</sup> This reform both informed and was influenced by other changes to women's socioeconomic and political status.

Coalitions of women CSOs and party members worked to **raise civic awareness** about the value of women's political participation and provisions for women's equal rights in the Moroccan constitution. A broad array of local and international women's organizations mobilized to advocate for a national quota system, slowly building public awareness about and media attention to women's representation through awareness campaigns, public seminars and lectures, and training activities. A public discourse began to form around issues of women's exclusion, women's right to participation, and the role of quotas.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout their quota campaign, women civic and party leaders leveraged international protocols, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the opportunity to improve Morocco's standing in the international community in their lobbying efforts with the male leadership of the major parties, the prime minister and the palace.

### B. ELECTORAL QUOTAS

The struggle for improved participation of women in politics coalesced in a concerted advocacy campaign carried out by a coalition of women's organizations. A National Committee comprised of 20 women's branches of political parties and women's rights organizations lobbied party leaders, cabinet ministries, and the public to raise support for political and legal proposals granting women greater political participation.<sup>8</sup> In 2002, this coordinated advocacy effort resulted in an agreement among political parties to set aside 30 seats in the lower house of parliament for women, filled from a national list. The quota was not formalized into law, and instead existed as an "agreement" among the political parties.

Building on this agreement, in 2008, the government introduced a 12 percent gender quota law for communal elections, which was applied the following year. As part of this updated electoral code, additional seats were added to the various commune councils, making it possible for parties to meet the agreed upon benchmark. In an historic election marking advancements in women's participation, more than 3,400 women were elected to local office in June 2009, following the adoption of a quota calling for a minimum of 12 percent representation by women in locally elected bodies.<sup>9</sup>

Constitutional reforms in 2011 doubled the number of national seats reserved for women from 30 to 60 out of the 395 seats in parliament (15%). The electoral code was also amended to increase the number of seats and reform the ballot structure. As a result of these changes, and the active role of civil society and women's groups, the

proportion of women members of parliament increased from 10 to 17 percent in the 2011 elections.<sup>10</sup>

### C. PARTY POLICIES

Within Morocco's evolving political context, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP) was the first party to put in place **internal quotas** during its sixth congress in 2000, with a 20 percent quota for all party boards and leadership bodies at the local and national level. The party also had a 20 percent quota for the representation of women on candidate electoral lists. To help gain the support of their party's leadership, women party activists linked their campaign for the expansion of women's rights and the full participation of women in politics to broader discussions surrounding gender equality, democratization and improving external relations between Morocco and the international community. Aside from USFP, the Istiqlal Party has adopted selection criteria to ensure women's placement on their national lists.<sup>11</sup>

Most major political parties in Morocco have founded **women's sections or comparable internal structures** that address women's issues and the needs of women party members. For example, the Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS) created an equality council to ensure women's representation in the party's decision-making processes. The USFP has worked to reflect women's rights in their platform, tackling issues such as a citizenship law, which guarantees rights to the children of Moroccan women and foreign men. Responding to their own constituencies, other parties have undertaken similar promotion strategies, deeming it desirable to be viewed as empowering women.

### Outcomes and Way Forward

The constitutional and electoral reforms, and formalization of the reserved seats for women, have allowed for women's political participation in Morocco. Prior to the agreement for reserved seats for women, only two women had served in parliament's lower house. Meanwhile, in the 2009 communal elections, the local level quota allowed for the number of elected women councilors to jump from 127 to more than 3,400, exceeding expectations, with women constituting 12.4 percent of the council seats available. Overall, the quota was one factor in motivating more than 20,000 women, across all of the political parties, to run as candidates in the 2009 elections.<sup>12</sup>

The dependency on the quota system is strong though, in part due to the lack of complementary strategies or policies in place to advance women's political participation in other ways. Moreover, the bulk of political party funding comes through a public financing system. Decisions about how to spend those public funds continue to be concentrated with the male leadership of the party, and there are no mechanisms in place to ensure that women candidates receive the funding they need to run successful election campaigns.

The advancement of women through an agreement between political parties helped build bases of women's leadership in all of Morocco's political parties. As Morocco continues its democratic evolution, these party structures will be well positioned to foster the development of the broader role and impact of women in politics. The women already elected at the local level, who seek to work across party lines, can lead advocacy efforts for stronger enforcement of quotas and other policies to come from the grassroots.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives of all political parties or organizations in the country, but rather showcases some concrete actions at a particular point in time. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
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## BOX

## PERU: WOMEN'S FORUM ADVOCACY FOR QUOTAS

“WOMEN'S FORUM WAS ABLE TO LEVERAGE THE NEW QUOTAS IN THE REGION TO ADVOCATE FOR A NATIONAL QUOTA.”

As demonstrated in the case of Mexico, in the 1990s there was growing consciousness in Latin America of the need to create greater political opportunities for women, and a wave of quota laws and quotas were passed as a result. In 1994, a coalition of women's organizations in Peru called the Women's Forum was able to leverage the new quotas in the region to advocate for a national quota, and, by gaining the support of key women party activists, successfully

persuaded former president Fujimori to lend his party's support to congressional deliberations on a quota law.

In 1997, the coordinated efforts of women leaders in civil society and the political parties led to the successful passage of a 25 percent quota law for party lists, followed by an expanded 30 percent legal quota for national, municipal and local elections. Parties face the rejection of their list for noncompliance with the quota. Although the quota enforcement mechanism has yet to be applied, the passage of the quotas opened the door to a substantial increase in the number of women in parliament, from 11 to 29 percent in the 2006 elections.

## RWANDA: USING THE CONSTITUTION TO INSTITUTIONALIZE WOMEN'S POST-CONFLICT GAINS<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Rwanda experienced a civil war in the early 1990' and a genocide in 1994. The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), now a political party, has brought stability to Rwanda and played a leading role in the arduous and ongoing task of rebuilding the country. In 2003, President Kagame was elected in the country's first presidential election since the genocide, and retained this position as Head of State.

In 2008, Rwanda became the first country in the world to elect a majority of women members to its lower house of parliament, with women taking 56 percent of the seats.<sup>2</sup> This achievement was the result of deliberate post-genocide efforts to encourage women's participation in public life and the implementation of a constitutionally guaranteed quota. Nonetheless, Rwanda's leadership in terms of women's political participation must be understood in the context of the country's broader challenges in consolidating democracy.

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the Rwandan Patriotic Front to promote women's political empowerment. It shows how the combined efforts of women activists and the support of male leaders led to the adoption of reserved seats for women and internal party quotas. As a result, globally Rwanda has the highest proportion of women in its lower house.



UNDP

### KEYWORDS

Voluntary and legislated quotas  
Women's mobilization

### AT A GLANCE: RWANDA

<b>Name of parliament</b>	Parliament of Rwanda
<b>Structure of parliament</b>	Bicameral (Senate and Chamber of Deputies)
<b>Type of electoral system</b>	Proportional Representation and reserved seats (lower house)
<b>Legislative election</b>	September 2008
<b>Number of women elected</b>	45 out of 80 (56.3%)

## Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

Support for women's participation in politics can be traced to the 1994 – 2003 liberation period. During the transition, parliamentarians were appointed by political parties, not directly elected. The RPF routinely appointed women to nearly 50 percent of its allotted parliamentary seats.<sup>3</sup> These women party activists, according to one observer, were aware of precedents in other countries in Africa when women were marginalized from politics after rebel movements came to power.<sup>4</sup> As such, in 2003, women organized to prevent Rwanda from following that path and successfully advocated for a 30 percent quota to be enshrined in Rwanda's constitution.<sup>5</sup>

The genocide and its aftermath also had an effect on the Rwandan government's promotion of women's leadership. In the immediate aftermath, there was an enormous social upheaval and women constituted the majority of survivors. Women took on new economic and social roles, literally rebuilding families and the nation. It was inevitable that women would also take on public roles and have a say in shaping the political priorities. The participation of women in government has been an outgrowth of the new roles that women filled in post-genocide Rwanda.

Genocide widows who worked together with perpetrators' wives to rebuild communities after the violence were held up as models to the nation. Key institutions established to deal with the genocide, e.g., the Unity and Reconciliation Commission and the Gacaca Courts, were headed by women. War, violence, and displacement, which can destroy a country's social fabric, can also provide windows of opportunity for social change. This was the case for women in Rwanda.

## Strategies Employed

### A. WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

During the country's transition to peace, Rwandan women activists worked to **institutionalize the expressed commitment of the political leaders** and

ensure that women would continue to have equal opportunities for representation in political institutions at all levels. The RPF supported quotas and was committed to building women's experience in political leadership and accustom the electorate to vote for women candidates.

The commitment of Rwandan political leaders to political equality for women made it possible for a quota to be written into the constitution and for women to assume positions of political power. The pro-women position of the RPF made it necessary for other parties to follow suit, particularly given Rwanda's majority women electorate. Had other parties opposed these reforms, or refused to bring women into key positions, they would have risked greater political marginalization.

The political leadership of Kagame and the RPF on this issue was matched by an **advocacy campaign** by grassroots women's organizations and women within the political parties. The women's movement sought to ensure that women, who had played such significant roles in rebuilding the country after the genocide, would be part of the new political system. Women's organizations understood that while Kagame's support was valuable, it could not be assumed that the country's leadership would always support gender equality policies, so they pushed to legally codify women's rights. Women's organizations in Rwanda are well represented by an umbrella organization, *Pro-Femmes/Twese Hamwe*, which has a close working relationship with the government and with women leaders. Women civil society leaders have advocated for many of the recent changes that have improved women's legal standing in Rwanda, including an inheritance law, the criminalization of rape and gender-based violence, and the 2003 constitutional quota.

### B. ESTABLISHING STATE MECHANISMS FOR WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

The first post-genocide government established mechanisms that laid the groundwork for women's participation in government at all levels. **A system of women's councils** was put in place at each of the many levels



of government, from the neighborhood up to the national level. Initially one representative from the women's council at each level had a reserved seat on the official council at that level, thereby creating a link between the women's councils and government. The women's councils provided opportunities for women to develop leadership skills and build support in various communities. In 2003, when the constitutional quota was adopted and 30 percent of seats in parliament were reserved for women, those seats were filled from the existing women's council system.

In addition to the women's councils, Rwanda employed other **innovative electoral mechanisms** designed to bring women into political office. During local district elections in 2001 and 2006, for instance, each voter received three ballots: a general ballot, a youth ballot, and a women's ballot. This system guaranteed that some women would be elected to district councils, and it also gave voters the experience of voting for women candidates, making it an acceptable part of the political process in a country that, historically, had discouraged women from seeking public leadership roles.

### C. CONSTITUTIONAL QUOTAS

Rwanda's constitution is notable for citing CEDAW and for establishing a quota for women's representation. The **constitution mandates women's participation** at the level of 30 percent in all decision-making bodies. The quota applies not only to parliament, but also the president's cabinet, the judiciary and local government.

The constitution clause resulted in the reservation of 24 out of the 80 seats in the lower house of parliament for women, which were filled through a separate women's only electoral list. In addition to the reserved seats, **political parties adopted their own voluntary quotas** to ensure that 30 percent of their candidates on party lists were women. The combination of reserved seats and voluntary party quotas yielded dramatic results, with women taking 48.8 percent of the seats in the 2003 elections and 56 percent in the 2008 election.

### Outcomes

The influence of Rwandan women is not limited to parliament but also extends throughout decision-making bodies. More than 30 percent of local councilors and mayors and vice mayors are women. The Ministers of Commerce, Education, the East African Community and others, including the head of the Commission on Human Rights, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Head of Gacaca courts and the Acting Chief of Police have been women. One respondent commented that, "Rwanda has come to respect women's authority... in all the institutions that are really at the heart of this country, we find women."<sup>6</sup>

While the RPF played a dominant role in the creation of a quota, the other parties have also complied with the law and nominated and elected women to parliament. Women from minority parties have served in high-ranking government positions as part of coalitions with the RPF.

The large proportion of women in parliament has led to an active women's caucus, which, when established in 1996, was the first cross-party caucus in Rwanda's parliament. According to one of its founders, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians has sought to "defend women's interests without considering where they come from, without any divisions, without discrimination based on race or political party."<sup>7</sup> Particularly during the transition period, women parliamentarians would often cross party lines if they felt the interests of women in Rwanda were threatened. The majority of women members act as a guarantee that women's interests are taken seriously in the legislature.

Several key pieces of legislation in Rwanda can be attributed to the high levels of women's representation and to the strength of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.<sup>8</sup> These include the law on inheritance and succession (1999), the child protection law (2001) and the gender-based violence law (2008). Women have also been influential in ensuring that other pieces of legislation are

gender-sensitive and child-friendly, including the law on national citizenship, the classification of genocide crimes and the protection of witnesses.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

The Rwandan experience demonstrates that the advancement of women in politics through quotas or other means can be particularly effective if codified during the drafting of the constitution. Including the quota in the constitution was a preferable approach to leaving the issue in the hands of political parties, as this way all parties are forced to comply.

Women in leadership positions have faced some challenges, particularly balancing private and public roles. While the expectation is that women will take part in public life, there has been no corresponding movement to reduce their responsibilities in family and home life. Public acceptance of their leadership has changed dramatically, but traditional expectations of their family and social roles have not changed and women often end up with a double workload.

At the same time, women parliamentarians have been subject to public criticism to a greater extent than men. During the 2008 election, for instance, a newspaper editorial in Rwanda's leading English-language paper asked what women had done for the country since their election in 2003. The editorial did not ask what male parliamentarians had done for the country in the same

period. Women are particularly visible in their new roles and sometimes held to a higher standard than their male colleagues. As members of a pioneering generation, the mistakes and failings of women in public office in Rwanda are carefully scrutinized. Consolidating democracy, and delivering on the historic achievement of being the first country in the world to elect a female majority to its national legislature, are key political hurdles facing women in Rwanda.

### Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of some parties in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). (2008). "IPU Applauds Rwanda as First Parliament to Elect a Majority of Women Members (2008)." Available at <http://www.ipu.org/press-e/gen311.htm>, accessed January 2012.
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## BOX

## SERBIA: WOMEN'S WING MOBILIZATION FOR POLITICAL CHANGE<sup>1</sup>

Serbia is a republic with legislative power vested in both the government and the National Assembly of Serbia (Narodna skupština Republike Srbije). Women gained 21.6 percent of the seats in the National Assembly in the 2008 elections. With numerous political actors vying for political power, parties are frequently required to form coalitions in order to impact the National Assembly's policy agenda. The G17 Plus is a Liberal-Conservative political party, which emerged from a CSO formed by a group of 17 free-market economists. Serbia's G17 Plus Party has a strong women's wing that has helped both increase the representation of women in G17 Plus' delegation in the Serbian parliament and expand the presence of women in positions of influence within the party. Women comprise around 29.1 percent of the G17 Plus' parliamentary group.

The origins of G17 Plus women's wing lie with a group of 15 women party leaders who, beginning when the party was founded in 2002, sought to ensure that women were able to play a significant role in the party. These women built upon existing ties they had with international organizations which had previously funded trainings, workshops and other activities for Serbian women. The G17 Plus women engaged these international organizations, requesting trainings on a range of topics, including gender awareness, communication and negotiation for G17 Plus women members.

After 100 G17 Plus women had gone through these trainings, 16 of the most active women participants

“BRINGING MORE WOMEN INTO ELECTED OFFICE AND THE PARTY LEADERSHIP WOULD HELP SECURE THE SUPPORT OF THESE WOMEN AND ATTRACT MORE POTENTIAL VOTERS TO THE PARTY.”

were appointed as regional network coordinators, charged with recruiting more women; these women spearheaded the creation of the women's wing of the party. This approach created a strong grassroots constituency for the women's wing that was both useful to the party and provided the women with a stronger bargaining position with the largely male party leadership.

After the women's wing had been established, the leadership of the women's wing persuaded the G17 Plus to reform the party bylaws to recognize the wing's as a formal party structure. Shortly thereafter, the women's wing began to advocate for additional measures to ensure that more women succeeded in getting into public office. Serbia has a 30 percent quota law for all party lists, but the quota law was considered meaningless as it had no placement mandate requiring parties to place women in winnable positions on lists. Therefore, the women's wing lobbied the party directly to ensure that women candidates were given high positions on the lists.

The G17 Plus women's wing has relied primarily on two arguments to convince the party leadership to promote women's political participation. Women





activists, leveraging the G17 Plus' pro-European stance, argued that the promotion of gender equality was necessary for the G17 Plus to be perceived as a "European" party. Moreover, the wing argued that since women represent more than half of the population and at least 40 percent of party members, bringing more women into elected office and the party leadership would help secure the support of these women and attract more potential voters to the party. In addition to advocating for greater women's representation, the women's wing has actively sought funding for trainings and workshops for women candidates and activists. It has also supported and nominated women to the gender equality commissions that local governments created throughout Serbia, in order to better impact policies on women's priorities at the local level.<sup>2</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 This box does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of one party in detail.
- 2 National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI). (2008). "Assessing Women's Political Party Programs: Best Practices and Recommendations." Available at <http://www.ndi.org/node/15121>, accessed January 2012; Interview with Lidija Prokic, NDI Serbia, Senior program manager in 2009.

## SOUTH AFRICA: WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF THE POLITICAL AGENDA<sup>1</sup>

### Background

South Africa made the transition to democracy following a long history of racial segregation under the apartheid system. An interim constitution was enacted by parliament in 1993 and came into force on 27 April 1994. A Constituent Assembly consisting of the two houses of Parliament together drafted the 1996 Constitution. In 1994, free general elections were held for the first time in South Africa's history, enabling the election of Nelson Mandela as the country's first black president. In the years since the collapse of apartheid, the country has made substantial democratic progress. South African democracy is characterized by credible regular elections, media freedom and a reasonably strong rule of law.

The African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners (the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the South African Communist Party) dominate South African politics. The 400-member National Assembly is elected through a list proportional representation electoral system, with closed party lists. The ANC holds 65 percent of seats in the National Assembly. The remaining seats are shared between 12 parties, including the Democratic Alliance, Congress of the People, Independent Democrats and the Inkatha Freedom Party. Women hold 44 percent of the seats in parliament.<sup>2</sup>



GETTY IMAGES/PAWEL GAUL

### KEYWORDS

Women's mobilization  
Voluntary party quotas

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

African National Congress

### AT A GLANCE: SOUTH AFRICA

<b>Name of parliament</b>	Parliament of South Africa
<b>Structure of parliament</b>	Bicameral (National Assembly and National Council of Provinces)
<b>Type of electoral system</b>	Proportional Representation (lower house)
<b>Legislative election</b>	April 2009
<b>Number of women elected (lower house)</b>	174 out of 400 (44%)

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the African National Congress to promote women's participation within the party and in the context of elections. It highlights how women's mobilization within the ANC influenced the adoption of voluntary party quotas. The case study focuses on women's participation in the National Assembly, although some important advances in women's participation have also been made in the National Council of Provinces and at the provincial and local levels.

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

After a long struggle against an oppressive system of government characterized by institutional racism, patriarchy and oppression, in 1994 a new democracy brought in the mandate of advancing the country towards a democratic, non-racist and non-sexist society.<sup>3</sup> South Africa's commitment to gender equality is enshrined in the constitution under the Bill of Rights, which incorporates acknowledgment of the equal and inalienable rights of all women and men and a principle of non-sexism.<sup>4</sup>

The strong political will among South Africa's leaders to advance women's participation has been a key factor in the establishment of a comprehensive national machinery for the advancement of gender equality, including structures such as the Office on the Status of Women and the Commission on Gender Equality. The South African government has further strengthened its commitment by acceding to regional and international instruments promoting gender equality; enhancing the integration of women into government policies and programmes; introducing new legislation designed to promote women's empowerment, including women challenged by poverty in areas such as access to health, welfare, housing, water and education; and involving greater numbers of women in senior positions of government.

### Strategies Employed

The rise early on of women in key leadership positions in party structures helped ensure that ANC women activists had a seat at the table during the country's and the party's transformation, which they used to institutionalize a gender equality framework through important party documents. ANC women's mobilization was central in ensuring women's participation in the party leadership and in key negotiation processes in the 1990s.

#### A. WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

South African women were central to the struggle against the apartheid regime, frequently taking to the streets. On 9 August 1956, 20,000 women marched to Pretoria to protest the newly proposed laws that would have required them to carry passes.<sup>5</sup> Women in the ANC still point to that historic march as a key moment when women across races proved their capacity as catalysts for change. The day is now celebrated as a national holiday known as National Women's Day. The song from that march – "You have touched the women, you have struck a rock, you have dislodged a boulder, you will be crushed!" – is still used in the women's movement, underscoring the relevance of this history to women and politics in the country today.

During the constitutional negotiations between 1992 and 1994, women's organizations were fundamental to ensuring that women's needs and interests became part of the debate about rights. A Women's National Coalition (WNC) that crossed racial and ideological divides was formed to influence the constitution-making process.<sup>6</sup> After a two-year national campaign involving more than 2 million women, the WNC produced a Charter for Women's Effective Equality that articulated the hopes of South African women and pressed home the objective of gender equality. Women members from all political parties were involved in the WNC, which reached a consensus to push for women's empowerment and inclusion of women candidates in the parliamentary elections. The WNC proposed that the new state should include a 'package' of institutions to promote and protect

gender equality: in parliament, a women's caucus; in the state, an Office on the Status of Women; and an independent Commission for Gender Equality.<sup>7</sup>

During the period of active resistance, women were either elected or appointed to leadership structures in ANC, which created both a presence for women within the movement and an awareness of women's concerns and their role in politics among the party leadership. In addition, the national liberation movement followed a policy of non-sexism and equality, based on a strong rights agenda. This was outlined in the Opening Speech by former President Thabo Mbeki at the International Solidarity Conference in 1993: "The vision we share of a truly nonracial, nonsexist and democratic society cannot be realised if we do not address successfully the issue of development, in the fullest meaning of that word."<sup>8</sup>

Women's organization during the transition period meant they were able to enter the democratic era prepared with new agendas. Women participated in the structures around the transition, including the constitution-drafting bodies, the bodies redrafting party bylaws for the new system, and the first government. The Women's Charter, an internal ANC document calling for women's equality across party lines and races, was later incorporated into the country's constitution. Grassroots women's organizations played an important role in devising and pushing through all of these initiatives. The structure of the ANC Women's League, the women's wing of ANC (ANCWL), ensured that grassroots women throughout the country were connected to what was happening at the national level, thus opening the way for a new and more dynamic leadership with a broader representation of working class women to come to the fore within the party. Organized debates at the grassroots level helped bring women's issues forward, and a newspaper was used to help mobilize funds for women.<sup>9</sup>

## B. VOLUNTARY PARTY QUOTAS

Strong advocacy efforts on the part of women party activists led to the ANC putting in place several voluntary mechanisms and policies to ensure women's

representation in South African politics. The ANCWL consistently raised the issue of gender equality within the internal structures of the party. Prior to the 1994 elections, women in the ANC demanded and won a quota to ensure that at least 30 percent of the list candidates were women. Although never legislated, the quota was reflected in the ANC's Adopted List Process for National elections finalized in October 1993. The 30 percent quota applied to the elections from 1994 to 2004. The quota was raised to 50 percent women candidates in time for the 2009 elections and, as a result, 40 percent of the ANC parliamentary caucus members are women.

As a common strategy throughout their efforts, women in the ANC used international pressure to further their goals within the party. Within the southern African region, the ANCWL in collaboration with civil society activists campaigned vigorously for South Africa's accession to the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (2008), which established parity for women in decision-making positions. Through its affiliation with the Socialist International, the ANCWL maintains close ties with like-minded political organizations, including the women's wings of 157 political parties throughout the world.<sup>10</sup>

## Outcomes

Prior to the adoption of the ANC quota, women's representation in parliament had never exceeded four percent. With the 2009 elections, South Africa came close to achieving parity by electing 44 percent women among its members of parliament, which placed it third in the global ranking of countries with most women in parliament. However, women in the ANC are influential not just based on their numbers in parliament. They hold office at virtually every level of government and have held positions such as deputy president, ministers, speaker of parliament and chief whip in the parliament. Women are also represented in growing numbers in municipal structures and councils. With these achievements, women in the party perceive that gender equality

is fully enshrined in the ANC's vision and principles. The presence of women in key positions has also contributed to a number of pieces of legislation in the parliament, including the Maintenance or Child Support Act, the Equity Employment Act, Domestic Violence Act and the Abortion Act.

Meanwhile, several other parties have also recognized the need to be responsive to women voters. The Democratic Alliance and the Independent Democrats both have women leaders and have taken initiatives to adopt a gender-sensitive platform.

The success of the South African women's movement in the transition to democracy is a familiar one to scholars and activists. The transition following nationalist struggles led to the inclusion of gender equality concerns in the heart of democratic debates. Women's political participation was extended into the realm of representative government and a range of institutions were created to defend women's interests in policy making.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

A central lesson is that when key moments of transition emerge, whether due to the end of a conflict, change in regime or other factors, the role of women in the new system must be formalized. In South Africa, women who had a seat at the table during the transition period worked to ensure that their male counterparts implemented comprehensive strategies that would solidify the ANC's commitment to women in the party, constitution and political institutions. As noted by one party respondent, gender-sensitive laws "are imperative to prevent possible backsliding or a backlash against women's political participation from future generations who may not understand or have the context of why women's participation in politics is important; if quotas are not enshrined in the constitution, or enacted in law, there are no guarantees."

Although women have achieved tangible results in South Africa with the adoption of special measures and policies, South Africa remains deeply affected by its

apartheid past, and development in the post-apartheid era has been uneven. The country experiences one of the largest gaps between rich and poor in the world. Women bear the brunt of uneven development and persistent poverty, and remain disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Gender inequality continues to be deeply rooted in the structures and attitudes of state and civic institutions. In an ANC address in 2008, then Women's League President Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula noted that "the majority of South African women have not as yet fully tasted the fruits of liberation, particularly working class, rural, and poor women." As South Africa looks to consolidate its democracy, it will be pressed to ensure that women of all races and backgrounds benefit equally from its policies and participate effectively in the governance of its political institutions.

### Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of one party in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UNDAW. (2010). *Map on Women in Politics: 2010*. Available at [http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap10\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmmmap10_en.pdf), accessed January 2012.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Bill of Rights, Act 108 of 1996. Available at <http://www.info.gov.za/documents/constitution/1996/a108-96.pdf>, accessed January 2012.
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- 7 Ibid.
- 8 Thabo Mbeki. (1993). "Opening Speech" delivered at the *International Solidarity Conference on the Theme From Apartheid to Peace, Democracy and Development*, 19 February, Johannesburg. Available at <http://www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=4570>, accessed January 2012.
- 9 Interview with ANC party activist, October 2009.
- 10 Socialist International Women is the international organization of the women's wings and leagues of the socialist, social democratic and labor parties affiliated to Socialist International. There are currently 157 organizations from all parts of the world. More information is available at <http://www.socintwomen.org.uk/>, accessed January 2012.



## BOX

## SOUTHERN AFRICA: REGIONAL LESSONS ON LEVERAGING TRANSITION PERIODS AND INSTITUTIONALIZING PARTY GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICES<sup>1</sup>

Political actors in Mozambique and Namibia, many of whom came out of movements in the struggle for independence, used periods of transition to build gender equality into both political party structures and their respective country constitutions. Both countries now boast strong levels of women's political representation, and demonstrate the importance of seizing the opportunities that result from major government shifts to advance women in politics.

In **Mozambique**, the Liberation Front of Mozambique party (FRELIMO) began as an anti-colonialist movement in 1962 and, even in those early years, included women in the struggle for independence. In 1977, when FRELIMO transformed into a political party, the inclusion of women remained a key element of the party's mission, and women were purposefully incorporated into the party's structure at all levels, including the creation of a women's wing. In 1992, FRELIMO formalized gender equality within the party through the implementation of a quota system to ensure women's representation in all bodies and at all levels of government. In January 2010, women constituted 42 percent of the Mozambique parliament, and the Parliament elected its first woman speaker, Veronica Macamo.<sup>2</sup>

In **Namibia**, the 1990 constitution was adopted upon independence from colonial rule and South African apartheid. Building on the country's struggle for independence, the constitution places high value on the restoration of dignity, equality and human rights.<sup>3</sup> In particular, Article 23 allows for special measures

“MOZAMBIQUE AND NAMIBIA DEMONSTRATE THAT POLITICAL PARTIES AND GOVERNMENTS THAT HAVE UNDERTAKEN PROGRESSIVE STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION CAN INFLUENCE EACH OTHER TO TAKE COMPARABLE OR COMPLEMENTARY INITIATIVES.”

policies in order to remedy “the fact that women in Namibia have traditionally suffered special discrimination and that they need to be encouraged to play a full, equal and effective role in the political, social, economic and cultural life of the nation.” Building on the constitution, the Namibian parliament passed the Local Authorities Act of 1992, which mandated that local elections be conducted using a party list system in which at least two women were required per every 10-person or less council, and three women were required for every council of more than 11 people. This law was strengthened in 1997, and as a result 42 percent of local government councilors and 40 percent of mayors in Namibia are now women.<sup>4</sup>

### INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF POLITICAL PARTY GENDER EQUALITY PRACTICES

Mozambique and Namibia demonstrate that political parties and governments that have undertaken progressive strategies to improve women's political participation can influence each other to take comparable or complementary initiatives.





In the wake of the enhanced women's quota legislation in the Namibian Parliament in 1997, political leaders in government and the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network worked together to persuade the Swapo party and the opposition party, the Democratic Turnhalle Alliance, to call on party branches to alternate male and women candidates on party lists at the local level.<sup>5</sup> In the subsequent elections, the total percentage of women candidates rose to 47 percent.

In **Mozambique**, encouraged by the FRELIMO quotas policy, several government ministries began to implement programs to mainstream gender into policy development, resulting in more government initiatives that incorporate gender considerations.<sup>6</sup> Under the leadership of the FRELIMO party, the executive branch has created new mechanisms to give platform to women and their priority issues, including the development of women's committees and special commissions. Similarly in parliament, a commission to deal with social, gender and environmental issues was established. The judiciary has also taken steps to include women in the legislative process.

These examples illustrate the ways in which the strategic inter-relationships between parties and the government can drive increased women's political participation more broadly.

#### RECOGNITION OF GENDER AND ETHNICITY

In Mauritius, the electoral debate has historically emphasized ethnic divisions at the expense of gender considerations, and women's representation in Mauritius remains one of the lowest of the SADC countries with only 18 percent women in parliament.

Mauritius' political parties have further developed a specific system for ensuring that all ethnic groups are included in politics, called the "Best Loser System," but no comparable initiatives have been put in place for women. The attention given to ethnic divisions in Mauritius has discouraged the emergence of viable cross-cutting women's organizations or of an organized movement that could advocate with the government to address gender imbalance in politics.<sup>7</sup> Mauritius demonstrates that in democracies with limited political operating space for discourses of inclusion, ethnic groups and women's seeking equal participation can end up in competition for recognition.

#### ENDNOTES

- 1 This box does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties and initiatives in the countries mentioned, but rather showcases some specific actions.
- 2 Sapa. (2010). "Mozambique's First Woman Speaker." *Times Live*. Available at <http://www.timeslive.co.za/news/africa/article/257512.ece>, accessed January 2012.
- 3 Bauer, G. (2004). "The hand that stirs the pot can also run the country: electing women to parliament in Namibia." *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42(4): 479-509.
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- 6 Leigh Disney, J. (2008) "Women's activism and feminist agency in Mozambique and Nicaragua." Temple University Press: Philadelphia, PA.
- 7 Chiroro, B. (2005). "Engendering Democracy Through the Ballot Box in the Mauritius 2005 Elections." EISA Occasional Paper, No. 57. Available at <http://www.eisa.org.za/PDF/OP37.pdf>, accessed January 2012.

## SPAIN: WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MEN TO TRANSFORM THE POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN<sup>1</sup>

### Background

Spain has a bicameral parliament, consisting of the Congress of Deputies (lower house) and the Senate (upper house). There are two major parties dominating politics, the Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE) and the People's Party. In addition there are a number of minor political parties in the Spanish political arena, including the United Left, Convergence and Union, the Basque Nationalist Party, the Republican Left of Catalonia, the Galician Nationalist Bloc and the Canarian Coalition.<sup>3</sup>

The PSOE has a high proportion of women at the highest levels of political leadership. Following the 2008 election, 47.6 percent of the PSOE parliamentary group were women. Additionally, a majority of the PSOE cabinet was women, with nine women among the 17 cabinet members, including key positions such as defense,

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by the Socialist Party to promote women's participation within the party and in the context of elections, although it is not the only political party in Spain to have done so. It examines how the support of male leaders has significantly improved women's political opportunities within the party, and led to the adoption of progressive quota arrangements.



FOTOLIA/ALFONSO DE TOMÁS

### KEYWORDS

Partnership with men  
Internal quota  
Women's mobilization

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE)

### AT A GLANCE: SPAIN

<b>Name of parliament</b>	Spanish Parliament/Cortes
<b>Structure of parliament</b>	Bicameral (Congress of Deputies and Senate)
<b>Type of electoral system</b>	Proportional Representation (lower house)
<b>Legislative election</b>	March 2008
<b>Number of women elected (lower house)</b>	127 out of 350 (36%) <sup>2</sup>

economics, public works and deputy prime minister. The defense minister, Carmen Chacon, was also Spain's first pregnant minister, and the minister for equality, Bibiana Aido, was Spain's youngest cabinet minister at 31-years old when she assumed the position. The PSOE's accomplishments in fostering political access for women are attributable to several overlapping strategies.

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

In 2004, as the PSOE looked to gain political power, the party's leadership was receptive to arguments by women party activists who suggested that branding PSOE as the women-friendly party could help them be successful in the elections. The PSOE proactively ran women candidates and campaigned for a legal quota and gender equality policies. The numerous women who were voted to parliament and nominated to the Zapatero government were able to help the PSOE fulfill its campaign promises.

### Strategies Employed

The PSOE's women's secretariat played an important role in the introduction of a series of incremental internal quotas that would provide the framework for a party culture open to promoting women as leaders, as well as taking on a gender equality platform. With the emergence of a pro-women party leader and the application of a gender quota to the cabinet, the PSOE was well-positioned to extend that same gender equality framework that was developed within the party to the Spanish political system, passing several public policies that addressed various inequalities confronted by women in politics, the economy and society.

#### A. INTERNAL PARTY QUOTA

PSOE's efforts to promote women within the party originated in the late 1970s when Spain was emerging from the authoritarian regime and moving towards democracy. During that period, the PSOE's women's secretariat was founded and began advocating for

gender equality within the party. Quotas were always at the center of their advocacy efforts, but initially there was resistance to internal quotas from both women and men, who argued that quotas would give an unfair advantage to women and somehow bring the qualifications of all women candidates into question. Advocates for gender-based quotas in the PSOE linked their campaign to the question of geographic quotas, which were part of an effort by the PSOE to ensure a broad base of support across the various states and regions in Spain.<sup>4</sup> Ultimately, the women's secretariat's arguments were effective, and in 1988 the **PSOE implemented an internal quota system for all party lists**. This quota was initially set at 25 percent, but increased to 40 percent in 1997, and applied to party leadership boards and committees as well as to candidate lists.

Because of the different systems used to elect deputies and senators, PSOE's internal quota has always had a stronger impact on the Congress of Deputies (elected through party lists) than in the Senate (which uses a mixed electoral system combining lists and single member districts). Nonetheless, the internal quota made it possible, and even necessary, for the PSOE to build the capacity of their women candidates and to open opportunities for women party members to gain experience in politics at the local and national levels.

#### B. POLICY REFORM

Benefitting from the quota, an enhanced presence of women in the party contributed to other strategies, including the strong advocacy for women by Prime Minister Zapatero and the passage of the 2007 law on equality. Preceding his rise to power, Zapatero had announced himself to be a committed feminist and in doing so had, in the words of one respondent, removed the "taboo" associated with feminism in Spanish politics.<sup>5</sup> In 2004, the party campaigned on passing a wide-ranging gender equality law that would also call for quotas of 40 percent on all candidate lists for all legislatures. Zapatero's first political move upon his

election as Prime Minister was coordinating his cabinet and party bench in parliament to introduce a draft bill. He is also broadly recognized as being instrumental in creating Spain's first majority women cabinet in 2008, as well as giving women the numerical edge in the cabinet by creating an Equality Ministry.

After the gender equality law was passed, PSOE looked to **mainstream gender into the policy-making process**. Since 2004, the PSOE has introduced legislation on agricultural reform so that men and women can share property titles, and on dependent care so that the Public Administration Ministry can support families with up to two-thirds of expenses related to the care of dependents. In addition to their influence in parliament, women are involved in the PSOE's policy development, internal party debates and other decision-making processes. As one interviewee described it, women are viewed as more than just "window dressing" in politics.<sup>6</sup> Several respondents described women as being treated equally as men in the party and that their views were given as much consideration as those of their male counterparts.

### Outcomes

Throughout the 1980s, as Spanish democracy was consolidating, the representation of women in the parliament remained low. Women did not exceed 10 percent of the membership of parliament, or even of the PSOE delegation during the years before 1988, when the PSOE adopted its internal quota. In the 1989 elections, the first after PSOE's quota, the proportion of women among the PSOE delegation to parliament increased from seven to 17 percent.

The law on equality, with regards to quotas, turned internal PSOE policy into a legal mandate for all parties. The People's Party complied with the legislated quota in the 2008 national elections and nominated more women candidates than they had in the past. The equality law also imposed comparable provisions for greater gender equality in leadership bodies in the private sector,

another sector in which Spanish women had been traditionally marginalized.

Spain also attempted to replicate abroad the leadership on gender that it has displayed at home, advocating within the EU for laws to protect against gender violence and the creation of a nondiscrimination directive.

### Challenges and the Way Forward

While internal quotas, the enlistment of supportive male leaders and the equality law can all be considered separate party strategies, they are also interdependent. PSOE's decade-long experience with an internal quota policy opened all of its leadership, both women and men, to the value of including women in the party, and had enhanced the likelihood that its candidate for prime minister would be open to campaigning on gender equality issues. Similarly, the PSOE women parliamentarians, who benefitted from the quota and constituted almost half of the PSOE delegation, played a key role in getting Zapatero's draft bill passed in parliament.

Nonetheless, challenges still remain for Spain and the PSOE. The PSOE's success in guaranteeing women's representation in the national political arena has not been equally realized at the local level. Although 36 percent of PSOE council members are women, women represent only 15 percent of PSOE mayors, suggesting that this elected position, which is impervious to list-based quotas, is still male dominated. Additionally, at the national level, men are re-elected more frequently and serve longer terms than women. Looking forward, Spain and the PSOE will have to consider strategies that will allow them to sustain the successes they have achieved, respond to factors that may be preventing a diverse group of women from participating in the Spanish political sphere, and foster gender-sensitive political institutions so that women have equal opportunity to pursue careers in politics.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all political parties in the country, but rather showcases concrete actions of some parties in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 The case study was written during 2009-2010, and information contained refers to the 2008 elections. An election was held in May 2011 in which women also won 36% of the seats.
- 3 Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). *PARLINE Database*. Available at [http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2293\\_E.htm](http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2293_E.htm), accessed January 2012.
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- 5 Interview with PSOE official, September 2009.
- 6 Ibid.

## BOX

## TIMOR-LESTE: CREATING INCENTIVES TO ADVANCE WOMEN'S CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

Timor-Leste gained independence in 2002. As both a new state and a post-conflict country, successful efforts to bring women into political life in Timor-Leste underscored the value of addressing women's political participation early in a country's development.

In 2001, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) sought to ensure that women were involved in the country's first election for the constituent assembly, i.e., the body charged with writing the constitution, acknowledging the important role of including women and enshrining equality into the constitution. UNTAET worked to strengthen women's participation in various aspects of the electoral process. In 2001, Timor-Leste had a mixed electoral system, combining single member district elections with one national list to elect the 88 members.<sup>1</sup>

UNTAET supported a media outreach strategy for women candidates, many of whom were first time candidates running for office and required access to media in order to build their voter base. **Media time** was made available to both women candidates and to parties that placed women in winnable positions on their party lists. The latter tactic created a strong incentive for parties to support women candidates. The media access included time on television and radio as well as space for advertisements in newspapers.

In addition, efforts were made to ensure that women were represented in campaign staff positions and at other levels of government. Although no quota was applied in the electoral laws, **a quota of 30 percent** was established for women in the campaign offices for political parties, and a similar quota was established for women in public administration positions. UNTAET contributed to establishing a quota for the

“EFFORTS WERE MADE TO ENSURE THAT WOMEN WERE REPRESENTED IN CAMPAIGN STAFF POSITIONS AND AT OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT.”

National Election Commission to ensure that at least four of the 15 commission members were women. These initiatives contributed to women obtaining 26 percent of the seats in the 2001 constituent assembly. The women assembly members went on to play a key role in passing Article 17 of the Constitution, which stipulates that “women and men shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family, political, economic, social and cultural life.”<sup>2</sup> Since 2001, the country has set up other policies to ensure women's representation in political life.

More recently Timor Leste has adopted **a quota for women candidates** in the election law. Political parties must ensure that women comprise 25 percent of candidates on party lists, and that one out of every four candidates is a woman. Parties that fail to meet this quota must revise their candidate lists in order to register for election.<sup>3</sup>

### ENDNOTES

- 1 Later, in the lead up to the 2007 elections, the district seats were eliminated and the size of the parliament reduced, so the 65-member parliament was elected through a single list.
- 2 East Timor and Indonesia Action Network. “Constituent Assembly: East Timor.” Available at <http://www.etan.org/etanpdf/pdf2/constfnen.pdf>, accessed January 2012.
- 3 See Global Database of Quotas for Women at <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?country=22>, accessed January 2012.

## UNITED KINGDOM: NOMINATING WOMEN CANDIDATES IN WINNABLE SEATS<sup>1</sup>

FOTOLIA/RUIVALE DE SOUSA



### KEYWORDS

Candidate nomination  
Party policy reform

### AT A GLANCE: UNITED KINGDOM

<b>Name of parliament</b>	Westminster Parliament
<b>Structure of parliament</b>	Bicameral (House of Commons and House of Lords)
<b>Type of electoral system</b>	Plurality/Majority (lower house)
<b>Legislative election</b>	May 2010
<b>Number of women elected (lower house)</b>	143 out of 650 (22%)

### Background

The United Kingdom is a constitutional monarchy in which the Queen is the head of state and the Prime Minister is the head of government. The Parliament, or Westminster, is bicameral, comprising the House of Lords and the House of Commons. The members of the House of Commons are directly elected in single member districts and serve five-year terms. The UK is a multi-party system and the Conservative Party and the Labour Party have dominated the parliament since the 1920s. In the House of Commons, women comprise 22 percent of elected members of Parliament, an increase of 2.5 percent over the previous Parliament elected in 2005.<sup>2</sup>

The evolution of women's political empowerment and involvement in parliament has been slow. Different strategies have been employed by political parties to increase the proportion of women elected in the first-past-the-post electoral system. The electoral system does not particularly favour women's election, pitting

This case study presents some of the strategies undertaken by political parties to promote women's political participation, including those of the Conservative Party. It highlights the use of candidate selection methods to promote women's participation actively.



women in direct competition with men, oftentimes men incumbents with more name recognition and greater access to funding needed to run a successful campaign. The winner-takes-all electoral system also makes it difficult to implement candidate quotas, so strategies have centered on the nominating women to run in winnable constituencies.

### Women's Political Participation

A 2004 study by the UK Electoral Commission found no significant gender gap in terms of voter turnout. However, the same study found that women were significantly less likely than men to participate in campaign politics such as political party campaigning, membership, or donations, or even just establishing contact with politicians.<sup>3</sup> Women had less trust than men in the political institutions and in their own ability to influence the political process, which they perceived as male-dominated. They were more likely to become involved in electoral campaigns and to trust the institutions of government in constituencies with women MPs, indicating the importance of increased women's political representation.<sup>4</sup>

The 1997 election in which Labour wrested control from the Conservative Party was attributed in part to the defection of women from the Conservative Party to the Labour Party.<sup>5</sup> Labour's adoption of its own special measure resulted in a record numbers of women elected. In total 120 women were elected, doubling the number of women in parliament: 101 were from the Labour Party, 13 were Conservatives, and six came from smaller parties or as independents. These numbers decreased slightly in the 2001 elections, as the parties were more hesitant to implement quotas for fear of legal challenges.<sup>6</sup> In the 2005 general elections, women won 128 (20%) of the seats in parliament,<sup>7</sup> with most women again coming from the Labour Party. The 2010 elections resulted in the first hung parliament since 1974, with the Conservative Party and the Liberal Democratic Party ultimately announcing a coalition government. In all, 143 women were elected. The number of Conservative Party Women elected increased greatly from 17 to 49,<sup>8</sup> in large part owing to its Women2Win campaign.

In the UK, political parties have taken initiatives to encourage women as candidates and as members of political parties and other organizations. These initiatives include training, mentoring, women-targeted membership drives and the use of financial incentives to encourage organizational innovation.<sup>9</sup> For example, the Labour Party has implemented women only shortlists for candidate nomination to promote women's chances of securing a party nomination, and the Conservative Party has also implemented reforms to its candidate selection procedures.

In 2005, David Cameron became leader of the Conservative Party. In a speech following his victory as Conservative Party leader, Cameron claimed that the future of the Conservative party was "crucially, [in] broadening our representation in Parliament so we better reflect the country we aspire to govern."<sup>10</sup> By revising the candidate selection process to be more inclusive and diverse, the Conservative Party hoped to become more relevant to growing populations of British voters, including women, youth and ethnic minorities.

### Strategies Employed

#### A. INCREASING WOMEN LEADERS: WOMEN2WIN

In 2005, a group of male and female Conservative members launched **Women2Win**, an initiative designed to increase the number of Conservative women Parliamentarians, by campaigning for more women to win nominations for winnable and Tory-held seats. Women2Win is "a broad cross section of men and women from across the Conservative Party who came together in a recognition that the Party constantly needs to change in order to win the trust and confidence of the British People."<sup>11</sup>

Women2Win, which included a website of the same name, played an active role in recruiting new women members, and providing them with the training, mentoring and support they needed to succeed within the party. Many of the women candidates selected thus far have received support from Women2Win.<sup>12</sup> Women2Win believes "that when the gender balance of candidates reflects that of modern Britain, the

Conservative Party's electoral support substantially increases – by making a concerted effort to bring about gender equality, the electorate will recognise the positive efforts being made and this will be reflected in their vote.”<sup>13</sup>

## B. CANDIDATE SELECTION QUOTA

A few weeks after the launch of Women2Win, new candidate selection procedures were announced, designed to increase the number of women and ethnic minority Conservative legislators. They included the introduction of a **Priority List** of the “brightest and best” candidates, at least half of whom would be women and 10 percent ethnic minorities. Associations in Conservative-held and targeted electoral districts were expected to select their candidates from this list. In January 2007, changes were announced to allow anyone on the List to apply for any seat. Another round of changes granted constituencies two main options. First, as part of a “big event,” each member could have four votes – two for women and two for men – to create a shortlist of four people, half of whom would be women. Constituency executives then conducted a thorough interview process and selected the final candidate. Under the second option, anyone on the electoral register in the constituency could vote on a shortlist which did not have to meet gender requirements. Later reforms required a 50 percent gender balance among the individuals being considered at each stage in the process, regardless of the approach chosen by the constituency.<sup>14</sup>

## The Way Forward

Proponents argue that the revised candidate selection policy has not only proved effective in increasing the number of women who are shortlisted and selected, but it has also helped broaden the Conservative Party's appeal. The changes to candidate selection rules certainly had an impact. In the 2010 election, the number of women MPs in the Conservative Party group in parliament increased from 17 to 49.

However, this proportion represents 16% of the total Conservative caucus. Women2Win acknowledges the need to “continue increasing the number of Conservative

women MPs by providing support, advice and training to women who wish to enter Parliament.”<sup>15</sup>

This challenge also applies to cabinet positions; of the 24 cabinet posts in 2010 government, only four were filled by women. Women also still face barriers in assuming party leadership. There has only ever been one woman party leader in the history of the Conservative party, and similar trends are found in other political parties in the UK.

## Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of all the initiatives or all the organizations in the country aiming to promote women's political participation, but rather showcases concrete actions of one organization in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 Center for Women and Democracy. (2010). “‘Derisory’ Increase in Number of Women MPs (2010).” Available at <http://www.cfdw.org.uk/news/28/61/Derisory-increase-in-number-of-women-MPs>, accessed January 2012.
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- 8 Women2Win. (2011). “Our Organization.” Available at <http://www.women2win.com/text.aspx?id=5>, accessed January 2012.
- 9 Norris, Lovenduski, and Campbell, 2004.
- 10 Cameron, D. (2005) “Cameron: Until we're represented by men and women in the country, we won't be half the party we could be.” *Conservatives*. Available at [http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2005/12/Cameron\\_Until\\_were\\_represented\\_by\\_men\\_and\\_women\\_in\\_the\\_country\\_we\\_wont\\_be\\_half\\_the\\_party\\_we\\_could\\_be.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2005/12/Cameron_Until_were_represented_by_men_and_women_in_the_country_we_wont_be_half_the_party_we_could_be.aspx), accessed January 2012.
- 11 Women2Win, 2011.
- 12 Ashiagbor, S. (2008). *Political Parties and Democracy in Theoretical and Practical Perspectives: Selecting Candidates for Legislative Office*. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs. Available at [http://www.accessdemocracy.org/files/2406\\_polpart\\_report\\_engpdf\\_100708.pdf](http://www.accessdemocracy.org/files/2406_polpart_report_engpdf_100708.pdf), accessed January 2012.
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## UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: FUNDRAISING NETWORKS AND A GENDER EQUITY POLICY FOR PARTY CONVENTIONS<sup>1</sup>

### Background

The United States of America (US) is a federal constitutional republic, and two political parties have dominated American politics since the 1850s: the center-left Democrats, and the center-right Republicans. Several other third parties achieve minor representation at the national and state levels from time to time. There are few laws regulating political organization and, consequently, the political parties have been free to develop their own systems of organization. The national convention is the highest authority for both the Democratic and Republican parties, and comprises a series of gatherings, or nominating conventions, of party delegates in presidential election years to nominate the party's candidates for president and vice president as well as adopt the party platform. The Democratic and Republican national committees have general responsibility for the affairs of their respective parties between nominating conventions, while each state chapter has its own charter and by-laws.

This case study presents some of the strategies employed by the Democratic Party to promote women's participation. Although gender quotas are prohibited by its charter, the Democratic Party applies a so-called soft quota to its party structures and processes, mandating equal representation in the party "as nearly as practicable." The case study focuses on women's participation at the federal level.



DIGITAL VISION

### KEYWORDS

Women's mobilization  
Funding networks  
Party organization

### POLITICAL PARTY EXAMPLE

Democratic Party

### AT A GLANCE: UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Name of parliament	Congress
Structure of parliament	Bicameral (Senate and House of Representatives)
Type of electoral system	Plurality/Majority
Legislative election	November 2008
Number of women elected (lower house)	73 out of 435 (16.8%)

The U.S. has a bicameral Congress, with a House of Representatives and the Senate. Women constitute 17 percent of the Senate and 16 percent of the House of Representatives in the 112<sup>th</sup> Congress.<sup>2</sup> Candidates who wish to run as a Democrat or Republican for elected office need simply declare their affiliation to a party, and if they can garner enough votes in the primary election, they can become the official party candidate. In practice, state party committees often recruit and endorse candidates of their choice, but electoral processes vary between states as well as between districts within states.<sup>3</sup>

### Rationale for Increasing Women's Participation

As early as 1848, women activists convened the first women's rights Convention in the United States in Seneca Falls, New York and created a Declaration of Sentiments, demanding women's suffrage. Despite a century of mounting support for women's political participation, American women activists have experienced inconsistent gains within the Democratic Party. In 1953, Democrat leaders decided to dissolve the party's Women's Division in favor of integrating women party activists into all committees and leadership roles. Although met with disdain by women in the party, this gender-neutral approach took hold for several decades and women generally abandoned collective strategies to influence policy as an electorate group.<sup>4</sup> However, as a result of women's organization both externally and internally, Democrat women later began to advocate for their influence within the party. As women began to mobilize across sectors, the Democratic Party was more responsive to women's call for greater representation, recognizing the impact that women could have on the electoral success of the party. In addition, the party leadership came to acknowledge women as one of its key constituencies, with women voting at higher rates than men since 1980 and constituting higher numbers of undecided and swing voters.<sup>5</sup>

### Strategies Employed

#### A. WOMEN'S MOBILIZATION

Women activists aligned with the Democratic Party worked both within and outside of the party to leverage reform periods to demand that the party leadership

achieve important benchmarks for women in politics, including equal representation in the national conventions, the equal division of party leadership positions at the state level, and the nomination of a woman on the presidential ticket.

Meanwhile, external women's organizations emerged. In the 1960s and 1970s, several women's CSOs and political action committees emerged with the specific mission to foster women's full political participation, arguing that American politics represented an "Old Boys' Network."<sup>6</sup> Several of these organizations have gone on to attain prominent stature both within and outside the major political parties, including the National Organization for Women (NOW), the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), the National Federation of Democratic Women (NFDW), the Women's Campaign Fund and EMILY's List. These organizations sought to increase women's access to political power through the recruitment and training of, and provision of financial donations to, women candidates at the state and national levels.

As these organizations grew in membership and support, they began to mount pressure against political institutions to guarantee equal political space and opportunities for women. Riding the wave of feminist rallies surrounding the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) – an amendment to the United States Constitution which would have guaranteed that equal rights under any federal, state, or local law could not be denied on account of gender – women's organizations like the NWPC strategically lobbied the Democratic Party's leadership to reaffirm the party's pro-ERA platform at their 1972 Convention.

#### B. INTERNAL RULES FOR PARTY CONVENTIONS

As a result of a falloff in women's representation among the delegates at the 1976 Convention, the NWPC, NOW and the women's caucus came together to advocate for party Charter language that would guarantee 50-50 representation of women and men in Democratic Party Conventions. Leading up to the 1980 Convention, President Jimmy Carter was persuaded to give his backing to this initiative, capitalizing on his concern that the women would otherwise vote for his chief competitor in the Democratic presidential

## FUNDRAISING NETWORKS: EMILY'S LIST

In the 1980s, the 25 “founding mothers” of EMILY’s List identified that women candidates were not getting the necessary seed money for their campaigns to be taken seriously as competitive candidates against men.<sup>1</sup> Drawing on their immediate networks, the founders embarked on a letter writing campaign to raise awareness about their new network and encourage women to give money for women candidates, arguing that even small donations could help women’s campaigns.<sup>2</sup>

EMILY’s List devised fundraising strategies based on an understanding of the United States’ campaign finance system and laws. The group realized that as a political action committee, it was limited to one \$5,000 contribution per candidate per election cycle, but it could “bundle” an unlimited amount of individual contributions<sup>3</sup> from its members. Using a rigorous selection process, EMILY’s List identifies and recommends top Democratic women candidates to its members across the country and asks them to give directly to these women’s campaigns, providing them with detailed profiles about each candidate’s views, backgrounds and campaigns so that they can make informed decisions. One hundred percent of members’ contributions go directly to the campaigns in order to provide greater cash boosts to women candidates.<sup>4</sup>

As EMILY’s List’s membership and fundraising capacity grew, the Democratic Party acknowledged the group’s commitment to pro-choice women candidates and the enhanced funds that women candidates were able to bring to their campaigns as a result of their involvement in the EMILY’s List network. The party leadership and women’s caucus welcomed the systems that were put in place by EMILY’s List, but neither the party nor EMILY’s List envisioned that comparable successes could be achieved from within the party structures.<sup>5</sup>

Since its founding, EMILY’s List has grown to include more than 100,000 members, raised millions of dollars for candidates, and helped elect 80 pro-choice Democratic women members of Congress, 15 senators, 9 governors, and hundreds of women to state and local office.<sup>6</sup> EMILY’s List has inspired and supported the replication of its strategies with Democratic organizations at that state level, such as Annie’s List in Texas, and across party lines, with the creation of Wish List and the Susan B. Anthony List for Republican candidates.

### NOTES

- 1 Seed money is the initial funding required to start a campaign in order to win the party nomination. As such, the acronym for EMILY’s List stands for “Early Money Is Like Yeast” – it makes the dough (i.e. campaign funds) rise. (Interview with founder of EMILY’s List, January 2010.)
- 2 EMILY’s List. “Our History,” <http://emilyslist.org/who/history/>, accessed January 2012.
- 3 Currently, individuals may only contribute a maximum of \$2,400 per election per candidate for federal office.
- 4 EMILY’s List. “Our History,” <http://emilyslist.org/who/history/>, accessed January 2012.
- 5 Interview with one of the founders of EMILY’s List, January 2010.
- 6 Ibid.

primaries.<sup>7</sup> As a result, the 1980 Democratic Party convention represented the first time in U.S. history that a national party’s nominating convention delegates included equal numbers of men and women. NWPC and NOW members constituted over 20 percent of the women delegates at that convention.<sup>8</sup>

The Democratic Party also voted to revise its Charter to ensure that future National Conventions would

be composed of equal numbers of men and women delegates. Moreover, the Charter now calls for all party structures to be equally divided between men and women, including the DNC, the executive committee, regional caucuses and state central committees, and gives the NFDW and the women’s caucus seats on the DNC and party executive committee. State parties are similarly required to take “provable positive steps” to

comply with the Charter's provisions in regards to equal division of gender,<sup>9</sup> and most Democratic Party state bylaws stipulate that the vice chair of the state party has to be the opposite sex of the chairperson.<sup>10</sup>

The women's caucus and associated women's organizations work to develop a pipeline of women's political leadership from the grassroots to the national level. This work is grounded in strategies to recruit women leaders at the local level, push for women's candidacies, especially in open seats where Democratic Party incumbents are not running,<sup>11</sup> and encourage candidates to include images of women in their television campaign advertisements.<sup>12</sup>

### Outcomes

Since the 1980s, the Democratic Party has maintained a gender balance at the party's national conventions. Women who attend party conventions have had the opportunity to network and fundraise in ways that have been critical to their political careers. Many first-time women office seekers have previously served as party delegates, which allowed them to leverage the relationships they built through participation in the party's conventions. Responding to the Democratic Party's efforts to formalize women's role in the conventions through Charter revisions, the Republican Party also worked to promote greater proportions of women in their conventions, with 48 percent women in 1980.<sup>13</sup>

### Challenges and the Way Forward

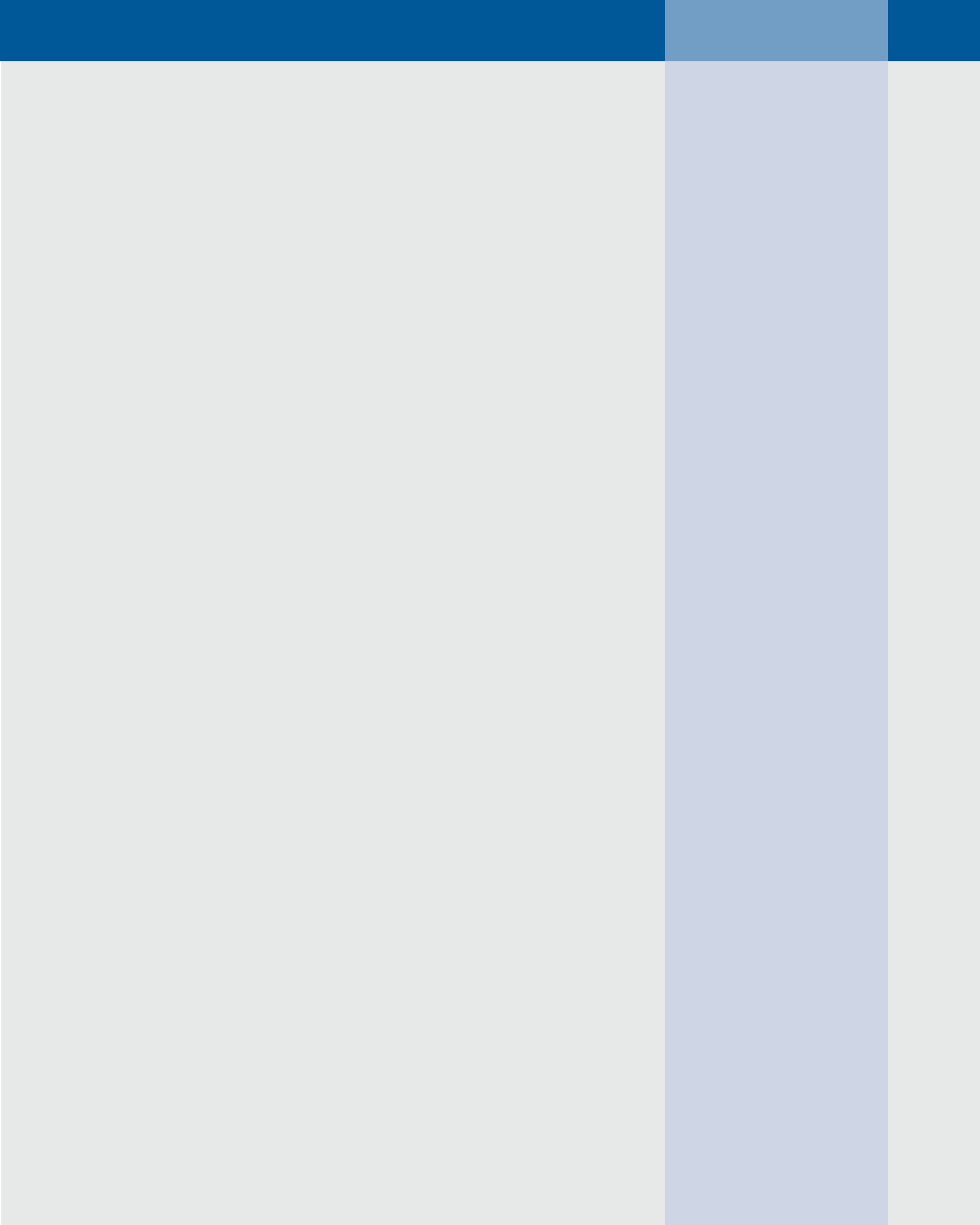
Despite the real gains in representation and support for women's policy priorities in the Democratic Party, the role of convention politics has proven limited in getting more women elected to public office. Women seeking political office at all levels in the United States have often by-passed traditional centers of candidate support, receiving support instead from a network of women's political organizations, which provide financial aid, research, information and staff, and generally encourage Democratic women's active participation in the political process.<sup>14</sup>

Given the emphasis of the political parties on presidential elections, women party and civic activists continued to advocate for the Democratic Party to elect a woman presidential nominee. However, the focus on presidential

politics has limited the ability of activists to garner momentum for parity in women's representation at the various levels of government. Moreover, the success of EMILY's List has provided the Democratic Party a justification for not building a stronger women's wing within the party. Women in the United States continue to confront a hurdle in getting above 17 percent representation in Congress and, as of 2010, constitute only 22.9 percent of state executive positions,<sup>15</sup> 24 percent of state legislators,<sup>16</sup> and 17.6 percent of mayors.<sup>17</sup>

### Endnotes

- 1 This case study does not present a comprehensive analysis of the initiatives of all the political parties in the country, but rather showcases some of the concrete actions of one party in detail. The analysis and recommendations do not necessarily reflect the opinions of UNDP or NDI.
- 2 "Facts on Women in Congress 2010." *Center for American Women and Politics*. [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/Congress-CurrentFacts.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/Congress-CurrentFacts.php), accessed January 2012.
- 3 Ulloa, F. "The Electoral System of the United States." *Mundo Electoral*, <http://174.36.232.8/html/index.php?id=98>, accessed January 2012.
- 4 Brodtkin, K. (2007). "We Are Neither Male nor Women Democrats: Gender Difference and Women's Integration Within the Democratic Party." *Journal of Women's History*, 19(2): 111-137.
- 5 "The Gender Gap and the 2004 Women's Vote: Setting the Record Straight." Center for American Women in Politics, [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/voters/documents/GenderGapAdvisory04.pdf](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/voters/documents/GenderGapAdvisory04.pdf), accessed January 2012.
- 6 Interview with Democratic Party activist, January 2010.
- 7 Gelb, J. (1989). "Feminism and Politics: A Comparative Perspective." Berkeley, USA: University of California Press.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Center for American Women and Politics. "Firsts for Women in U.S. Politics," [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/resources/Firsts.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/resources/Firsts.php), accessed January 2012.
- 10 The Democratic National Committee. "The Charter and Bylaws of the Democratic Party of the United States," [http://s3.amazonaws.com/apache.3cdn.net/58e635582dc516dd52\\_5wsmvyn09.pdf](http://s3.amazonaws.com/apache.3cdn.net/58e635582dc516dd52_5wsmvyn09.pdf), accessed January 2012.
- 11 Interview with Democratic Party activist, January 2010.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Gelb, J. (1989). "Feminism and Politics: A Comparative Perspective." Berkeley, USA: University of California Press, p. 64.
- 14 Gelb, J. (1989) "Feminism and Politics: A Comparative Perspective." Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 67.
- 15 Center for American Women and Politics. "Facts on Women in Statewide Elective Executive Office 2010." Available at [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/Statewide-CurrentFacts.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/Statewide-CurrentFacts.php), accessed January 2012.
- 16 Center for American Women and Politics. "State Legislature." Available at [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/state\\_legislature.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/state_legislature.php), accessed January 2012.
- 17 Center for American Women and Politics. "Women Mayors in U.S. Cities 2009." Available at [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/Local-WomenMayors.php](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/Local-WomenMayors.php), accessed January 2012.



“ENSURING WOMEN’S EQUAL PARTICIPATION  
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GENDER EQUALITY WITHIN THEM – AND,  
ULTIMATELY, WITHIN SOCIETY AS A WHOLE.”



United Nations Development Programme  
Bureau for Development Policy  
One United World Plaza  
New York, NY, 10017 USA  
Tel. +1 212 906 6305

For more information:  
[www.undp.org/governance](http://www.undp.org/governance)



National Democratic Institute  
for International Affairs  
455 Massachusetts Ave, NW, 8th Floor  
Washington, DC 20001-2621  
Tel. +1 202 728 5500

For more information:  
<http://www.ndi.org>

