



Women's Political Participation

The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (www.iknowpolitics.org)

Joint Training on Effective Electoral Assistance

Brussels, 1-5 December 2008

Organized within



In collaboration with





Outline

- ❑ **Global picture of Women's Political Participation**
- ❑ **Barriers to women's political participation**
- ❑ **Promoting meaningful participation**
- ❑ **iKNOW Politics** (International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics)

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Women's Political Participation

- ❑ **Gender Parity or at least a critical mass target** of having 30 % women in decision-making positions globally (Beijing Platform for Action 1995) + importance of the outcome: legislation enhancing women's rights or gender equality.
- ❑ Women in national parliaments: 18.4 % (18.5% of legislators in lower houses and 17.6% in upper houses*) up from 13 % in 1990.
- ❑ Highest are Nordic countries (41.4%)* + Rwanda (56.25 %)
- ❑ Lowest are Arab states (9.1%) and Pacific Island states (1.8%)*
- ❑ 16% of Ministerial posts are held by women
- ❑ Women Heads of State: 4.7%, Women Heads of Government: 4.2%, Women Heads of Parliament: 10.7%

*source: Inter-Parliamentary Union – October 2008



Barriers to women's participation

Political obstacles

- Impact of the electoral system (First-Past-the Post versus Proportional Representation has proven to be the most important predictor of high numbers of women in parliament)
- Absence of special measures (quotas, reserved seats)
- Political Party structures (party nominations and selection of party lists is often male-dominated)

Socio-economical factors

- Lack of funds , fundraising skills, fewer links to corporate and other sources of funds
- Unemployment
- Family and domestic responsibilities
- Lack of education and capacities

Ideological obstacles

- Cultural norms
- Fixed and traditional gender roles
- Lack of confidence
- Media portrayal of women in politics



Promoting meaningful participation: The Electoral Cycle and Beyond

- ❑ Challenge of securing gender equality in political participation goes beyond achieving better quantitative ratios between men and women during an election year + **importance of the outcome**: legislation enhancing women's rights or gender equality+ increasing the participation of women not only in electoral processes but also on-going **local and national decision-making processes**
- ❑ Enhance **women's participation** – as voters, candidates and electoral administrators.
- ❑ Work with **political parties** to integrate gender equality goals into parties' regulations.
- ❑ Support **electoral and constitutional reform processes**
- ❑ **Promote Civic and voter education** (including capacity building of journalists on gender sensitive reporting or media training)
- ❑ **Capacity development** of womens' candidate and women currently in office
- ❑ **Networking** (ie women's parliamentary caucuses, women's sections of political parties, informal networking)



The International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics (www.iKNOW Politics.org)

- iKNOW Politics is a **joint initiative** of UNDP, UNIFEM, IPU, NDI and International IDEA.
- online workspace** designed to increase the participation and effectiveness of women in political life by utilizing a technology-enabled forum
- Access resources, share experiences and create knowledge.
- After less than two years of existence, iKNOW Politics has now more than 3,000 members around the world, with more than 1,200 resources available on-line. Since the first day of its launch, iKNOW Politics has provided free and easy access to resources specifically designed to help women run political campaigns, participate in the political parties, fundraise, work with media and voters, advocate and lobby for women's issues

Welcome to iKNOW Politics!



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our KNOWLEDGE

Women and 2008 Elections: Challenges and Opportunities for Strengthening Ghana's Democracy

This article highlights opportunities and challenges for a greater participation of Ghanaian women in this year's historic election.

our VOICES

Defining Women in Decision-Making Positions

Submitted by iKNOW Politics on Fri, 2008-05-02 13:19.

iKNOW Politics members and experts worldwide are invited to share their thoughts on defining the concept of women in decision-making positions.

[Get Back in Women](#)

our STORIES

Middle East: Arab Women Need to Have a Larger Role in the Media

The media's handling of women's issues has always generated heated debates in different communities around the world, and the Arab region is no exception. This week, a pan-Arab panel of media practitioners and experts convened in Abu

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Women and 2008 Elections: Challenges and Opportunities for Strengthening Ghana's Democracy

This article highlights opportunities and challenges for a greater participation of Ghanaian women in this year's historic election. It describes how the government, political parties, civil society and the media in Ghana are challenged to do more to advance the interests and representation of Ghanaian women in the electioneering process.

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ASK THE EXPERTS

Welcome to Ask the Experts circle! Before submitting your question, please review previous relevant [Consolidated Responses](#) in the resource library. In this section, members can post specific questions to the iKNOW Politics network of experts. All questions will first be forwarded to the Network Facilitator, and your patience in awaiting a response is appreciated.

How Do Women Candidates in Somaliland Overcome the Clan Barriers?

Submitted by [Wairimu Munyinyi](#) on Mon, 2008-03-10 07:02.

Body:

Somaliland is preparing for its local government elections to be held in July 2008. Nagaad, an umbrella organization for women plans to support women candidates. The biggest barrier to increasing women in leadership positions in Somaliland has been the issue of clan support, which is rarely accorded to women. Currently, there are only 3 women out of 330 elected councillors. What strategies can Nagaad apply to help women gain the support of the clan and be endorsed for leadership positions?

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Which Factors Explain the Rise of Women in Parliaments in Sub-Saharan Africa?

Submitted by [Nora](#) on Fri, 2008-02-15 01:50.

Body:

I am interested to know what factors best explain the rise of women in parliaments in Sub-Saharan Africa?

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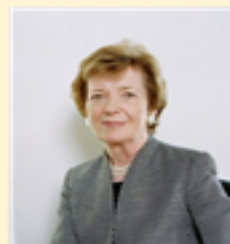
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Second E-Discussion Forum on Gender Quotas in Politics

June 4-11, 2008

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NEWS

Africa: Number of Female MPs Rising, Study Reveals

Submitted by bsalimova on Tue, 2007-03-06 16:21.

Africa: Number of Female MPs Rising, Study Reveals - The study conducted by the Inter Parliamentary Union shows an increase in the number of women parliamentarians and presiding officers worldwide. [allAfrica.com]

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Tags: [World News](#)

Sierra Leone: Fighting Gender Bias Ahead of Elections

Women in Sierra Leone fight to gain more posts during the upcoming general elections in July, 2007. Women activists and leaders claim that their gender is the biggest obstacle for getting elected as there are deep rooted stereotypes and discrimination against women in the country.

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INTERVIEW WITH FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE MADELEINE K. ALBRIGHT

Submitted by iKNOW Politics on Mon, 2007-02-26 23:47.

"My advice to women is to have a sense of confidence that what you have to offer is worthwhile. You can make a difference. You have to make a difference. Then, having made up your mind that you have been put on this earth to make a difference, you must use the resources that are available to you – through a process like iKNOW and the whole network, for example – to be able to do that!"



Question: You were the first female Secretary of State and the highest-ranking woman in the history of the US government. As a woman striving for this leadership position – as well as other positions you have held – what challenges have you faced?

Answer: I never thought that I would be able to be Secretary of State. It just never occurred to me, mainly – as I often put it – because I had never seen a Secretary of State in a skirt. At the time, there was the sense that being Secretary of State

was not a woman's job, not even a job for a woman to aspire to. I was up against the fact that many people doubted that women could even do this job at all – that was the main challenge. But, once I had

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UPCOMING EVENTS

"Building Bridges" film festival screening - Venice, California (9 days)

National Young Women's Leadership Conference (15 days)

"Building Bridges" film festival screening - Dover, Delaware (16 days)

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EVENTS

(all) ▾

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Week Day Table List

« June 2008 »

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Women's 1 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization Call for Papers: First European Conference on Politics and Gender	Women's 2 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization Call for Submissions: Gender Issues in Information and Communication Technologies	Women's 3 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization	Women's 4 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization	Women's 5 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization	Women's 6 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization	Women's 7 Human Rights: Building a Peaceful World in an Era of Globalization Civil Society and Policy Influencing: the European Context and Peace Building
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