

Women's Participation in Elections Across Africa ***2011***



Make *Every* Woman Count

Promoting the Empowerment of African Women & Girls

ABOUT MEWC

Founded in December 2010 two months after the launch of the African Women's Decade, Make Every Woman Count (MEWC) is a young women-led organisation committed to promoting and advocating for the empowerment and rights of African women/girls ; and monitoring the African Women's Decade.

The MEWC website serves as both a place for us as an organisation to advocate for our mission through our publications as well as a comprehensive online resource to support African women grassroots , women's organisations and activists with informational tools to support their social and organisational objectives. MEWC aims is to be a platform for African women/girls to exchange ideas and experiences, and a voice for those who have largely gone unheard. MEWC seeks to strengthen the voices of African women and girls so that they can take the lead on Africa's social, political and economic development.

MISSION

MEWC's mission is to raise awareness of the African Women's Decade by providing timely and accurate information, resources and tools to support and strengthen the work of African women's rights advocates, African women's grassroots organisations and activists; and to promote the participation of African women in all areas of social, political and economic development. Our mission it to be both an online resource as well as a medium through which individuals and organisations working towards women's rights in Africa can network and share ideas.

VISION

MEWC's vision is a world where women's rights have been achieved so that they can participate and influence decisions that affect their lives; and to fully participate in the economic, political and social life of the continent. We believe gender equality must be mainstreamed at every level of society and requires a multifaceted and multinational approach. We believe gender equality is not only a basic human right, but its achievement has enormous benefits for socio-economic development.

Email: info@makeeverywomancount.org

Website: www.MakeEveryWomanCount.org

MEWC is a UK Registered Charity no 1144255

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SUMMARY.....	3
CHALLENGES.....	3
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3
2011 AFRICAN ELECTIONS CALENDAR	5
INTRODUCTION.....	8
BENIN.....	10
CAPE VERDE.....	10
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC.....	11
CAMEROON.....	12
CHAD.....	14
COTE D’IVOIRE.....	14
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC).....	17
EGYPT.....	18
GABON.....	20
THE GAMBIA	22
LIBERIA.....	23
MOROCCO.....	25
NIGER.....	26
NIGERIA.....	27
RWANDA.....	28
SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE.....	29
THE SEYCHELLES	29
SOUTH SUDAN	30
UGANDA.....	32
TUNISIA.....	33
ZAMBIA.....	36
DJIBOUTI.....	37
CONCLUSION:	39

SUMMARY

This report seeks to provide an overview of the role of women in elections across Africa in 2011 by covering the position of female candidates before and after the elections have taken place; it is one of the first election monitoring projects in the field focused solely on the women's political participation.

Our aim in this report is to provide an analysis of women's participation in African politics, incorporating primary and secondary sources to reveal achievements and obstacles to women's political empowerment. We aim to provide a platform for feminist views and voices of parties and voters on the ground. The first objective is to provide an easy to use tool to follow the role of women in elections across Africa by covering the female candidates before and after the elections have taken place.

The accessibility of current and reliable data on women's political participation, access to leadership is even more difficult to find and compile. Without this information it is difficult to construct an objective view and analyses to interpret women's political participation. By providing this data in an accessible, easy to read framework, MEWC hopes to maintain an information gateway for researchers, policy makers, students, women's organizations and local voters.

In the long run, the objective of the project is to provide a platform for female voters and candidates to express their views and ideas, raise their political profile as well as possibly engaging with the Pan-African women's movement via MEWC. MEWC also hopes to provide a platform to female candidates and women-led political parties to share their experiences with our readers, policymakers, politicians and other women organizations. By sharing these lessons MEWC hopes to contribute to improving women's access to information, encourage communication and highlight the prevailing obstacles that prevent gender parity of leadership and political representation.

CHALLENGES

As an organisation still in its first year, monitoring elections and political participation data is difficult and time-consuming. Without access to resources or field representatives, we rely on local news reports, independent election monitoring groups and elections databases to ascertain the level of women's political participation in African elections. With diligent research, we were able to report on most of the elections that took place in 2011 with respect to women's participation; however our accuracy and precision with data would benefit from access to better resources, more time and full-time staff researchers and writers. These challenges were expected in our first year and the report was planned around mastering those obstacles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

TO NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

- a) Governments should actively promote and encourage the candidacy of women candidates through the use of quotas that can be re-enforced through sanctions and adequate electoral systems and legal measures that emphasis women's rights.
- b) National Constitution, and other national legal frameworks specifically Family Law must guarantee Women equal rights to their male counterparts.
- c) Should make data, particularly the number of women in office/ parliament, higher and lower houses more easily accessible on Official National Websites, News papers and other forms of media.
- d) Encourage voting awareness campaigns prior to election to ensure voters men and women of all ages are aware of their rights and responsibilities.
- e) Lastly Support Education for all-illiteracy continues to prevent many women from benefiting from their right to vote.

TO POLITICAL PARTIES

- a) Should promote men and women candidates equally.
- b) Should comply with parity quotas regardless of whether or not they are voluntary.

c) Publish party lists with men and women candidates side by side.

TO INTERNATIONAL NGOS

a) Apart from the IPU website it remains difficult to acquire relevant and reliable data on women candidates running and the number of women candidates elected. International Organisation should encourage national governments to record and publically publish such information to make it available to all.

b) Seek a grass root approach to support women political participation in Africa at all levels and work, cooperate with women's organisation on the ground to construct a sustainable, realistic, gradual solution.

c) Support women candidates and women's organisations throughout the political process.

TO LOCAL NGOS, WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS, ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMBERS OF CIVIL SOCIETY

a) Should encourage and support cooperation with each other to support women candidates, create and generate awareness amongst women voters to promote women's political participation.

b) Establish programs to encourage women and the youth to partake in the political realm and vote.

c) Should record, report, publish and share their findings, projects and experience with addressing women's political participation at all levels.

“We simply can no longer afford to deny the full potential of one half of the population. The world needs to tap into the talent and wisdom of women. Whether the issue is food security, economic recovery, health, or peace and security, the participation of women is needed now more than ever,” Michel Bachelet

“Full political participation will become a reality for us, as women, when quotas and set-asides become a relic of the past; when our access in participatory institutions at all levels is considered a right; and when we no longer feel compelled to wage campaigns and stage protests in order to have a say in the decisions that affect our lives – be it at the peace table or in the political and economic arenas.” Ellen Sirleaf Johnson

2011 AFRICAN ELECTIONS CALENDAR

Flag	Date	Country	Election
	January 9-15, 2011	South Sudan	Referendum*
	January 23, 2011	Central African Republic	General Elections Presidential (2nd Round): March 27, 2011
	January 31, 2011	Niger	Presidential (1st Round) and Legislative Presidential (runoff): April 7, 2011
	February 18, 2011	Uganda	General (Presidential and Parliamentary/Legislative)
	February 20, 2011	Chad	Parliamentary elections & Presidential Elections (1 st Round): May 8, 2011
	March 13, 2011	Benin	Presidential (1st Round) Parliamentary/Legislative: April 17 th

	April 2011	Nigeria	Parliamentary/Legislative: April 4, 2011 Presidential: April 16, 2011 Regional: April 26, 2011
	May 19-21, 2011	Seychelles	Presidential Parliamentary/Legislative: October 29, 2011
	July 17 & August 7, 2011	Sao Tome and Principe	Presidential (1 st round) Presidential (runoff)
	August 27, 2011	Cape Verde	Presidential
	September 20, 2011	Zambia	General (Presidential and Parliamentary/Legislative)
	September 26-27, 2011	Rwanda	Senatorial
	October 9, 2011	Cameroon	Presidential
	October 11, 2011	Liberia	General November 8, 2011 Presidential (2 nd round)

	October 23, 2011	Tunisia	Parliamentary/Legislative
	November 24, 2011	The Gambia	Presidential
	November 25, 2011	Morocco	Parliamentary/Legislative
	November 28, 2011	The Democratic Republic of Congo	General (Presidential and Legislative)
	November 28, 2011- January 03/11, 2012	Egypt	Parliamentary/Legislative (three-two part rounds)
	December 11, 2011	Cote d'Ivoire	Legislative
	December 17, 2011	Gabon	Parliamentary/Legislative

Source: [Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening \(CEPPS\)](#)

INTRODUCTION

"Democracy is about inclusion of all, for equal participation," and therefore, it is "clear that democratization that fails to incorporate a gender perspective and impact of certain groups in a given society is a flaw." Hon Anna Margareth Abdallah, Tanzania MP

Women's political participation is integral to women's rights and empowerment as well as socio-economic development. As in most areas of the world, African women who represent over half of the population often represent anywhere between 0 and 20% of elected and appointed decisions-making positions. Rarely, as is the case in Rwanda, do women manage to gain their fair share of the seats for representation in government offices.

The Stockholm-based Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) reports that women politicians across the globe confront a "masculine model" of politics. In many cases they lack political party support and have no access to quality education and training necessary to enter politics.

It is the view of Make Every Woman Count that women's political participation is crucial to achieving other outcomes in women's rights and development, specifically increasing the number of female friendly laws curbing gender based violence, land owning rights, divorce laws, access to education and better healthcare. We also believe that the participation of women is imperative in post-conflict societies, especially where UNSCR 1325 is yet to be implemented.

For decades, African women have been sidelined in taking part in the social, economic and political development of the continent. However, today, African women are proving that women's participation and leadership is a vital to poverty alleviation and peace-process in Africa.

THE ARAB SPRING AND WOMEN'S RIGHTS

2010 and 2011 were very important years for women's political participation. In 2010, gains for women were registered in just half of all parliamentary elections or renewals. The most notable progress was seen in Northern Africa in post-revolutionary Egypt, Tunisia and Libya. North Africa saw women's representation in single or lower houses increased from 9.0 per cent to 11.7 per cent between 2010 and 2011. In Tunisia, the gender equality law was enacted by the recently elected Tunisian Islamist Party as a basic law that can only be repealed by two-thirds majority, (as opposed to a law that can simply be repealed by a soft majority).² While the gender equality law is not perfect, it is a great first step.



Women in Cairo calling for equal rights.

Photograph: Fatma Naib

However, despite great hopes for post-revolutionary Egypt, Tunisia and Libya, there is still cause for alarm. During the first week of January, a newly circulated draft law that would give Libyan women only 10% quota in parliament while they make up 50% of the

population is outrageous.³ In Egypt, women have taken the frontline of the recent protests and have received discriminatory and intolerable treatment. Women have protested for an end to the violence perpetrated by the army on peaceful protesters; they have called alongside their brothers for immediate free and fair elections, and they have protested calling for greater participation of women in public and political life—even going as far as calling for a parallel parliament for women.⁴ Still, violence perpetrated against female protesters continues.

Most importantly, MEWC wants to highlight the importance of the Arab Spring for women's rights and their political representation. What is often overlooked in analysis of the Arab Spring is the role women played in the protests and violence. People are often surprised to see YouTube videos of women protesting and being beaten – as if this is their awakening and their first time fighting for their rights. But for hundreds of years, women have been fighting in independence and revolutionary movements across North Africa, with the notion that the fall of the colonial power or the dictatorship will bring rights for women. But this has not been the case. The Arab Spring is yet another chance to bring women's rights to North Africa. The first elections in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya are crucial and will be key indicators of the direction these countries will move in achieving women's rights or maintaining the status quo.

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Sub-Saharan Africa has also seen recent progress, with Ethiopia, Madagascar and the United Republic of Tanzania recording improvements in 2010. Women now have better access to a level of decision making that directly impacts their lives and the issues they care about. According to the Africa Progress Report for 2011, “Women's representation in parliaments in Sub-Saharan Africa is now higher than in South Asia, the Arab states or Eastern Europe.”⁵ Rwanda is by far the most female-friendly legislature in the world, with women holding over 50% of the parliamentary seats.⁶ “From its inception, The African Union adopted a 50 per cent quota for women's representation, which is reflected in the composition of the AU Commission. Again, this standard reflects and reinforces efforts to enhance women's representation at the national level. Angola, Mozambique and South Africa have exceeded the 30 per cent benchmark for their legislatures. Rwanda made history in 2008 when 56 per cent of legislators elected to parliament were women, the highest in the world”⁷.



Across Africa, women's movements are now putting more emphasis on decision-making power.

Photograph: Reuters / Mowliid Ibd

However, what remains an issue across Sub-Saharan Africa is the lack of political support women receive. ‘Gender Equality’ may be enshrined in the constitution but it is often nominal. Women frequently lack support to achieve their goals and gain representation leading to unequal access to campaign resources, media coverage and public exposure. In 2010, many women contenders for political office suffered from a shortage of both media coverage and public appearances. Many female candidates in 2011 received no media coverage and little party support.

In Niger, only 8 women were elected for legislative seats and in Benin, women hold only 8% of the legislative seats. These are telling signs that while Sub-Saharan Africa has made some changes during the first year of African's Women's Decade, there is still a long way to real progress.

“I challenge African women to take responsibility for their own destiny collectively. To stop playing victims. To stop pointing fingers to men, to tradition, to culture, to any other argument to explain our modest progress.”⁸ Graca Machel, 1997

BENIN

Benin is considered one of the more politically stable states in the West African region, mainly because of previous successful elections and peaceful transitions of power.⁹ Parliamentary elections initially slated for April 17, 2011 were postponed to 30th April due to delay in the presidential elections and the registration of parliamentary candidates. Benin’s National Assembly (Assemblée Nationale) is unicameral and made up of 83 members who are elected by popular vote to serve four year terms.¹⁰ Women in Benin make up a small percentage of legislators and top decision makers in ministries. Women’s political participation in public life is inhibited by oppression based in beliefs about the appropriate roles and limited talents accorded to women.

In August 2010, the National Assembly adopted a new law on the election of members of the National Assembly.¹¹ It raised the statutory number of members from 83 to 99 and set a 20 per-cent quota for women in all party lists for parliamentary elections. However, in September, the Constitutional Court nullified both provisions. It stated that increasing the statutory number of members would be allowable only if there were sufficient financial resources and that the quota for women candidates violated the principle of gender equality guaranteed by the Constitution. The Court stated that such a quota could be justified only if it applied to both genders or if a higher percentage was applied (since women account for 52% of Benin's population). Consequently, the 2011 elections were held for 83 seats in the National Assembly without any women's quota for party lists; a reflection of women’s political participation in Benin!

Only eight women were elected and of these, the first lady Chantal de Souza later resigned and was replaced by her male counterpart, which reduced the number of women from 8 to 7. In May 2011, Benin President Thomas Boni Yayi appointed eight (8) women as cabinet ministers out of the total number of 27 ministers.¹² This is considered a big improvement in women’s participation because the number of women ministers was increased by four. However, there is still a lot that needs to be done in Benin to increase women’s political participation and put women in decision-making positions.

Women’s Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation: National Assembly	As Per April 2011 Elections	Percentage
Female Members of Parliament-Unicameral	7/87	8.43%
Female Ministers	8/26	30.8%

CAPE VERDE

Women’s suffrage came into force in 1975, which brought about women’s active rights to vote and passive right to vote, this means that women were able to vote and stand for elections respectively.¹³ To date no woman has been elected Prime Minister or President.

Presidential elections took place on the 7th August 2011 showing that the number of women elected to the national assembly is gradually rising with 15.3% in 2006 and 20.80% in 2011.¹⁴

The 1999 Electoral Code includes measures aimed at promoting women’s political participation, yet the Electoral Code lacks implementation.¹⁵ Under the *Electoral law*, the State provides a subsidy to political parties that have successfully elected at least 25 per cent of women in both national and municipal levels. Despite the law, women continue to be underrepresented and only few seek public office.¹⁶

Nevertheless, the Cape Verdean government is making strides to include more women in the political process. In the last few years, women’s political participation has been a central concern for the government of Cape Verde, namely a number of government

programmes initiated through the Institute for Gender and Equality and Equity (ICIEG). The ICIEG has elaborated and implemented the First National Plan for the Promotion of Women 1997 -2000. In 2004, the main objective of the second National Plan for Gender Equality and Equity (2005-2009) was to democratize the system of power and gender relations, promoting equal opportunities at all levels and also promoting a qualitative change of behaviors and attitudes.¹⁷

Women’s Political Participation Recent Statistics

	2006 Presidential & Parliamentary Elections	2011 Presidential Parliamentary Elections
Female Presidential Candidates	0/2 ¹⁸	0/4 ¹⁹
Females Securing Lower or single House Seats	11/72 seats or 15.3% ²⁰	15/72 seats or 20.80% ²¹
Females Securing Upper House or Senate Seats	Not/Available	Not/Available

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The women’s suffrage came into force in 1986 with women’s ability to both actively vote in elections and passively stand for elections.²² To date no woman has been elected Prime Minister or President.

Presidential and national assembly elections took place on the 23rd of January 2011. No woman was elected President, although the number of women elected to hold national assembly seats is gradually increasing, with 10.5% in 2005 and 12.5% in 2011.²³

Article 74 of the 2004 Constitution requires that at least three of the nine members of the Constitutional Court be women.²⁴

A 2003 National Dialogue recommended that women make up 35% of posts in national ministries and political parties, yet these are just recommendations which have not been implemented. There is no constitutional quota pertaining to advancing the representation of women in political office.²⁵

The lack of constitutional quotas centered on gender parity in political and public office has been termed ‘gender blindness’. The lack of recognition of women's historic experience of systemic marginalisation and disempowerment socially, economically or politically enable the absence of measures of redress such as quotas to exist.²⁶

In the absence of a constitutional quota there is the 2003 National Dialogue recommendation and a reaffirmation in the last sentence of the Preamble to the 2004 Constitution affirming the Republic's commitment to all ratified international conventions and in particular to those that prohibit discrimination against women and those relating to the protection of the rights of children.²⁷

Women’s Political Participation Recent Statistics

	2006 Presidential & Parliamentary Elections	2011 Presidential & Parliamentary Elections
Female Presidential Candidates	0/11 ²⁸	0/5 ²⁹

Females Securing Lower or single House Seats	11/105 or 10.5% ³⁰	13/104 or 12.5% ³¹
Females Securing Upper House or Senate Seats	No Data	No Data



CAMEROON

The presidential election in Cameroon was held on 9 October 2011. For the first time, two women were contending for the presidential election: **Edith Kabbang Walla**, known as **Kah Walla**, and **Esther Dang**.

Incumbent President Paul Biya stood for another term; he was able to do so due to a constitutional amendment, passed in 2008, that eliminated term limits. President Biya won the election with over 75% of the vote.

While gender parity in political participation in Cameroon has increased slightly due to the success of some feminist movements, there remains a crisis of citizenship in Cameroon. Overwhelmingly, women lack the documents needed to even register to vote or run for office.

"Women must register to vote. But first they need their official documents. Today there are still women who go about their daily business without a national identity card," Catherine Abena, Minister for the Defense of Women and Families, said during the conference.³²

President Paul Biya, in power since 1982, was officially reelected following the 9th October 2011 presidential election in Cameroon; an election, which was described by observers as irregular, notably in terms of voters count, with reports that "even dead people voted;"³³ and because of intimidation and fraud claims.³⁴ As per the last parliamentary elections in July 2007, Cameroon ranked 83rd in the world in terms of number of women in parliament. As such, women currently represent 13.9% of Cameroon's Parliament, taking 25 out of 180 total seats.³⁵

Prior to the elections, civil society organizations have rallied to encourage women to vote. A central challenge is that numerous

women don't have identification documents, which are essential in order to be allowed to register to vote.³⁶ Horizon Femmes, a non-profit organization, has worked extensively to incite women to register to vote and has focused on getting women involved and interested in politics – a difficult task in a society where corruption is widespread and male-centered, and the belief in the political system and democracy is weak.³⁷

PAUL BIYA'S RECORD ON WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY

Within the government, a special ministry - The Ministry for the Promotion of Women and the Family (MinProff) - exists to work on women's rights and family affairs. In his speech on 25 October 2011³⁸, President Paul Biya placed an important emphasis on the role and place of women in Cameroon society and showed his commitment to reinforce equality between men and women. He appeared ready to challenge some of the rural traditions; for example that women cannot inherit property and other such customary practices, in order to promote gender equality. Biya highlighted the importance of including women in agricultural reforms and ensuring education for girls. However, until now, those promises have remained unanswered: women do not have access to property, they are still sidelined on the political participation front and it is still rare to find a woman in a position of power within the various administrations.

GENDER EQUALITY IN CAMEROON

While the 1996 constitution of Cameroon upholds the principle of gender equality and states that all citizens are equal and have the same rights without discrimination, several obstacles to such equality remain. Cameroon's legislation originates from a dual system of Napoleonic Code and common law and the coexistence of customary and written law³⁹. Furthermore, despite such texts, there is a weak political culture amongst women, and political opinions are often exaggerated by the views and involvement of one's husband.

As local traditions are an important part of Cameroonian life, they occasionally adversely affect the situation of women in the country. However, traditional leaders in Cameroon are slowly changing practices that are harmful to women after learning about CEDAW⁴⁰ and the rights that it provides for women. In 2007, civil society organizations, in collaboration with relevant government stakeholders, recognized the value of CEDAW as a powerful tool to stimulate change if widely disseminated and used as the basis for understanding universally accepted human rights principles, namely those relating to gender equality.⁴¹ Finally, the Constitution of Cameroon guarantees compulsory primary education for both sexes.

While the outcome of the presidential election was predictable with the re-election of President Biya, the upcoming July 2012 legislative elections will prove a challenge for Cameroon in terms of participation, free and fair elections and overall democratic procedure. With women being contenders for the first time in the 2011 presidential election, MEWC will be monitoring the number of women voting, being elected into parliament and joining the government in the 2012 elections.

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation	As of 2010	After the Elections (2011)
Female members of Government	6/55 or 10%	N/A
National Assembly	25/180 or 13.9%	N/A
Council (Municipal) seats	1651/10632	N/A
Number of women candidates	None in the elections of 2004	2



Photo: International Foundation for Electoral Systems

CHAD

Chad's political history has been plagued since before its independence. Elections since the democratic constitution was approved in 1996 have been marred with difficulties. In 1995, President Idriss Déby unilaterally modified the constitution to remove the two-term limit on the presidency. The most recent elections saw some irregularities with the EU praising the elections as peaceful and a turning point for the country. President Déby was re-elected in April with 83.59% of the vote with a 55.75% participation rate.⁴²

Chad is ranked 90th on Women in Parliament: World Classification, electing 24 women in 2011, filling 12.4% of the parliamentary seats.⁴³

While the constitution in Chad provides equal rights for all its citizens, women lack the skills needed to be aware of these rights as basic literacy skills are lacking in Chad and the enrolment rate of women in school is only 27.5%. Poor education and literacy skills have led to an unsustainable democracy. There is also a low level of female participation in voting as often families vote once through the male head of household, or "Family voting".⁴⁴

As it stands today, Chad has not implemented a constitutional quota for legislative positions.⁴⁵

*Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics*⁴⁶

Political Representation	Number of seats	Number of women as of 2010	Number of women after 2011 elections
Legislative/parliament	188	8 or 4.2%	24 or 13.2%
Government ministers	27	3 or 11%	N/A
Executive and Regional Level Government positions	22	0	N/A
Mayors	262	5 or 2%	N/A

COTE D'IVOIRE

As Cote d'Ivoire slowly recovered from the violent political struggle that ensued after the presidential elections in December 2010 it simultaneously prepared to hold legislative elections in 205 districts on December 11, 2011.

These legislative elections presented a second opportunity for women's groups, NGOs and women seeking to be part of the new political framework of Cote d'Ivoire. Women have until now remained largely invisible, not even attaining the 30% quota demanded in legal texts, conventions and treaties. Although women's leadership role in Ivorian politics has gradually increased women held only 8.5% of parliamentary seats in 2005. Many of these women were allocated oversee ministerial portfolios.⁴⁷

There are presently only five women ministers (13.88%); attaining the 30% benchmark appears a rather insurmountable objective in this light. The women elected have been awarded "traditional roles" such as the Minister of the Family and Women or Education to give the illusion that women are equally represented in government.⁴⁸ Remaining sidelined and unable to directly participate or access the formal decision-making political structures.

The last time Cote d'Ivoire had a women in a leadership role was in 1988 in the position of vice-president of the National Assembly. Historically in Cote d'Ivoire women and women's groups have been mobilized to pursue the goals of other popular parties such as the RDR, PDCI or the FPI but during elections women have not been recognized for their contributions.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN

"The Constitution of Côte d'Ivoire prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, and government policy encourages full participation by women in social and economic life. Nevertheless, Ivorian women remain confined to traditional roles, especially in rural areas."⁴⁹ Family law regards the male figure, generally the father as the head of the household-he also has sole parental right over the children and custody in the case of a divorce. GBV was very much a way of life prior to the outbreak of conflict; the national state budget in 2002 allocated less than 2% to the legal system.⁵⁰

Women according to Ivorian law (1995-till now) are considered secondary citizens. They have not been accorded inheritance rights and have limited access to land, once married men are awarded legal control of all assets. With the exception of the 2010 elections⁵¹ they have been given limited access to political power maintaining limited access to the public sphere and restricted reproductive rights.⁵² Rape is considered illegal under national law, but the law is rarely enforced.

Between 2002 and 2007 sexual and gender-based violence served militaristic purposes as a weapon of terror and only amplified the social inequalities present in society.⁵³ Women's role in the armed conflict was influenced by their political, economic and social status outside the armed conflict.

A BOTTOM UP APPROACH

Women groups in Cote d'Ivoire have been involved in community level, formal and informal work but align themselves with specific groups of society, along political views, class or ethnic lines, and not as a homogenous group. There is a large discrepancy between feminist groups at the elite level spear headed by Simone Gbagbo that demonstrated against the Ougadougou Accord that maintained a nationalistic/religious undertone; Community level support groups that led the "Women for Peace March" against the political situation that were affiliated with Ouattara's political campaign and Human Rights Orientated organizations such as VAFAG.⁵⁴

Including women in local governance is insufficient; they must be active actors in the reconstruction and transformation of all state institutions. Although groups such as the Centre Feminin pour la Democratie et les Droits Humains en Cote d'Ivoire and Action pour la Protection des Droits de l'Homme (APDH) have made it their mission to strengthen the leadership capacity of women; available data confirms that women have had lower positions in the national administration throughout the 1990s⁵⁵.

To counteract this pattern, a Coordination Unite: Femme pour les Election et la Reconstruction Post-Crise has been put together to monitor the participation of women in the legislative elections. While Plate Forme des Femmes pour Gagner (PFG) has held a campaign to promote the participation of women as traditional leaders and in decision-making institutions. With other organizations such as the Campagne National de L'Organisation des Femmes Actives de Cote d'Ivoire have been supporting the elections through awareness raising projects that seek to encourage women to partake in the elections.⁵⁶

The role reversal that was a direct consequence of the conflict could however provide an opportunity to transform pre-war gender stereotypes if women were to be included in all debates and decisions regarding leadership and governance. Women's groups sought to achieve gender parity through the legislative elections that took place on December 11.

The equal representation of women in government is not only necessary for gender parity but also a vital step in recognizing the efforts made by women to encourage and support democracy in Cote d'Ivoire. Women have been major background actors in the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire, demonstrating and in one case being killed for their demands (Abobo Incident).⁵⁷

OBSTACLES: NO IDENTIFICATION...NO VOTE

However many Ivoirians have been excluded from the elections, due to a lack of identification papers or as a result of internal displacement and refugees that remain unidentified. With a lack of measures put in place to include these voices some voters believe that “the results of the polls will not reflect the choice of the people.”⁵⁸ With women making up 75% of the displaced population in Cote d’Ivoire this has endangered the numerous programs and efforts being made to include women in the legislative elections. This factor combined with the low turn as a result of a boycott supported by FPI supporters threatens the legitimacy of the election.⁵⁹

CONCLUSION/OUTCOME:

Gender parity or equal participation of women in governance and leadership is an essential step in the recognition that equality is a right unfortunately Cote d’Ivoire has not implemented any legislative measures to enforce this right.

The legislative elections have been hailed as a success by a number of women’s organizations including the L’OFACI. Twenty-eight out of the 105 women candidates that ran were elected.⁶⁰



Women Political Representation Statistics⁶¹

Political Representation	As of 2010	After-the elections
Legislative-Unicameral National Assembly	18/203 or 8% (2000) ⁶²	10%
General/Constitutional Council	13/35 or 37.1%	N/A
Total percentage (%) of women in government	13%	N/A
Total number of candidate lists headed by a female candidates	Presidential elections (2010): 1/14	N/A

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) historic presidential and legislative elections took place on November 28 2011.

Joseph Kabila Kabange has been president of the DRC since January 2001. He took office ten days after the assassination of his father, President Laurent-Désiré Kabila. He was elected as President in 2006 and stood for another term in the 2011 election.⁶³

The National Assembly has 500 seats elected from multimember plurality constituencies. The Senate 104 seats elected by the Provincial Assemblies by proportional representation; eight from Kinshasa and four from each of the other 24 provinces. Past elected Presidents are *ex officio* members of the Senate.⁶⁴The Electoral Law (Law 06/006 of March 2006, 13) requires that lists of candidates or coalitions should take into account the equal representation of men and women, but also that candidate lists are not rendered invalid by the failure to attain parity.⁶⁵

Article 13 of Electoral law is a weak article as it stipulates that candidates should merely 'take into account' gender equity and that failure to meet such a recommendation doesn't warrant correction. WILPF DRC and UK WILPF members Annie Mbambi and Marie-Claire Faray say "[article 13] lacks coercive or incentive dispositions in the incorporation of women in useful position in the electoral roll. Therefore, inequalities and disparities between women and men in politics remain high".⁶⁶Three of the main political parties, the ruling People's Party for Reconstruction and Democracy (PPRD), the opposition Movement for the Liberation of Congo (MLC) and the Congolese Rally for Democracy (RCD) all adopted a 30% quota for the representation by women but these quotas were not implemented in the nomination of candidates.⁶⁷

Congolese women are not effectively represented and have never participated in the governance of the country since 1960, the year of the independence. No woman has ever been a head of state or head of government, neither have they been head of armed groups.

There are currently no female members of the office of the Senate and there is only one woman among the seven members of the office of the National Assembly. Out of the 108 Senators, there are only six women of which only one is the chair of a commission (on socio-cultural affairs). There are 43 elected women out 500 elected members of the DRC national assembly. Out of the 45 members of the Government, there are only five women of which four are ministers and one is a vice minister. There is no female Governor or Vice Governor of the 11 current Provinces of the Republic.⁶⁸

NOVEMBER 2011 ELECTIONS

The second ever legislative and presidential elections in the DRC were incredibly important because they have the potential to end years of impunity; gender based violence and armed rebel groups.

The elections also symbolise progression and the adoption of democratic norms. The election campaign period that began one month before the elections day has seen accusations of the rigging of polls, opposition supporters clashing and calls by candidates to break prisoners out of prison.

According to the Carter Centre, 32 million people were registered to vote, half of which were women. There were no female presidential candidates in 2011, a reduction in comparison to the 2006 presidential and legislative elections when women made up four of the thirty-three presidential candidates.

In the 2011 elections women composed 12% out of 18,000 legislative candidates.⁷³ local and international rights groups signed an open letter to presidential candidates⁶⁹ calling for calm and an end to "hate speech" ahead of the November 28 vote.⁷⁰There has been considerable alarm at the electoral ambitions of Ntabo Ntaberi Sheka who is running for one of two seats in the Walikale district of the North Kivu province. An arrest warrant has been issued for Sheka, he has been accused of organising the mass rape of 387 people in Walikale district in mid-2010. The arrest warrant is for crimes against humanity and has been issued by Congolese prosecutors.

After initially postponing the announcement of the outcome of the elections, the final results have been confirmed. The increasing use of violence post elections is also a source for concern and questions the credibility of the elections. People have been fleeing to the capital fearing even more violence after the announcement, specifically women and children in search for safety and security. Will candidates accept the results, has the voice of the people including women been heard and lastly, will it be fully recognized in the new government?

Ensuring the inclusion of female candidates and ministers in the new government is essential for combating the issue of domestic and gender based violence that has threatened the life, health, and socio-economic future of both men and women in the Democratic Republic of Congo in the past years.

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Participation	As of 2011	2011 Legislative and Presidential Elections
Female Presidential Candidates	4 of 33 ⁷¹	0 out of 11 ⁷²
Female Parliamentary Candidates	1,100 of 9,000 ⁷³	12% of 18,000 ⁷⁴
Females Securing Lower or single House Seats	52/500 Seats, 10.4% ⁷⁵	Results due January 2012
Females Securing Upper House or Senate Seats	5 /108, 4.6% ⁷⁶	10/72 or 13.9% ⁷⁷
Female Provincial Legislature Reps	43/632, 6.8% ⁷⁸	Results due January 2012

EGYPT

The central feature, which dominated the first phase of the parliamentary elections on 2 December, was the high turnout rate, as 62% of eligible voters cast their ballot. The Islamist parties clearly dominated the first phase of the elections. The Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party emerged with 36.6% of the vote while the far more fundamentalist al-Nour "the Party of the Light" emerged in second place with 24.4%. The rise of al-Nour has raised concern among observers as their leaders openly support the introduction of the harshest interpretation of Islamic law and call for women to be veiled and segregated.


The final outcome, including the number of seats allocated to women in Parliament, will only be known in late January 2012 as the third round of parliamentary elections take place.

GENDER EQUALITY IN EGYPT

In 1957, Egypt was the first country in the Arab world to elect a woman into parliament, having allowed women to vote just the year prior⁷⁹. During the rule of Gamal Nasser, girls were encouraged to attend school and women to join the workforce as part of the overall push for economic development in the country.

Nowadays, while women may work outside the home, attend school and university and can participate in democratic life, progress seems to have stalled on several fronts in the past years. The literacy rate for women is only 58% and only 23% of the workforce is made up of women. Progress also remains to be seen in the constitution, where, despite upholding equality between the sexes, women still face discrimination, notably in inheritance and divorce laws.

"We support a woman's right to education, to employment, even to become a Member of Parliament or government minister - but not to occupy the position of national sovereign". Essam al-Arian, vice-president of the Justice and Freedom Party (JFP), the Muslim Brotherhood political arm⁸⁰



Egyptians in Cairo's Tahrir Square celebrate the fall of the Mubarak government, but activists acknowledge the need to continue pressing for human rights and democratic reform. Photograph: Associated Press / SIPA / Alfred

The first post-Mubarak parliamentary elections occurred in September 2011 and the presidential election is due to take place in March 2012. These upcoming elections are critical to how the country shapes its future, and will give us clues about the emerging political landscape and to the level of involvement and influence women will have as candidates and voters.

Observers have expressed disappointment that no women were included in the 63 persons group drafting the package of constitutional amendments, which was passed on March 19, 2011 with 77% of the vote. The amendments, which established presidential term limits among other things, also contained a provision which some believe limits the presidency to only men. In addition, the amendments contained no reference to equality for women, but did not change the quota for women's participation in Parliament's lower chamber, currently set as 64 of 444 seats⁸¹. Egyptian women's political representation is low, with only 18 women in the 264-member Consultative Council.⁸²

Despite new election regulations, which forced political parties to include women on their lists, women's membership and representation in political parties remains weak, and representation on municipal councils is less than 3%. Political parties have managed to counteract the regulation by placing women on the bottom of the lists, giving them close to zero chance of being elected.

The Election Commission stated that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Freedom and Justice Party gather 36.6% of the 9.7 million valid ballots. One of the new first tasks of the new parliament will be to select a 100 member panel to draft the new constitution.

This task will reveal the parliament's commitment to gender equality on all domains of leadership and governance. The new constitution will define the role of women in Egyptian society in the public and private sphere and the role religion, or more specifically Sharia Law, will come to play in the future Egyptian State.

Buthaina Kamel, a 49-year old TV presenter has already announced her candidacy to the Presidential elections. Although she admits her chances of being elected are close to none, she is doing it out of principle to show the world that Egypt is a modern country where women have the right to vote and run for office.⁸³ So far, she is the only female candidate.

“I intend to run for president to show the world that Egypt is a modern country, in which women are afforded the right to vie for the highest position of state, which – like the right to vote – is a basic human right”. Buthaina Kamel, female candidate for the Egyptian presidential elections⁸⁴

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

(Final Results at end of Jan)

Political Representation	As per 05.12.11
Acting Head of State	Muhammad Hussein Tantawi (Head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces)
Current Head of Government	Prime Minister Essam Sharaf
Female members of Government	N/A (government in transition)
People's Assembly (lower chamber of Parliament)	By quota: 64 seats out of 444 are allocated to women. The final number will be known after the third round of election in January 2012.
Consultative Council (upper chamber of Parliament)	18 out of 264
Shura Council	8% (2007)
Number of women who are planning to run for presidential election in 2012	One

GABON

The people of Gabon, Sub-Saharan Africa sixth largest oil producer headed to the polls on the 17 of December 2011 to vote in the Legislative Elections⁸⁵. The elections drew a lot of criticisms from opposition groups, many of who withdrew from the elections and urged their supporters to boycott and disrupt the legislative elections.

According to the country's constitutional court⁸⁶ 475 candidates were vying for seats, including 90 candidates from President Ali Bongo Ondimba's Parti Democratique Gabonaise (PDG) and 160 candidates from smaller groups that support the leader. Of the original 13 parties that would have opposed the PDG in the legislative elections on 17 December 2011, only three smaller parties chose to remain in the race-the rest have opted to boycott the poll⁸⁷.

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

While Gabon has been politically stable since independence, the new political era marked by the election of Ali Bongo is characterized by a certain level of political and social uncertainty and unrest⁸⁸. President Ali Bongo Ondimba was elected in August 2009 with 41% of the vote; the president succeeded his father, former president Omar Bongo, who died in June 2009 after a 41-year rule. The two leading opposition candidates each received approximately 25% of the vote.

International observers characterized the election as largely free and fair; however, the election was marred by post-election violence, significant restrictions on human rights, and accusations of political tampering with the electoral process. Authorities censored news coverage and harassed the press. Irregularities included problems with voter lists and registration, polls that opened late, improperly secured ballot boxes, and armed security personnel in or near voting sites. Numerous opposition candidates contested the election results, but the Constitutional Court in October 2009 validated President Bongo Ondimba's victory⁸⁹.

It is important to stress that the government is dominated by a strong presidency. When the legislature is not in session, the president can veto legislation, dissolve the national legislature, call new elections, and issue decrees that have the force of law. The legislature generally approves legislation presented by the president, who appoints ministers of government and heads of parastatal companies⁹⁰. Thus making it difficult by the opposition to actually have a say in the running of the country.

THE STATUS OF WOMEN IN GABON

The Constitution in Gabon recognizes men and women as equals before the law. However, discriminatory legal provisions within both the civil and penal codes continue to constrain the status of women, particularly within the context of marriage and family relations. Social attitudes and cultural practices also represent genuine obstacles to the advancement of women⁹¹.

The law provides that women have rights to equal access in education, business, investment, employment, credit, and pay for similar work; however, women continue to face considerable societal and legal discrimination, especially in rural areas. Women own businesses and property, participate in politics, and work throughout the government and in the private sector. However, the law requires that a woman obtain her husband's permission to travel abroad, although this is rarely enforced⁹².

Women in Gabon do hold governmental positions from the ministerial level on down and in all branches. In a 30-member cabinet, there were six women. The president of the Senate and the head of the Constitutional Court also are women⁹³. However gender disparity remains an issue in Gabon.

ELECTION OUTCOME-CONCLUSION

Unfortunately official turnout figures are not available and there appears to be no exact record of the number of women registered to vote, a total of 746,000 people were registered to vote⁹⁴.

A worrying trend remarked by local activists has been the decline in female political participation and activism in Gabon since the last elections in 2009⁹⁵. This observation is supported by the lack of data and information on the political participation of women in the 2011 legislative elections.

Amidst an active boycott President Ali Bongo's Gabonese Democratic Party (PDG) won an absolute majority in the general elections⁹⁶. The winning party obtained 114 out of 120 seats. The last 6 seats were shared between the Parti Democratique Social (PMS), L'Union pour la Nouvelle Republic (UPNR); two seats have been awarded to women candidates, Nyingone-Anda Marie Madeleine and Albertine Maganga Moussavou⁹⁷.



A polling station in Nigeria: From voting to holding elective office, Africa women are pressing for a bigger voice in political affairs.

Photograph: Reuters / Akintunde Akinleye

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics⁹⁸

Political representation	As of 2009	Since 2011 Elections
Female members of Parliament-Bicameral	25/211	Seems to be no accurate data as of yet.
Female members of Senate	18/102 or 17.6%	Seems to be no accurate data as of yet.
Number of women in National Assembly	17 /116 or 14.7%	Seems to be no accurate data as of yet.
Female Ministers	5/45	Seems to be no accurate data as of yet.

THE GAMBIA

Nearly 800,000 registered voters in The Gambia are expected to have gone to the polls on Thursday November 24, 2011 to cast their ballots through the West African country in the presidential elections ***tipped to hand incumbent Yahya Jammeh a fourth term at the helm of the tiny tropical state which he is accused of ruling through fear and repression for 17 years.***⁹⁹ Three candidates were competing for the presidential seat including President Yahya Jammeh of the ruling Alliance for Patriotic Re-orientation and Construction, Ousainou Kunda Darboe of the United Democracy Party and Hamat Ngany Kumba bah, an independent. All candidates were male. President Jammeh is reported to have said that he would not campaign because his victory was a "foregone conclusion" and only God could remove him from power.¹⁰⁰

The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) presided over the elections for the third time since its inception in 1997. Currently, there are ten registered political parties and a set total of 1302 polling stations for 796,929 voters.¹⁰¹ With about half of the nation of 1.7 million said to be illiterate, the country uses a unique voting system in which a marble is entered into a small hole in a metal drum bearing the colour, symbol and photo of each candidate.¹⁰² Jammeh's re-election to a new five-year term looks almost certain after 17 years of rule that began with a 1994 bloodless coup, and has since been marked by lethal crackdowns on protests, mass arrests of opponents and military reshuffles.

ECOWAS, an unusually strong critic of the member state, said it would not send a mission to observe the poll "because the preparations and political environment ... are adjudged by the Commission not to be conducive for the conduct of free, fair and transparent polls".¹⁰³

However the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth and the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) did send teams to observe the presidential elections in The Gambia. The Commonwealth expert team stated that it would assess the overall conduct of the elections, and the environment in which they take place, and where appropriate will make recommendations for strengthening of the electoral process in future.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION

Women in Gambia are underrepresented in the top hierarchy of decision making positions. The factors that hinder women's advancement and leadership are identified as low levels of education and training, socio-cultural factors and poverty. Women constitute 51 % of the population and their fertility rate is 6.1.

Most of the women live in the rural areas and are engaged in agricultural production, food processing and marketing. They are thus the main producers of food. Despite their huge investments in food production, women constitute 70% of the unskilled agricultural labor force. Land in the rural areas is scarce due to factors like environmental degradation, lack of access and control to land by women.

Women constitute 51% of the population but their numerical strength is not reflected in the number of positions they hold in the public sphere of decision making. In the civil service they are 21% of the work force of whom majority are employed in administrative and support positions rather than in managerial (UN 2005, Common Country Assessment the Gambia).

Women constitute 58% of voters and they exercise their franchise during elections. In the 2006 elections for the National Assembly of 54 members, only one woman was elected through the ballot box, one was returned unopposed and three were nominated (Electoral Report 2006). Female representation in the National Assembly is 13 % and falls far below that recommended by the Inter Parliamentary Union and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)

According to the Female Lawyer Association of The Gambia (FLAG), women constitute the majority of registered voters, and they are always instrumental in the successes of all political parties during elections.¹⁰⁴ However, of the 53 members of parliament, there are only four women-two elected and two nominated, including deputy speaker.

But with the National Assembly elections coming up early 2012 and local government in 2013, there is an urgent call on political parties to put measures in place to have greater female representation at the parliament and local government levels.

Women’s Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation- National Assembly	As per January 2007	Percentage
Female Members of Parliament- Unicameral	4/53	9.43%
Female Ministers	N/A	N/A

LIBERIA

The 2011 Liberian general election was held on 11 October 2011, with a presidential runoff election held on 8 November 2011. The presidency, as well as all seats in the House of Representatives and half of the seats in the Senate, were up for election. The election was organized for the first time by the National Elections Commission (NEC).

Liberia ranks 90th in the world in female representation in parliament, with only 13.5 percent of women making up the National Legislature of Liberia.¹⁰⁵ Six years ago, Liberia elected Africa’s first female head of state and recent Nobel Peace Prize winner, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. She is running again in this election on the platform that she has maintained the peace and hopes to be able to continue to do so if reelected.¹⁰⁶

The first round of voting on October 11 saw incumbent President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf win 43% of the vote while Tubman, her closest rival, won 32.7 per cent.¹⁰⁷ In the upcoming runoff election, defeated female candidates for political positions have overwhelmingly backed President Sirleaf. ¹⁰⁸“Over 105 defeated female candidates from across the country recently took the decision when they assembled at the St. Stephens Episcopal Church in Sinkor, Monrovia,” where a statement of support for President Sirleaf was drafted, claiming that the incumbent is the best candidate in the race.¹⁰⁹

These women of politics also congratulated President Sirleaf on her Nobel Prize, claiming that she has made the women of Liberia proud to vote for her.¹¹⁰“Responding to the communiqué, President Sirleaf applauded the women for the bold step taken to support her, saying she was not happy with the incoming legislature because of the fewer women.”¹¹¹ She also encouraged the women who did not win a seat during elections to continue to be politically active and show leadership in their respective communities.

She hopes the Nobel Prize will encourage all women in Liberia to continue to forge ahead in politics.¹¹²News reports in the run up to the second round of voting cited a low voter turnout the second time around due to the CDC boycott that left Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as the only candidate running in the run-off elections.

“Burnnies Korbtor, 20, who voted at a high school in central Monrovia, said she believed the low turnout demonstrated that voters were "scared," but added that she had no worries about coming out to vote for incumbent President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.”¹¹³ She also added that she believes Johnson-Sirleaf is "doing well in the country...Right now there's no war, nothing. Everything's calm.”¹¹⁴

However, during the run-off elections, there were reports of violence instigated by the CDC and other groups in which three people were killed.¹¹⁵Liberia still has a long way to go to increase women’s political participation. Entrenched traditional norms remain prevalent in institutional practices. In order to achieve gender parity in decision-making positions, Liberia should institute a quota

system.

Overall, there needs to be more advocacy towards preparing all government bodies to adopt gender mainstreaming approaches to programming. As of now, “Liberia and the New Elections Law of 1986, is based on the plurality/majority system. This is not ideal for facilitating increased electability amongst women in parliament or as heads of government.”¹¹⁶

ELECTION OUTCOME

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has been appointed for her second term in office in the midst of a boycott put in place by the runner up opposition party. The opposition's decision to boycott the runoff was based on their assertion that the overall election was significantly flawed. A proposition that has undermined the electoral success of Sirleaf's party that has now been leftdefending their position in office, encouraging national reconciliation and striving to integrate and include women in the new government.

The biggest task for Ellen Johnson Sirleaf will be the formation and consolidation of a new government. As one observer stated “Liberian women are moving forward-they should not sit down they can still make it” but tackling the status of women in the political sphere means addressing the threat of GBV they face on a daily basis in Liberia.¹¹⁷

Sirleaf's political agenda has recognized the importance of tackling the issue of rape which has become a “tragic norm” and continues to haunt the country eight years after the signing of a peace accord. The enactment of a rape law in 2009 was a positive step but the new government will have to oversee the strict implementation of this legal instrument to demonstrate its commitment to gender equality and justice.¹¹⁸



UN Photo

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

Women's Political Representation	As of 2010	After-the 2011 elections
National (upper house/senate)	16.7%	N/A
Local (lower/single house)	12.5%	N/A
% of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	N/A	N/A
Parliament	14%	N/A
Ministerial Seats	30%	N/A

MOROCCO

The legislative elections that took place on November 25th in Morocco¹¹⁹ are noteworthy because they were the first in the history of the country and hence were bound to define the democratic transition of Morocco.

These legislative elections represented the first step in a new political landscape with in which his Royal Highness was not guaranteed a position. This parliamentary election will determine whether the countries new constitutional provisions for women go “beyond paper gains.”

FIGHTING FOR A VOICE

In 1997, the first woman joined the Moroccan government as Secretary of State. Since that time however, the number of women ministers has remained limited.¹²⁰ While the initial Moroccan Constitution asserted the right for equality and explicitly recognized women's political rights (Article 8); the reformed constitution of July 2011 on the other hand recognizes that women--in addition to having equal civil and political rights should have equal economic, social, cultural and environmental rights.¹²¹ The new constitution offers huge hopes for gender equality by combating the problem of domestic violence and encouraging the creation of women's rights organizations to help institutionalize change.¹²²

A number of other measures have been taken to improve the status of women in Morocco in recent years. Women Rights groups and human rights activists took a rather unique approach to tackling gender parity on the political stage by first addressing inequality within the household through the framework of family law (October 2004) and the code of personal status (CSP).¹²³

The CSP governs the status of women under civil law. The revised CSP now proclaims the equality of men and women and confirms joint responsibility for the family. The recent constitutional reform has increased the quota number of seats reserved to women from 30 out of 325 to 60 out of the 395 (15%) in 2011.¹²⁴ Though still well below the 30% quota demanded by women's movements, it is an improvement from the initial quotas implemented in 2008.

ELECTORAL REFORMS

The electoral code has also undergone significant changes to increase the political participation of women, starting with a reform of the ballot system and electoral code in 2002 and the introduction of a proportional list system; followed by the institution of a positive discriminatory act in the form of a quota act, in the form of a national list of 30 seats reserved for women in the House of Representatives for the parliamentary elections.¹²⁵

ACHIEVEMENTS AND OBSTACLES

Partially as a result of these measures and the active role of civil society and women' groups, Moroccan women's representation in decision-making positions has improved at government level. Seven portfolios were assigned to women in 2007 including 5 full title-ministers for the first time. September 2007 marked the election of 34 women to the House of Deputies 10.77% in contrast to 0.66% in the previous legislature (2002). The political participation of women grew from 0.6% in 1997 to 10.7% in 2002, while women's rates in local councils multiplied by 22, increasing from 0.56% to 12% in 2009.¹²⁶

These measures endorse the need for equal political participation and have had a positive impact but parity could not be further from the reality as women presently make up only 10.46% of the parliament;¹²⁷ and no woman has ever been appointed *Wali*, President of a Regional Council or governor.

As observed by CAWTAR study women's candidatures on electoral lists in 2007 was limited in spite of the introduction of quotas. “The political representativeness of women in the House of Representatives depends more on respecting the moral engagements of political leaders, than on observing ballot mode¹²⁸.” Political parties have not put forward enough female candidates in the past, when they have made it they were not granted ministerial positions.

Moreover information on women's participation in political parties remains scarce; many Moroccan women do not have full access to information or resources with which to empower their civic or political lives¹²⁹. Some female candidates such as Kakon a Social Party Candidate have broken the media blackout on female participation by running for this year's election. When asked if her Jewish nationality would present an obstacle, Kankon answered “ not because I am Jewish but because I a woman¹³⁰.”

ELECTION OUTCOME

With 48.7% women registered to vote¹³¹, the competing parties and candidates fought for a place in the 395-seat chamber of representatives in which a number of seats are reserved for youth candidates and women.

According to the Interior Ministry, although voter turnout was low (45.4%)¹³² as expected, with four out of ten Moroccans not registered to vote.¹³³

His majesty the King has appointed a Prime Minister from the Justice and Development Party (PJD) that won the elections.¹³⁴ Only

one woman has been chosen to be included in the 30-member cabinet as the minister of Solidarity, Women, Family and Development.

Today the list system is a positive step in recognizing women's political participation and provides an affirmative display of gender equality. The next parliament has the chance, through legislation, to decide the reach of constitutional reforms approved by a landslide popular vote in July 2011. The reformed constitution and legislation have put in place judicial and legal mechanism that seek to encourage and defend the political participation of women.

Positive legislative changes, however, will only become truly significant if they are incorporated into the day-to-day lives of Morocco's millions of women and girls. There appears to be no mechanisms or sanctions that ensure the complete institutionalization of list voting system and police the implementation of the quota system.

NGOs and local women's organizations have played a major role in increasing the number of radio campaigns, posters, meetings, and training sessions for women, to encourage them to stand for office in elections and to vote for candidates who are likely to consider women's agendas. It is essential that the future leaders of Morocco recognize the importance of a growing civil society allowing it to play a role in holding the government accountable for its promises and electoral mandate.

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics¹³⁵

Political Representation	As of 2010	After the elections in 2011
<u>Bicameral Parliament:</u> Chamber of Counselors (Majlis al- Mustacharin	6/270 seats	N/A
Chamber of Representatives (Majlis al-Nuwab)	30 /325 seats or 9.2%	66/395 seats or 15%
Total percentage (%) of women in parliament	10.46%	N/A
Total Percentage (%) of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	269/6691 or 4.91 %	N/A

“With rising demands for justice, upcoming elections in many countries and political transition, we have an opportunity to open doors wider for women,” Michelle Bachelet

NIGER

On April 7, 2011, Mahamadou Issoufou of the Nigerien Party for Democracy and Socialism (Parti Nigérien pour la Démocratie et le Socialisme – PNDS) began his presidential term in office after having defeated 10 other candidates for the position. This is Niger's third transition from military to civilian rule since 1993. However, according to the National Democratic Institute, “Niger's nascent institutions face a number of challenges that could undermine the consolidation of recent democratic gains.”¹³⁶ Niger is ranked as one of the poorest nations in the world despite its large revenue from natural resources such as mining and uranium production.

In the legislative elections, Issoufou's party won a majority of the seats (34) while the opposition party saw a drop in their number of seats due to an election boycott. The ex-prime minister's party, Nigerien Democratic Movement for an African Federation (MODEN/FA Lumana, won 23 seats. The European Union mission declared the election, despite some technical problems, relatively free and fair.¹³⁷

Niger is ranked 88th for women in parliament with 13.3% of seats held by women, electing 8 women in 2011¹³⁸ Despite this low number, the highlight of this year's election was the campaign of Niger's first female presidential candidate, Mrs Bayard Mariama Gamatié, winning .38% of the vote in January. While this may seem like a poor result compared to female candidates in other countries in West Africa, given the status of women in Niger and a history of politics dominated by men, her campaign made great strides. When asked about her intent to run for president despite all odds, Mrs Gamatié's response was determined: "You have to love your country, be a democrat, possess a political vision and, above all, be driven by the desire to succeed."¹³⁹ Mrs Gamatié also happens to be the founder of the Democratic Assembly of Nigerien Women (RDFN) and former minister under the Fourth Republic.

Niger has a long way to go in the promotion of women's empowerment. Family law still dictates legal matters perpetuating discrimination and often violence against women in the public and private sphere. Women make up more than 52% of the population in Niger which has a population of 14 million. Yet they are poorly represented in the state legislature. Women in Niger face many obstacles such as sociocultural barriers, high illiteracy rates, discrimination within parties, forced and early marriage and poverty.¹⁴⁰

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation	Number as of 2010	Number Elected in 2011
Legislative	N/A	8
Presidential Candidates	0	1
Total percentage (%) of women in government	N/A	13.3%
Total Percentage (%) of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	0	1

NIGERIA

Nigeria is the largest economy in West Africa and the third largest in Africa, and with a population of over 150 million, it is the most populous country on the continent. From April 9 to 26, 2011, Nigeria held parliamentary, presidential and governorship elections. Unfortunately the Independent National Election Commission, the body that oversees the country's public office elections, did not issue any data about the number of women registered to vote. However it is estimated that half or slightly over half of the 73.5 million registered voters were women.¹⁴¹

Several hurdles hinder Nigerian women's successful participation in politics. Lack of internal democracy in the political parties hinders women's emergence as candidates for elective positions. Godfathers who fund the political party machineries wield excessive power and have preference for male candidates. There is large scale discrimination against women within the political parties culminating in very few women holding offices in party decision-making structures and this manifests in the way female candidates are maltreated at all levels. Since men are usually in the majority of political party set up, they tend to dominate the party hierarchy and are therefore at an advantage in influencing the party's internal politics. Women's under representation arises from social, cultural and religious attitudes of different Nigerian societies which most often relegate women to the background. For the 2011 Presidential elections, only one woman - Chief (Mrs.) Ebiti Ndok, of UNPD emerged as a candidate. In the National Assembly elections, only 9.1% of the candidates were female.¹⁴²

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics¹⁴³

Political Representation	Number of Seats	Number of women candidates	Number of women as of 2010	Number of women as of 2011
Presidential	1	1	0	None
Vice presidential	1	4	0	None

Senate	109	19	9 or 8.26%	7 or 6.42%
Governorship	36	13	0	0
Deputy Governorship	36	58	0	1
House of Representatives	of 360	13	25 or 6.98%	12 or 3.33%
State House of Assembly	of 909	N/A	54 or 5.45	N/A

RWANDA

Though politics in Rwanda have been dominated by the ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) since the 1994 genocide, the country's 2003 constitution includes measures aimed at strengthening multi-party representation in government structures. In the Senate (*Sénat*), 16 members are indirectly elected to serve 8-year terms and 8 members are appointed by the President to serve 8-year terms¹⁴⁴. In the Chamber of Deputies (*Chambre des Députés*), 53 members are elected through a closed-list proportional representation system to serve 5-year terms and 27 members are indirectly elected by special interest groups to serve 5-year terms.¹⁴⁵ The country's constitution¹⁴⁶ stipulates that women must occupy at least 30% of seats at all leadership levels.¹⁴⁷ As of November 2011, 56.3% of the Rwandan parliament comprised women, making it, by the far, the most female-friendly national legislature on the planet, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).¹⁴⁸ Further there is a parallel system of women's councils and women-only elections guaranteeing a women's mandate for all elected bodies. The electoral law for local authorities concludes that 30 percent of members in all indirectly elected councils at district and city of Kigali levels shall be women.

Between February and March 2011, Rwanda held local elections for Senate members and district and sector council officials where women won 43.2% of districts and Kigali City advisory posts. A report released by the Gender Monitoring Office,¹⁴⁹ shows that women massively participated in the February- March local elections recording 54.5% of the registered voters as women, compared to 45.5 percent men. It also shows that 41% of the candidates who ran for elections for district advisory committees were women. Women form 34.4% of the advisory council and 47.6% of the executive committee at national level. In total more women than men assumed office.

Though there is a significant progress, tradition and customs of authority remain barriers to women's participation in decision-making organs. The report shows a low number of women in top local leadership posts like district Mayor, executive secretary at sector level, leader at cell level, among others. Women prefer to reserve these posts for men. Over 30% were elected to district advisory committees, People with Disabilities, and Youth Councils, in accordance with the constitution. Women were present at the voting stations before the male voting population in most sectors of the country, which reflects a determination to be included in the democratic processes and greater awareness about government programs.

Yet women faced a number of technical difficulties in access polling stations, in some areas like Save sector, Gisagara, some men prohibited their wives from going to vote in the Gender Monitoring Office.

The head of Gender Monitoring Office, Oda Gasinzigwa, said that women were also reluctant to apply for positions like that of district Mayor. Conversely, posts like, Vice Mayor for Social Affairs were dominated by women. "Women still need the confidence to go for posts which have for long been occupied by men,¹⁵⁰" she said. "It is also surprising how any gender official or women leaders are always women- it show misconceptions of the true meaning of gender." She explained that gender mainstreaming processes were implemented within a Rwandan culture in which men are still perceived as the head of the family and the key decision makers. She called on the public for more efforts in the implementation of gender practices¹⁵¹.

Women Political Representation Statistics¹⁵²

Political Representation	Number of Seats	Number as of 2010	Number Elected in 2011
Chamber of deputies (Lower House)	80	45 or 56%	N/A
Upper House/Senate	26	9 or 34.6% (as of 2003)	10 or 38.5%
*Government ministers/Cabinet	26	N/A	8 or 30% ¹⁵³

Mayors/ deputy Mayors 30

11 or 37.6%

N/A

SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE

Since it gained independence from Portugal in 1975 until 1990, São Tomé was a single-party state, with restricted political rights. In 1990, voters approved a constitution that established a multi-party democracy. Since then, nine elections have taken place, which domestic and international observers have classified as generally free, fair and transparent.

Despite three villages that boycotted the election in protest of poor living standard, overall voter turnout was high with 66%.

The presidential elections that took place on July 17, 2011 (first-round) and August 7, 2011 (run-off) saw two women run: Elsa Pinto and Maria das Neves. Das Neves is a former Prime Minister of São Tomé and was the first African woman to head a government¹⁵⁴. She held the post of Prime Minister from 3 October 2002 until 18 September 2004 after allegations of corruption were brought against her. Both women are now members of government, which include 4 women out of 14 possible seats.

Furthermore, ten women (out of 55 members) currently sit on the National Assembly, which ranks São Tomé at the 64th place worldwide¹⁵⁵ and places it higher on the list than numerous other African nations including Botswana and Kenya.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN SÃO TOMÉ AND PRINCIPE

While the constitution provides for equality of all citizens regardless of gender, women nevertheless faced some forms of discrimination. Rape, notably spousal rape, occurred occasionally but no statistics on prosecutions were available.¹⁵⁶ The main form of violence against women was domestic violence with widespread reports of violence and rape by partners. Despite their rights to legal recourse, few women decided to bring legal action as they were often unaware of their right to do so and tradition prevented them from speaking about what happens inside the family. While contraception is authorized, it is not widely used due to lack of funds, and teenage pregnancy rate remains high.

The overall literacy rate is 84.9% and the female literacy rate (77%) remains a little lower than the male literacy rate¹⁵⁷. Girls have equal access to primary and secondary education as boys and no gender disparities appear in terms of access to health services. Women can also manage their own businesses without the interference of their husband or brother and participate freely in political and economic life.

While the women of São Tomé face similar forms of discrimination than other women across the world, including domestic violence, an unbalance in domestic chores and higher unemployment rate than men, women are also active participants in the social, economic and political life of São Tomé. They have access to education, health care and reproductive choices. In the coming decade, the priorities of São Tomé's leaders will be to reduce poverty and include an increasing number of women in leadership roles.

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation	As per 04.01.12 ¹⁵⁸
President	Manuel Pinto da Costa (since 03.09.11, elected for five-year term)
Prime Minister	Patrice Trovoada
Number of women in the Council of Ministers	4 (out of 14)
National Assembly	18.18%
Number of women who ran for presidential election in 2011	2 (out of 10 candidates)

THE SEYCHELLES

Seychelles gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1976 and established a multi-party system in 1993. Domestic and

international observers have since classified elections as being fair, free and transparent. Two elections took place in 2011 in the Seychelles: presidential in May and legislative in October. The turnout for both elections was high with 74% of voters casting their ballot for the national assembly elections and 85% during the presidential elections in May.

14 women (out of 32) are members of the National Assembly, which ranks the Seychelles fifth in terms of numbers of women in national parliaments worldwide and third (after Rwanda and South Africa) in Africa. Women won 11 of the 25 seats filled under the majority system and three women were nominated under the compensatory seats, bringing the total number of women to 14 out of the full 32 members.

In the Presidential elections, there was no female contender among the four main candidates.

*“It is through co-ordinated efforts, preventive work and collective responsibility that we can together reduce violence and progress towards meeting the regional target of halving levels of Gender Based Violence by 2015”*¹⁵⁹ Minister Bernard Shamlaye, November 2011

WOMEN’S RIGHTS IN THE SEYCHELLES

The Seychelles is one of the few African countries where women’s rights and equalities are enshrined in the constitution and implemented in society. Furthermore, the Seychelles has ratified numerous international agreements and treaties on the rights of women, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (The Maputo Protocol) on the 9th of March 2006 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) on 5th of May 1992¹⁶⁰.

Women in the Seychelles have similar political, social, economic and legal rights as men and have equal access to health care. The literacy rate is high at 91% and is the same for men and women¹⁶¹. Furthermore, women appear to have the same access to primary, secondary and tertiary education than men. The society of the Seychelles is largely matriarchal and inheritance laws do not discriminate against women. Moreover, no officially sanctioned discrimination against women seemed to be occurring on the work place¹⁶².

While domestic violence is punished by up to 20 years of prison, there was still several reports of such violence taking place and incest continued to be a problem, especially for girls under 15 being abused by a male relative¹⁶³.

Women in the Seychelles are an integral part of decision-making processes and participate actively in all spheres of life, as is reflected by their presence in the national assembly.

The main concern for women in Seychelles – similarly to women in numerous other countries - is gender-based violence, including domestic violence, incest and rape. The government has already taken important steps in tackling this problem and has notably launched a website www.genderseychelles.gov.sc which provides information on gender issues, developments and women’s rights in the country and abroad.

Women’s Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation	Following the elections of October 2011 ¹⁶⁴
President	James Michel
Vice President (no Prime Minister)	Danny Faure
Number of women in the Council of Ministers	3 out of 10 ministers
National Assembly	14 out of a total of 32 seats (43.75%)
Number of women who ran for presidential election in 2011	None (out of the four main candidates)

SOUTH SUDAN

Between the 9th and 15th of January 2011, the population of South Sudan was called to vote for unity or separation from Sudan, after years of internal conflict. The voter turnout of 60% that was required to validate the election was largely met and, in some regions,

participation reached almost 100%. Approximately 98% of the voters voted in favor of independence¹⁶⁵, which came into effect on 9 July 2011, and was accepted by the North. However, numerous disputes remain, including the sharing of the profits from oil production, the status of the Abyei province and of the South Kurdufan and Blue Nile regions, leaving some areas unstable. While Northern Sudan is predominantly Muslim, the South is mostly Christian.

The government of South Sudan has established a Ministry of Gender, Child and Social Welfare, which is headed by a woman, Agnes Kwaje Lasuba. The vision of the Ministry is to attain a peaceful, inclusive and equitable society and objectives include advocacy, sensitization and protection of the rights of all people without any discrimination on the bases of gender, ethnicity, political or religious affiliation. The Ministry also monitors any violations of women, children and persons with disability rights¹⁶⁶.

In terms of female political participation, South Sudan currently ranks 31st in terms of number of women in national parliaments¹⁶⁷ with 88 out of 332 members (26.5%) being women. An important number of women are also in ministerial positions, notably in the Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry and the Ministry of Transport.

WOMEN'S RIGHTS IN SOUTH SUDAN

As decades of civil war have created a gender imbalance within the country with young men dying as soldiers, women now constitute 60% of the population. Already in 2005, during the negotiations for the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), South Sudanese women formulated a series of demands, including a minimum representation of 30% for women in decision-making positions at all levels, including transitional institutions and all commissions established under the CPA.¹⁶⁸

Furthermore, during the International Engagement Conference (IEC) held in December 2011, women recommended ensuring that 25% of all investments in agriculture and commercial livestock go to female farmers thereby "increasing their food productivity, their entrepreneurship, and access to markets."¹⁶⁹ The large majority of farmers in South Sudan are small women farmers, and war has left South Sudan with a large number of female-headed households.

The question now remains as to whether those demands will be met, and donor countries will also play a crucial role to encourage the participation of women.

However, several factors continue to hinder the equal participation of women. The literacy rate of the total population is 27%, and for women it is only 16% (compared to 40% for men)¹⁷⁰. Furthermore, the lack of education and access to schools also prevent women from participating in political life.

Women also face a series of health concerns. Female genital mutilation (FGM) for example, is still occurring. While it is mostly practiced in the North, it also takes place in South Sudan as 7% of women in Juba report having being circumcised (compared to almost 100% in Shendi (north)¹⁷¹. Moreover, the HIV epidemic in South Sudan has been categorised as a general epidemic with approximately 3% being affected. The capital Juba has a prevalence rate of 6% and, in some regions, including Western Equatoria, the infection rate reaches 10%¹⁷².

As war heroes continue to be celebrated, the key contributions of women during the civil war are often forgotten. In the post-independence and reconstruction phase that South Sudan is now entering, the new country faces the major task of ensuring the inclusion of more than half of its population. As women outlined in their demands for the CPA, they must be included from the early start and their needs must be taken into consideration throughout the process, so that women can be actors in the construction of their own country.

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics

Political Representation	Following the referendum of January 2011
President	Salva Kiir
Vice President	Riek Machar
Number of women in ministerial positions	4 (out of 32) ¹⁷³
National Legislative Assembly	88 out of 332 (26.5%)
Council of States	5 out of 50 (10%)

UGANDA

Uganda is currently seen as a model country in relation to women's numerical participation in politics. With 24% women in parliament, Uganda's high level of female representation in parliament is linked to the fact that in addition to the 214 county MPs, each of the 56 districts in Uganda elects one District Woman Representative to Parliament through separate women's elections.¹⁷⁴

The female representation in the House has reached an all-time high. Women in the East African country are now sitting in 35 per cent of 375 available MP seats, up from the previous 30%.¹⁷⁵

It is crucial to look at the nature of women's participation. It is not a question of participation but a question of transformative participation. How are things going to be transformed? Hon. Miria Matembe¹⁷⁶

On the 18th of February 2011, 1,270 candidates were vying for the directly elected seats, while 443 were running for the special seats reserved for women. 18 candidates, including five incumbent MPs, were disqualified for failing to submit proper supporting documents.¹⁷⁷

Women's strong numerical presence in Parliament has had some positive effects in Uganda. First, it has led to a gender sensitive constitution that contains articles directly affecting women. Second, together with the civil society, the women in Parliament have been essential in passing legislation important for Ugandan women.

This is a result of many processes, including the government policy enshrined in the Constitution that instituted affirmative action for women at all levels of the political structure.¹⁷⁸

The position of women in a new multiparty era is not yet clear. Although the affirmative action seats as well as the use of electoral colleges have increased the presence of women on the political stage these measure could have negative repercussion on female representation in the Ugandan Parliament for two reasons.

Firstly there is the threat that guaranteeing women district spots ensures that women are represented at the local level but fails to provide the candidates with corresponding funding to undertake their responsibilities. Philippa Croome quotes *"Uganda's jump was largely due to an increase in the number of districts, which was a controversial move."*¹⁷⁹

Second the mode of electing women to Parliament has influenced the gender-equality debate. An apparent affiliation with NRM party (Museveni's Party) has translated into a form of patronage that has subjected women to certain positions in return for the party supporting women candidates and party members.

Manipulation of women by political parties which forces them to focus on party agendas is observed as a major challenge. Female representatives' closeness to the incumbent NRM regime makes it hard for them to challenge the governmental position in matters they find important.¹⁸⁰

Lastly women critical of the Movement or from opposing parties may have difficulties being elected to Parliament. Yet, regardless of potential drawbacks, former MP Jane Alisemera, outgoing chair of the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), says the current system benefits women.¹⁸¹

*'It's working - and we women MPs are making things happen'*¹⁸². MP Jane Alisemera

The mandatory inclusion of women, as well as the general societal awareness that this has generated, have certainly changed the general picture of public politics in Uganda. Increasing female representation has translated into the passing of a domestic violence bill in 2009 and active lobbying for the reform of land and family law.

However, women's location in the electoral process, both as voters and candidates, is still *affected*, both by mechanisms in the public arena and dynamics at the private and family level. Getting women's numbers up is the first step, keeping them there is the next.

Women's Political Participation Recent Statistics¹⁸³

Political Representation	As of 2010	After the elections in 2011

National (Cabinet)	N/A	N/A
% of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	Unsure	443/1270 or 34 %
National Parliament	99/ 375 or 29.73%	131/375 or 34.93%

BREAKDOWN OF THE 131 SEATS WON BY WOMEN:

- Constituency Representatives: 11
- Women District Representatives: 112
- Youth Representatives: 2
- Representatives of disabled persons: 2
- Workers Representatives: 2
- Representatives of the Uganda People's Defence Forces: 2

TUNISIA

On Sunday 23 October Tunisia held elections to elect a 217-member constituent assembly that would be charged with drafting a new constitution within a year and chart the country's transition.

Since women gained suffrage in 1959, the Tunisian government has been a decisive player in creating and maintaining space for the women's movement. The politics of Tunisia function within a framework of a republic organized under a constitution with a president serving as head of state and a Prime Minister as head of government.

Tunisia was one of the first Arab countries to react positively to the call of the United Nations for the implementation of government mechanisms to address gender equality.¹⁸⁴

The Ben Ali government banned all forms of discrimination towards women's political participation and initiated positive discrimination measures at all level of government.¹⁸⁵ The previous government had the most women in the region. Women have played a key role in Tunisian society, representing 26% of the working population, 50% of students, 29% of magistrates, 24% of the Tunisian diplomatic corp.¹⁸⁶ and 27.6% of parliament (59 of 214).¹⁸⁷

While women have been integrated into the most consultative structures, their proportions remain less than their ambitions both at the central and regional level. As of 2007, there were only two women minister, five women secretaries of state, and one women advisor to the President, one women governor, as well as several prominent permanent positions for women in the Ministry of Women and Family Affairs.¹⁸⁸



WOMAN VOTING IN TUNISIA CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

Photo: United Nations/ Noeman ALSayyad

Although women led the last legislative elections in 2009 a UN-STRAW & CAWTAR documentary¹⁸⁹ that covered the political course of seven key candidates identified a lack of political will. Under President Ben Ali, the RCD initiated a voluntary quota system (25%) in local and municipal councils. Unfortunately this voluntary quota applied only to the RCD candidate list¹⁹⁰ and did not reflect the rapidly expanding political participation of Tunisian women.

On April 11, 2011 the constituent assembly of Tunisia made history by passing a gender parity bill. A first in the region the bill declared that men and women must feature in equal numbers as candidates on the electoral list. The bill acknowledged the work of Tunisian women and awarded them an equal opportunity to participate in the country's new, post-revolution electoral system.¹⁹¹

Whilst it may appear self-explanatory that women be given an equal chance to contribute to the political construction of a new state, the recent elections have only partially recognized the work and rights of women to be part of the new government.

A LANDMARK ELECTION

Prior to the election there appeared to be some doubts on the foundation of the gender parity law.

Although there appears to be no exact figure available of the number of women registered to vote a monitoring project undertaken by Gender Concern International (2011¹⁹²) observed that there was a massive presence of women from all social and professional backgrounds at the polling stations.

An analysis of the role of female political participation in Tunisia revealed two core concerns: institutional obstacles (disparities between law and practice) and cultural obstacles rooted in society. There appeared to be a consistent lack of communication and information. Women cannot demand their rights without knowing their rights. Women came burdened with children, and in some cases were unable to read the voting ballot and were offered little assistance. While a number of women concluded only after getting to the voting station that they were not registered and unable to voice their opinion.

ELECTION OUTCOME

The election¹⁹³ resulted in a majority vote for the An-Nahda party¹⁹³ that has pledged to uphold women's rights. Hemadi Jabali the country's new prime minister has promised to "guarantee that Ennahda will be at the forefront of the fight to guarantee women's rights in all fields – politically, socially and professionally. The members of the coalition government and primarily Ennahda will affirm the rights of women through the constitution, through legislation and above all through our actions."¹⁹⁴

In spite of the list and the recent gender parity law, women's actual representation in the new assembly will not reflect their

proportion of the national population. Close to 4,000 women ran for the first time in the election for one of the 217 seats in the Constituent Assembly. Women headed only 7% of more than 1,500 candidate lists¹⁹⁵ and only one woman was given the chance to lead a political party (Maya Jribi-PDP Party).¹⁹⁶

Presently 42 of the 49 women elected to the constituency assembly are from the Islamist party a woman has just been appointed Vice-President of the Assembly. Despite the role women played during the protests, the transitional government only has two female ministers.¹⁹⁷

A recent article on the Aljazeera (2011) states “Tunisians finally have an independent, elected body that reflects their diversity and represents their voice¹⁹⁸” yet the new government appears to have failed to equally represent women.

A lot of work is still necessary to close the gender gap as stated by a candidate for the Takkatul Party, Bushra Balhaj Hmeida “women can make politics more human¹⁹⁹” if they are given the chance and included equally in the construction of a new state.

CONCLUSION

The women of Tunisia appear prepared to defend their rights to political representation as illustrated by the number of Tunisian women demonstrating on Wednesday November 2, 2011.

Whilst acknowledging the weaknesses of the gender parity law in practice one must also recognize its achievement however marginal. It has heightened interest in politics among women and it has allowed women to contribute to a nascent democracy but and has resulted in the largest % of women elected to a national body in the Arab World.

This new government a large coalition of a number of parties provides a unique opportunity for the pursuit of women’s rights by including a wide spectrum of views and political ideologies that could spearhead progress in the domain of women’s rights.

Women Political Representation Statistics²⁰⁰

Political Representation	As of 2010	After the elections in 2011
National (upper house/senate)	15.3% (2005)	N/A
Local (lower/single house)	22.8% (2004)	N/A
% of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	N/A	7% (number varied from 3% on independent lists and 7% on party lists) Maximum 2-3 per party list

Parliament	27.6% or 59/214 (2010)	N/A
Constituency Assembly (part of the transitional government-charged with re-writing the constitution and organizing the next elections)	N/A	26.3% or 57/217

ZAMBIA

With many countries in the SADC region striving to reach the 30% quota of women and improving the political participation and representation of women at the local and national level the election that general elections that took place in Zambia on February 20th, 2011 presents a rather unusual case study by diverging from the general trend.

Although women made up 50.02% of the recorded 3,940,053 voters registered by the Electoral Commission of Zambia (ECZ)²⁰¹, the tripartite elections that took place on the 20th of September 2011 demonstrated a decreasing number of female MPs, and local representatives.

According to the Zambian National Women's Lobby (ZNWL) last analysis in 2006, women constitute half of the voting population, yet they account for less than 15% of the candidates and elected officials in parliament and local government institutions²⁰². After the last tripartite elections in 2006, there was an outcry mostly from civil society over the low levels of women's representation but the outcome of the 2011 elections reveals a number of reoccurring obstacles.

The recent elections in Zambia failed to address the gender gap in terms of women's participation in elections.²⁰³

OBSTACLES AND STEREOTYPES

According to recent WILDAF Report (2011²⁰⁴) Zambia's electoral regime has built in obstacles that hinder the meaningful participation of women as candidates. Previous works and a number of studies outline three core problems. Firstly the Constitution of Zambia (1996)²⁰⁵ makes no provision for quotas to further the representation of women in publically elected bodies at any level, national, provincial or local. "The Constitution is masculine in its language."²⁰⁶

Second the absence of voluntary quotas by political parties to promote women's representation exposes a lack of political and affirmative action. Jotham Momba²⁰⁷ reported that all the political parties he surveyed "indicated that they did not provide any quotas for women or youth candidates for parliamentary or local government elections."

Although there are exceptions such as the United National Independence Party, a United Democratic Alliance member, who claims to be committed to a 30% representation of women within party structures, dedicated a single seat to a women MP in 2006.²⁰⁸ While the United Party for National Development put in place provisions to ensure that at least 30% of its national management committee is made up of women, the party allocated only two out of the 28 seats it won in the 2011 elections to female party members.²⁰⁹

Lastly there appears to be no special programmes to enhance women and youth participation in either intra-party leadership elections or to enhance their chances of being adopted as party candidates in parliamentary and local government elections. "Women were more than willing to stand for election as members of parliament and councilors, but the political parties were not giving them that opportunity."²¹⁰

Deep-rooted stereotypes still prevent female candidates and party members to be viewed as equals with their male counterparts. "As women we have taken ourselves into the political arena but the challenge is the adoption process. On adoption, most political parties don't pick women because we do not have financial muscle. Women are just taken as dancers for male politicians but we

want to contribute as well, as MPs or councilors.”²¹¹

It is crucial for the newly elected Zambian government to take active measures to encourage the political participation of women. There is a need for a broad policy shift that would help Zambia dismantle the cultural prejudices that disadvantage women in the process of selection of candidates at presidential, parliamentary and local government levels. “Women Friendly Legislation” that ensures through constitutional provision, that women get due representation.

Women Political Representation Statistics²¹²

Political Representation	Prior-to the election (2006)	After-the elections (2011)
National (Cabinet)	5 female ministers out of 21 and 6 female deputies out of 20.	
% of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	100/705 or 14.18%	106/709 (parliamentary candidates) and 27/130 (independent candidates ²¹³)
Allocation of Local Government Seats (Councilors)	387/4095 or 9.5%	83/ 1382 or 6%*
National Parliament	21/148 or 14.19%	17/148 or 11.4

DJIBOUTI

On 8 April 2011, the Republic of Djibouti held its third Presidential election since gaining independence from France in 1977²¹⁴. With 152, 000 registered voter, voter turnout and the exact number of women voters is unclear there were no women candidate²¹⁵. The competition took place between three male candidates.

After the official opposition staged a boycott alleging irregularities only two candidates registered to run in the 2011 presidential election. This resulted is Guelleh only facing one opponent – the independent candidate Mohammed Warsama Ragueh²¹⁶.

WOMEN RIGHTS IN DJIBOUTI

Djibouti considered a “partially free” country by the Freedom House Index has been slow to transform and challenge the traditional status of women and has seen virtually no political participation by women over the course of its history. Djiboutian women have had the right to vote since 1946.Djiboutian tradition dictates that the man is the head of the family. Yet the role of women is increasingly important. Women have taken greater initiative in running the family since the adoption of the Family Code in 2002²¹⁷.

The ratification of the international women’s Convention in 1998 with no reservations sparked a transformation in Djibouti that has “changed the landscape of the country” and resulted in the election of seven female Parliamentarians in 2003²¹⁸.

The creation of a Ministry for Women’s Promotion and the Adoption of the Strategy for Women’s Integration ensured the adoption of a National Action Plan in 2002. While additional measures such as the temporary quota requiring 20% of women in high-ranking posts has resulted in three ministerial posts now held by women. A woman was recently elected as head of one of the country’s four major political parties.

ELECTION OUTCOME/CONCLUSION

This election saw incumbent President Ismail Omar Guelleh extend his rule to a third term²¹⁹. The opposition boycott, along with the expulsion of a group of American election monitors²²⁰ has brought the legitimacy of the election into doubt.

In June of this year the country welcomed its first-ever female ambassador and in July the State party appeared before the monitoring Committee for its first-ever periodic review of the implementation of the convention²²¹. Through which it demonstrated its commitment to ensuring the franchise of women across the country.

Despite progress made to bolster women’s status in the northeast African country, experts expressed concern about the persistence of major obstacles there — including the staggering prevalence of female genital mutilation and the sluggish pace of women’s economic development.

Women Political Representation Statistics²²²

Political Representation	As of 2003	After the elections in 2011
Upper House of Bicameral Parliament		N/A
Lower House/Unicameral Parliament	7/65 or 10.8%	N/A
% of candidate lists headed by a female candidate	N/A	N/A



“Women’s political representation is absolutely important,” Nomcebo Manzini, head of UN Women for Southern Africa. Photograph: Africa Renewal / Ernest Harsch

CONCLUSION:

Make Every Woman Count believes that women's empowerment is integral to broader socioeconomic development; and Women's Political Participation is fundamental to women's empowerment.

*Women have to be part of the future. And it's imperative that as constitutions are created, as political parties are organized, as elections are waged and won, nobody can claim a democratic future if half the population is marginalized or even prevented from participating.*²²³ - Hilary Clinton, 20117



Long live freedom!" declares graffiti in Tunis: Tunisian men and women mobilized side-by-side against the authoritarian regime.

Photograph: Reuters / Louafi Larbi

CITIZENSHIP, QUOTAS, AND WOMEN'S POLITICAL VOICE

In many cases in African countries, quotas are the primary function for increasing women's representation and participation in local, regional and national legislative bodies. The Arab Spring in North Africa has led to widespread use of the quota system. In October of 2011, Tunisia implemented a 'zippered list' gender quota in parliamentary elections, that is, all political parties were required to have gender parity in their candidate lists. While this does not guarantee that there will be parity overall in the legislature, it does guarantee some women seats: 23% of the seats are now held by women parliamentarians. But are quotas good for women? Egypt attempted a similar zippered list quota framework but women were not required to be at the top of the candidate list as a party's leader. This resulted in only 10 women elected to a near 500 seat legislature.²²⁴

But are quotas good for women? It is commonly considered that representation of women must reach 30% before they can make a significant impact. However as noted in the 2011 Millennium Development Goal Annual Report, quotas are not the only factors that influence the level of women's political participation; electoral systems are key, gender sensitive electoral arrangements; access to polling stations; literacy; family laws; visibility of female candidates; violence during elections and so on. Quotas also can appear to be a Band-Aid to the situation—a temporary fix. They appear to be against the principle of democracy and direct elections if seats are automatically reserved to women. Some argue too that quotas deny seats to more qualified candidates; and lastly, many female candidates do not want to run for a seat that they feel they will not win with a full mandate—that they will gain the seat simply because they are the token female candidate. Moreover, these candidates are often awarded selective 'female' positions such as minister of home affairs or Social Services.

These are valid and important points. However, we believe that for the most part, the pros of quotas outweigh the cons. Quotas, if implemented successfully, significantly reduce barriers to entry for women. They increase women's profiles as leaders and thereby encourage younger women to pursue politics.

Most importantly, women's access to political arenas is a question of *citizenship*. As long as women do not have equal access to political platforms, their right to citizenship is of a second class nature. When women are not represented, or are simply unable to

run for a decision-making position, their citizenship is called into question. This is perhaps the most important change that can be made with the implementation of quotas.

Lastly, women have power in numbers. As long as they hold significantly fewer seats in legislatures than men, too much pressure is held on the backs of those few women to represent the whole female constituency.

2011 ACHIEVEMENTS

In Cameroon for the first time, two women were contending for the presidential election: Edith Kabbang Walla, known as Kah Walla, and Esther Dang. Sao Tome and Principe also saw two women running in the presidential elections.

In Gabon women hold governmental positions from the ministerial level to local decision-making positions. In a 30-member cabinet, there were six women. The president of the Senate and the head of the Constitutional Court also are women. In Gambia women constitute the majority of registered voters, and they were instrumental in the successes of all political parties during elections. Niger saw its first female presidential candidates.

In Benin in May 2011, Benin President Thomas Boni Yayi appointed eight women as cabinet ministers out of the total number of 27 ministers. This is considered a big improvement in women's participation because the number of women ministers was increased by four. In Cote d'Ivoire civil society has been an active agent of change that has spearheaded the inclusion of women in the 2011 elections by hosting an awareness campaign across the country and financially supporting women candidates.

In the last few years, women's political participation has been a central concern for the government of Cape Verde, namely a number of government programmes initiated through the Institute for Gender and Equality and Equity (ICIEG). While in Tunisia the gender equity bill was a positive step in the right direction as it ensures the inclusion of women in the electoral process.

Rwanda and Liberia remain key examples of the positive outcome of quotas that have been supported by other electoral mechanisms, challenging the conservative and traditional views that still define the position of women in a number of countries. In Liberia, the government of Johnson Sirleaf is not only tackling the status of women in the political sphere but also tackling gender equality at large by combating the threat of gender-based violence that women face on a daily basis in Liberia.

In Morocco, the list system is a positive step in encouraging women's political participation and provides an affirmative display of gender equality. The next parliament has the chance, through legislation, to decide the reach of constitutional reforms approved by a landslide popular vote in July 2011.

In Uganda, women's strong numerical presence in Parliament has had some positive effects. First, it has led to a gender sensitive constitution that contains articles directly affecting women. Second, together with the civil society, the women in Parliament have been essential in passing legislation important for Ugandan women.

2011 OBSTACLES

There is still a lot that needs to be done to increase women's political participation and put women in decision-making positions. Congolese women are not effectively represented and have never participated in the governance of the country since 1960, the year of the independence. No woman has ever been a head of state or head of government, neither have they been head of armed groups.

In Egypt, the first Arab country to elect a woman into parliament, female candidates and voters who participated in the last elections remain sceptical. Observers have expressed disappointment that no women were included in the 63 persons group drafting the package of constitutional amendments, which was passed on March 19, 2011 with 77% of the vote. Tunisia seems to be taking a similar path but women activists, candidates and voters seem prepared to defend their right to equal political participation and fight for their inclusion with the same motivation and determination that propelled them to take part in the Arab Spring. There are currently no female members of the office of the Senate and there is only one woman among the seven members of the office of the National Assembly.

In Cameroon while gender parity in political participation in Cameroon has increased slightly due to the success of some feminist movements, there remains a crisis of citizenship in Cameroon. Overwhelmingly, women lack the documents needed to even register to vote or run for office.

A number of countries have yet to adopt any form of quotas, in the Central African Republic the lack of constitutional quotas centered on gender parity in political and public office amounts to gender blindness. In number of countries there are voluntary quotas (Morocco and Cote d'Ivoire) but there appears to be no mechanisms or sanctions that ensure the complete institutionalization of list voting system and police the implementation of the quota system.

African women also face difficulties in obtaining detailed information on their rights, obligations and responsibilities as citizens. In some cases such as in Gabon this lack of information has contributed to a decline in female political participation and activism in Gabon in the latest elections.

Regardless of the goals and benchmarks set down in 1995 at the Beijing Platform for Action or the Gender Equity's Act in Politics (2010), a gender perspective has yet to be incorporated into all areas of governance, law and society in general ensuring women equal access to state resources and equal opportunities.

FINAL NOTE

As this report has attempted to demonstrate, women's political participation is contingent upon several variables. Gender equality and women's political participation are important markers of inclusive peace building and good governance. Women's greater participation in politics and public life in conflict-affected regions should be at the heart of post-conflict reconstruction programming and policy-making, helping to significantly increase the culture of plurality in post-conflict political life. Lastly true democratic development is incomplete and impossible without the full inclusion and integration of women in all aspects of society.

MEWC through the publication of this report hopes to provide and encourage more collaboration between, women leaders, potential female candidates, women's organisations, governments and international organisations. We aim to create a strong network of services for women and for the progress towards women's full inclusion and integration in African development.

- 1 http://www.emansion.gov.lr/doc/20101112AWDF_final_speech.pdf
- 2 <http://mg.co.za/article/2011-12-07-tunisia-ennahda-puts-focus-on-gender-equality>
- 3 <http://tripolipost.com/articledetail.asp?c=1&i=7604>
- 4 <http://bikyamasr.com/50600/egypt-women-call-for-parallel-parliament-greater-rights/>
- 5 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201105050365.html>
- 6 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
- 7 <http://bit.ly/wa8N9Q>
- 8 Graca Machel, (1997) "Empowering Women for the 21st Century: The Challenges of Politics, Business, Development, and Leadership" Summary Report of the 9th Annual Conference of the African Leadership Forum, Accra, Ghana, 1997, p. 20
- 9 'Benin ranks 15 out of 53 African countries', Mo Ibrahim Foundation 2009, <http://www.moibrahimfoundation.org>
- 10 CIA, The World Fact Book: Benin, November 9, 2011. <http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>
- 11 http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2033_E.htm
- 12 Benin President Appoints Scaled-Back Cabinet With More New Comers, Women, Serge- David Zoueme, May 29, 2011 <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-05-29/Benin/>
- 13 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm>
- 14 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
- 15 http://www.africa4womensrights.org/public/Dossier_of_Claims/DossierofClaimsENG.pdf
- 16 http://olddoc.ishr.ch/hrm/tmb/treaty/cedaw/reports/cedaw_36/cape_verde_cedaw_36.pdf
- 17 <http://esaconf.un.org/wb/default.asp?action=9&boardid=58&read=3489&fid=648>
- 18 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Verdean_presidential_election,_2006
- 19 <http://www.essentialafrica.com/updates/print/1782>
- 20 *ibid.*
- 21 *ibid.*

22 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm>

23 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

24 <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/carquotas.htm>

25 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2006/78725.htm>

26 <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/carquotas.htm>

27 <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/carquotas.htm>

28 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_African_Republic_general_election,_2005

29 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_African_Republic_general_election,_2011

30 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

31 *ibid.*

32 "Are women the Magic Bullet for Electoral Apathy?" Inter Press Service News Agency, 12 March 2011
<http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=50645>

33

34 "Dead people voted in Cameroon election", the Telegraph, 23 October 2011
<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/cameroon/8845035/Dead-people-voted-in-Cameroon-election.html>

35 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

36 "Are women the Magic Bullet for Electoral Apathy?" Inter Press Service News Agency, 12 March 2011
<http://ipsnews.net/africa/nota.asp?idnews=50645>

37 Une vision nouvelle pour les femmes, All Africa, 2 November 2011 <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/201111021444.html>

38 http://www.prc.cm/index_en.php?link=les_interventions_du_chef_de_l_etat/lecture_intervention&id=659&lang=en&pos=2

39 http://wikigender.org/index.php/Gender_Equality_in_Cameroon

40 CEDAW, Success Stories. http://www.unifem.org/cedaw30/success_stories/

41 <http://www.makeeverywomancount.org/index.php?view=article&id=2005%3Acameroon-2011-presidential-election-for-the-first-time-two-women-were-candidates-in-the-2011-presidential->

election&task=edit&ret=aHR0cDovL3d3dy5tYWtlZXZlcnl3b21hbmNvdW50Lm9yZy9pbmRleC5waHA
%2Fb3B0aW9uPWNvbV9jb250ZW50JnZpZxc9Y2F0ZWdvcnkmbGF5b3V0PWJsb2cmaWQ9NjkmSXRlbWlkPTE3MA%3D
%3D&option=com_content&Itemid=170#sdfootnote3sym

42 <http://africanelections.tripod.com/recent.html>

43 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

44 Counterpart International, "Elections in Chad: The Role of Women in Strengthening Democracy Gender Assessment Report," Promoting Elections, Accountability and Civic Engagement in Chad (PEACE)

45 UN women (2011), "In Pursuit of Justice: Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012"

46 Counterpart International (2011), "Elections in Chad: The Role of Women in Strengthening Democracy Gender Assessment Report," Promoting Elections, Accountability and Civic Engagement in Chad (PEACE) Program, Date: January 31, 2011 & International Parliamentary Union

47 Retrieved 10 07, 2011 from Genre et Action: <http://www.genreenaction.net>

48 There was a female candidate in the run-up for elections. Retrieved 12 09, 2011 from Radio Netherlands WorldWide: <http://www.rwn.org>

49 Constitution de la Republique de Cote d'Ivoire du 23 juillet 2000: http://democratie.francophonie.org/IMG/pdf/Cote_d_Ivoire.pdf

50 Ministry of The Family, Women and Social Affairs. (2008). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution of the Security Council (2008-2012) Background Document*. Abidjan: Gender Equality and Promotion Directorate.

51 Campagne National de L'Organisation des Femmes Actives de Cote d'Ivoire, accessed from: <http://www.ofaci.org>

52 Ministry of The Family, Women and Social Affairs. (2008). *National Action Plan for the Implementation of Resolution of the Security Council (2008-2012) Background Document*. Abidjan: Gender Equality and Promotion Directorate.

53 Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2010). *Afraid and Forgotten: Lawlessness, Rape and Impunity in Western Cote d'Ivoire*. London: Human Rights Watch.

54 Interview-Helene Dandilou (VFAG.org)

55 Africa For Women's Rights. (2010). *Cote d'Ivoire: Country Profile*. Retrieved 11 18, 2011 from Africa For Women's Rights: www.africa4womensrights.org

56 National Endowment for Democracy (2011), *Cote d'Ivoire: Country Profile & Elections Monitoring*. Accessed 01 12, 2011: <http://www.ned.org/where-we-work/africa/cote-divoire>

57 Human Rights Watch (HRW). (2011). *They Killed Them Like it Was Nothing*. London: Human Rights Watch.

58 Retrieved 12 04, 2011 from @bidja@n.net: <http://News.adbidjan.net>

59 United Nations Development Fund (UNDP). (2010, 01 01). *Cote d'Ivoire: Country Profile of Human Development Indicators*. Retrieved 07 14, 2011 from International Human Development Indicators (UNDP): www.hdrstats.undp.org United Nations Development Fund (UNDP). (2010, 01 01). *Cote d'Ivoire: Country Profile of Human Development Indicators*. Retrieved 07 14, 2011 from International Human Development Indicators (UNDP): www.hdrstats.undp.org

60 OFACI. (2011, 12 14). *Elections Legislatives du 11 Decembre 2011: Le Communiqué de L'Organisation des Femmes Actives de Cote d'Ivoire (OFACI)*. Retrieved 12 14, 2011 from News. Abidjan Net: <http://news.abidjan.net>

61 Compilation of data and information from the IPU (Inter Parliamentary Union Database) and the Quota Project (Global Database of Quotas for Women)

62 IPU-Inter Parliamentary Union (2011), *Women in Parliament: World Classification*. Accessed 10 12, 2011: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif301111.htm>

63 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Kabila

64 <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/drc5.htm>

65 <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/drcquotas.htm>

66 http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources_/NGO/hrinst_genderinequalityinthedrc_wilpf_december2010english.pdf

67 <http://www.eisa.org.za/WEP/drcquotas.htm>

68 <http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources>

69 <http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/28/dr-congo-letters-presidential-candidates-conduct-during-elections>

70 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/10/201110295055865324.html>

71 <http://www.eisa.org.za/PDF/drceom2006.pdf>

72 <http://www.eisa.org.za/PDF/drceom2006.pdf>

73 <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/node/42651>

74 http://www.makeeverywomancount.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1813:dr-congo-women-candidates-needed&catid=38:political-participation&Itemid=64

75 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

76 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

77 Inter Parliamentary Union Database: Women in Parliament as of November 2011

78 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

- 79 Women in Politics: Beyond Numbers <http://archive.idea.int/women/parl/studies1a.htm>
- 80 First Woman Candidate Begins Campaign, IPS, 31 October 2011 <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=105654>
- 81 Quota Project <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=EG>
- 82 http://stepheniefoster.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=248&Itemid=54
- 83 First Woman Candidate Begins Campaign, IPS, 31 October 2011 <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=105654>
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 <http://mobile.bloomberg.com/news/2011-10-08/gabon-to-hold-election-in-december-electoral-commission-says>
- 86 http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/world/2011-11/18/c_131255760.htm
- 87 http://www.consultancyafrica.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=909:pre-election-reflection-gabons-2011-legislative-elections-&catid=42:election-reflection&Itemid=270
- 88 <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/GABONEXTN/0,,menuPK:352119~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:352109,00.html>
- 89 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154347.htm>
- 90 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154347.htm>
- 91 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154347.htm>
- 92 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154347.htm>
- 93 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2010/af/154347.htm>
- 94 RFI. (2011, 11 03). *Gabon Opposition Split Over Election Disruption Call*. Retrieved 01 23, 2012 from RFI: www.english.rfi.fr
- 95 Griffiths, C. (2011). *Globalizing the Postcolony: Contesting Discourses in Gender and Development in Francophone Africa*. Plymouth: The Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group .
- 96 Radio Netherlands Worldwide. (2011, 12 18). *Gabon: Bongo Party Claims Absolute Majority in Election*. Retrieved 01 23, 2012 from All Africa News: www.allafrica.com
- 97 GABONECO. (2011, 12 22). *Gabon: Le Cenap Confirme la Suprematie PDG* . Retrieved 01 23, 2012 from Ganoneco News: <http://gaboneco.com>
- 98 Compilation or IPU (International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base), and Government Based Statistics from the national website: <http://www.gouvernement.ga/site2/index.html>

- 99 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201111241021.html>
- 100 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13378352>
- 101 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201111231086.html>
- 102 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201111240001.html>
- 103 <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/africa/2011/11/20111124578884260.html>
- 104 <http://www.foroyaa.gm/modules/news/article.php?storyid=7722>
- 105 <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Publications/White-Papers/2011/Increasing-Womens-Political-Participation-in-Liberia.aspx>
- 106 http://theinquirer.com.lr/content1.php?main=news&news_id=23
- 107 <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/africa/2011/10/2011101317220410905.html>
- 108 <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/node/42659>
- 109 <http://allafrica.com/stories/201110261195.html>
- 110 *ibid.*
- 111 *ibid.*
- 112 *ibid.*
- 113 <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=105761>
- 114 *ibid.*
- 115 *ibid.*
- 116 Cole, Samuel (2011) "Increasing Women's Political Participation in Liberia: Challenges and Potential Lessons from India, Rwanda and South Africa", *IFES Fellowships in Democracy Studies*, page 3
- 117 <http://africanelections.tripod.com/lr.html>
- 118 UN Women (2011), "In Pursuit of Justice: Progress of the World's Women" page 125
- 119 *Morocco: Country in First Polls Since Constitutional Reform.* (2011, 11 25). Retrieved 11 25, 2011 from Radio Netherlands Worldwide: www.rnw.nl

- 120Sadiqi, F. (2003). *Women, Gender and Language in Morocco*. Leiden: Koninklijk Brill.
- 121Jeune Afrique, 24: 2011 accessed from: <http://fr.allafrica.com/stories/printable/201111221557.html>
- 122Govan, F. (2011, 06 18). *Moroccan King Announces Constitutional Reform*. Retrieved 12 10, 2011 from Telegraph: www.telegraph.co.uk
- 123Boutheina, G. (2009). *Strengthening Women's Leadership and Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*. Tunis: The Arab Center for Women Training and Research (CAWTAR).
- 124Ewing, M. (2011, 11 21)
- 125Moroccan Vote Puts Women's Gains to Crucial Test. Retrieved 11 21, 2011 from Womens-News: <http://womensnews.org>
- 126Morocco Holds Legislative Elections. Retrieved 11 25, 2011 from MagharebiaNews: <http://www.magharebia.com>
- 127From iKnow politicsFreedom House.org
- 128Boutheina, G. (2009). *Strengthening Women's Leadership and Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*. Tunis: The Arab Center for Women Training and Research (CAWTAR).
- 129Gender Concern International. (2009). *Morocco: Country Profile and Election Monitoring*. Retrieved 12 10, 2011 from Gender Concern International : www.genderconcerns.org
- 130Jewish Woman in Morocco Poll Fray. Retrieved 11 25, 2011 fromAljazeera.Net: <http://www.Aljazeera.com>
- 131Gender Concern International. (2009). *Morocco: Country Profile and Election Monitoring*. Retrieved 12 10, 2011 from Gender Concern International : www.genderconcerns.org
- 132Thousands in Morocco Call for Poll Boycott. Retrieved 11 20, 2011 from AljazeeraNews: <http://www.aljazeera.com>
- 133Benmehdi, H. (2011, 11 22). Moroccans Protest Elections. Retrieved 11 23, 2011 from Magharebia.com: <http://www.magharebia.com>8 Aljazeera.net. (2011, 11 20).
- 134Magharebia News. (2011, 11 25). 10 El Amraoui, A. (2011, 11 25).
- 135Compilation or IPU (International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base), Government Based Statistics and information from the Gender Concern Database/Reports.
- 136<http://www.ndi.org/content/niger>
- 137<http://africanelections.tripod.com/recent.html>
- 138<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
- 139<http://www.acp-eucourier.info/content/huge-obstacles-facing-women-seeking-election-niger>

140 Ibid.

141 Kinoti Kathambi, Nigeria Elections Reflect Slow Progress for Women, accessed from www.awid.org 19th May 2011

142 Nwankwo Oby, Women and 2011 Elections in Nigeria. Accessed from www.boellnigeria.org 13th April 2011

143 Irabor, F.O, Reviewing Women's Political Participation and Performance at the 2011 General Elections In Nigeria. Accessed from www.baobabwomen.blogspot.com 10th May 2011 & Agbalajobi, D. T. (2010). Women's Participation and the Political Process in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects. *Africa Journal of Political Science and International Relations* , 4 (2), 75-82.

144 Ibid

145 Ibid

146 Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda, <http://www.cjcr.gov.rw/eng/constitution_eng.doc>.

147 Powley, E. (2003). *Rwanda: Women Hold up Half the Paliament*. Retrieved 01 21, 2012 from Women in Paliament: Beyond Numbers: www.idea.int

148 IPU (International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base): <http://www.ipu.org/english/home.htm>

149 The New Times: RWANDA: Women Participated Massively in Elections – Report, June 24 2011 Accessed from www.peacewomen.org

150 Emma Prince, Rwanda: Women participated massively in Elections- Report, 24 June 2011 accessed from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201106240213>

151 Emma Prince, Rwanda: Women participated massively in Elections- Report, 24 June 2011 accessed from <http://allafrica.com/stories/201106240213>

152 Compilation or IPU (International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base), Government Based Statistics and information from Afro-barometer Data Collection.

153 Members of Cabinet 26 with 8 women ministers <http://www.gov.rw/Cabinet> accessed on 17th January 2012 (30%)

154 Council of Women World Leaders <http://www.cwwl.org/council/bio-neves-maria.html>

155 Women in National Parliaments, Inter-parliamentary Union <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

156 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2008/af/119020.htm>

157 CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tp.html>

158 <http://africanelections.tripod.com/st.html>

159 Minister's message for 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence <http://www.genderseychelles.gov.sc/Resources/Minister's%20Message%20for%2016%20Days%20campaign%20REVISED.pdf>

- 160 Make Every Woman Count http://www.makeeverywomancount.org/index.php?option=com_fjrelated&view=fjrelated&id=73&Itemid=88
- 161 CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/se.html>
- 162 US Department of State <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100502.htm>
- 163 <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/2007/100502.htm>
- 164 <http://africanelections.tripod.com/sc.html>
- 165 South Sudan backs independence – results <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12379431>
- 166 Government of South Sudan official website <http://www.goss.org/>
- 167 Women in national parliaments <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
- 168 South Sudan women seek 30 percent representation in a new state <http://rosebellkagumire.com/2011/04/20/south-sudan-women-seek-30-percent-representation-in-a-new-state/>
- 169 Women aim to protect their rights in a young state <http://allafrica.com/stories/201112160236.html>
- 170 CIA World Factbook <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/od.html>
- 171 <http://www.guttmacher.org/pubs/journals/2707101.html>
- 172 <http://www.aidsalliance.org/linkingorganisationdetails.aspx?id=18>
- 173 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/world-leaders-s/south-sudan.html>
- 174 Hanssen, K. N. (2006/2007). *Towards Multiparty System in Uganda-Working Paper*. Norway: CMI-Michelsen Institute .
- 175 Olaka-Onyango, J. (2011, 05 02). *Uganda Elections: " An Exercise in Shame-Faced Endorsement*. Retrieved 12 12, 2011 from Pambazuka Press: www.pambazuka.org
- 176 International Alert . (2007). *Women's Political Participation in Countries Emerging from Conflict in the Great Lakes Region of Africa*. Kampala: International Alert .
- 177 Accessed from http://www.ipu.org/parline/reports/2329_E.htm-Uganda Parliament- <http://www.parliament.go.ug/>.
- 178 Ahikire, J. (2011, 02 15). *Towards Women's Effective Participation in Electoral Processes: A Review of the Ugandan Experience*. Retrieved 12 10, 2011 from Feminist Africa: <http://www.feministafrica.org>
- 179 Croome, P. (2011, 05 11). *Uganda: Women's Representation on the Rise*. Retrieved 12 10, 2012 from Gender Links: www.genderlinks.org

- 180 Ntawubona, J. (2010). *Women and Political Participation in Uganda*. Berlin: VDM Verlag Dr Muller.
- 181 Croome, P. (2011, 05 23). *Uganda: Women's Representation on the Rise*. Retrieved 12 10, 2011 from Pambazuka News: www.pambazuka.org
- 182 Croome, P. (2011, 05 11). *Uganda: Women's Representation on the Rise*. Retrieved 12 10, 2011 from Gender Links: www.genderlinks.org.za
- 183 Compilation of IPU (International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base), Government Based Statistics and information from Afro-barometer Data Collection.
- 184 United Nations . (2011, 06 30). *In Egypt, Tunisia and Elsewhere, Women Are in Vanguard of Demanding Change*. Retrieved 10, 2011 from United Nations Secretary-General : <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sgsm13685.doc.htm>
- 185 Trister, S. (2011, 10 27). *The Tunisian Elections in Pictures*. Retrieved 11 01, 2011 from Freedom House: <http://blog.freedomhouse.org>
- 186 <http://www.internationalviewpoint.org/spip.php?article2094>
- 187 IPU. (2011, 10 27). *Women in Parliaments: World Classification*. Retrieved 11 30, 2011 from Inter-Parliamentary Union: www.ipu.org
- 188 UNDP Fast Facts-Tunisia + Gender Inequality Index UN Statistics (SIGI)
- 189 Boutheina, G. (2009). *Strengthening Women's Leadership and Political Participation in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*. Tunis: The Arab Center for Women Training and Research (CAWTAR).
- 190 Goulding, K. (2010). *The Quandary of Gender Quotas in Tunisia: Representations and Perceptions at the Local Level*. UN-INSTRAW, CAWTAR.
- 191 Al Jazeera. (2011, 04 21). *Tunisia Gender-Parity "revolution" hailed*. Retrieved 10 12, 2011 from Al Jazeera News: www.aljazeera.com
- 192 Gender Concern International. (2009). *Tunisia: Country Profile and Election Monitoring*. Retrieved 10 30, 2011 from Gender Concern International : www.genderconcerns.org
- 193 Election Guide Digest: <http://digest.electionguide.org/2011/10/19/elections-in-tunisia-the-23-october-constituent-assembly/>
- 194 RTL. (2011, 12 14). *Tunisia: l'islamiste Hamadi Jabeli cherche de former le gouvernement*. Retrieved 12 14, 2011 from RTL-Infor: www.rfl.be
- 195 UNDP Project to Promote and Encourage Female Political Participation in Tunisia: <http://arabstates.undp.org/subpage.php?spid=10>
- 196 The Guardian, 2011: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/blog/2011/oct/22/tunisian-elections-2011-tunisia1>
- 197 Retrieved 10 25, 2011 from Ensemble Pour L'Egalite: <http://www.womenpoliticalparticipation.org>

- 198Kherigi, I. (2011, 11 24). *Tunisia: The Calm After the Storm*. Retrieved 11 24, 2011 from Al Jazeera News: www.aljazeera.com
- 199UNDP. (2011). *Women Play a Major Role in Tunisia's Historic Election*. Retrieved 10 29, 2011 from United Nations Development Program : www.beta.undp.org
- 200Source: Compilation of UN Statistics and Inter-Parliamentary Union
- 201ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA 2011, "Received Parliamentary http://www.elections.org.zm/new_elections_data/parliamentary_results.pdf [PDF, opens new window] (accessed December 2011).
- 202Mbulo, E. (2011, 04 22). *Women's Lobby Group Trains Female Politicians on Credibility*. Retrieved 12 14, 2011 from The Post - Zambia: www.postzambia.com
- 203MOMBA, J 2005, "Women and Youth Participation" IN [Political Parties and the Quest for Democratic Consolidation in Zambia](#) [PDF], EISA Research Report 17
- 204WiLDAF Report (2011)-SOURCE!!
- 205CONSTITUTION OF ZAMBIA 1996, [www] <http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/ZM/Constitution%20of%20Zambia%201996.pdf/> (accessed 21 December 2011).
- 206EISA. (2011, 09 22). *EISA Election Observer Mission to the Zambia Tripartite Elections of 20 September 2011*. Retrieved 12 14, 2011 from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa: www.eisa.or.za
- 207Momba, J. (2005), *Political Parties and the Quest for Democratic Consolidation in Zambia*, EISA Research Report, Johannesburg.
- 208EISA. (2008, 09 22). *Zambia Women's Representation Quotas*. Retrieved 12 14, 2011 from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa: www.eisa.or.za
- 209EISA. (2008, 09 22). *Zambia Women's Representation Quotas*. Retrieved 12 14, 2011 from Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa: www.eisa.or.za
- 210Kachingwe, K. (2011, 07 22). *Zambia: Calls for Political Parties to Field 50 Percent Female Candidates*. Retrieved 12 15, 2011 from IPS Inter Press Service: www.ips.org
- 211Kachingwe, K. (2011, 07 22). *Zambia: Calls for Political Parties to Field 50 Percent Female Candidates*. Retrieved 12 15, 2011 from IPS Inter Press Service: www.ips.org
- 212Compilation or IPU(International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base), Government Based Statistics and information from Afro-barometer Data Collection.
- 213ELECTORAL COMMISSION OF ZAMBIA 2011, "National Assembly Candidates by District", [www]http://www.elections.org.zm/new_elections_data/nacandidatesbydistrict.pdf (accessed 25 Dec 2011).
- 214Djibouti Opposition Boycotts Presidential Election', Somali and Press, 12 March 2011, <http://somalilandpress.com>

215<http://africanelections.tripod.com>

216'Elections in Djibouti', African Election Database, <http://africanelections.tripod.com>

217Youssef, H. A. (2004). *Arab Quota Report: Selected Case Studies-Women's Participation and Special Measures in Djibouti*. Cairo: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.

218www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011

219'Djibouti: President Ismail Omar Guelleh wins third term', BBC News, 9 April 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk>.

220William Davidson, 'Djibouti Opposition Meets After Violence At Protests; One Policeman Killed', 19 February 2011, Bloomberg, <http://www.bloomberg.com>

221www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011

222Compilation of IPU (International Parliamentary Union-Women in Politics Data Base), Government Based Statistics and information from Afro-barometer Data Collection.

223Clinton, H. (2011). *Remarks on Women's Political Participation At A UN Event*. Retrieved 01 03, 2012 from US Department of State: [www//.state.gov.secretary/rm/2011/09/172738.htm](http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/09/172738.htm)

224http://blogs.cfr.org/coleman/2012/01/10/quotas-for-womens-political-participation/?cid=oth_partner_site-atlantic%22