



BOTSWANA PRE - ELECTION REPORT

Background:

Botswana is undergoing National General Elections on the 22nd October, 2019. Botswana has committed to international, continental and regional norms, and standards including SDGs, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPFA), and the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development and committed to their implementation.

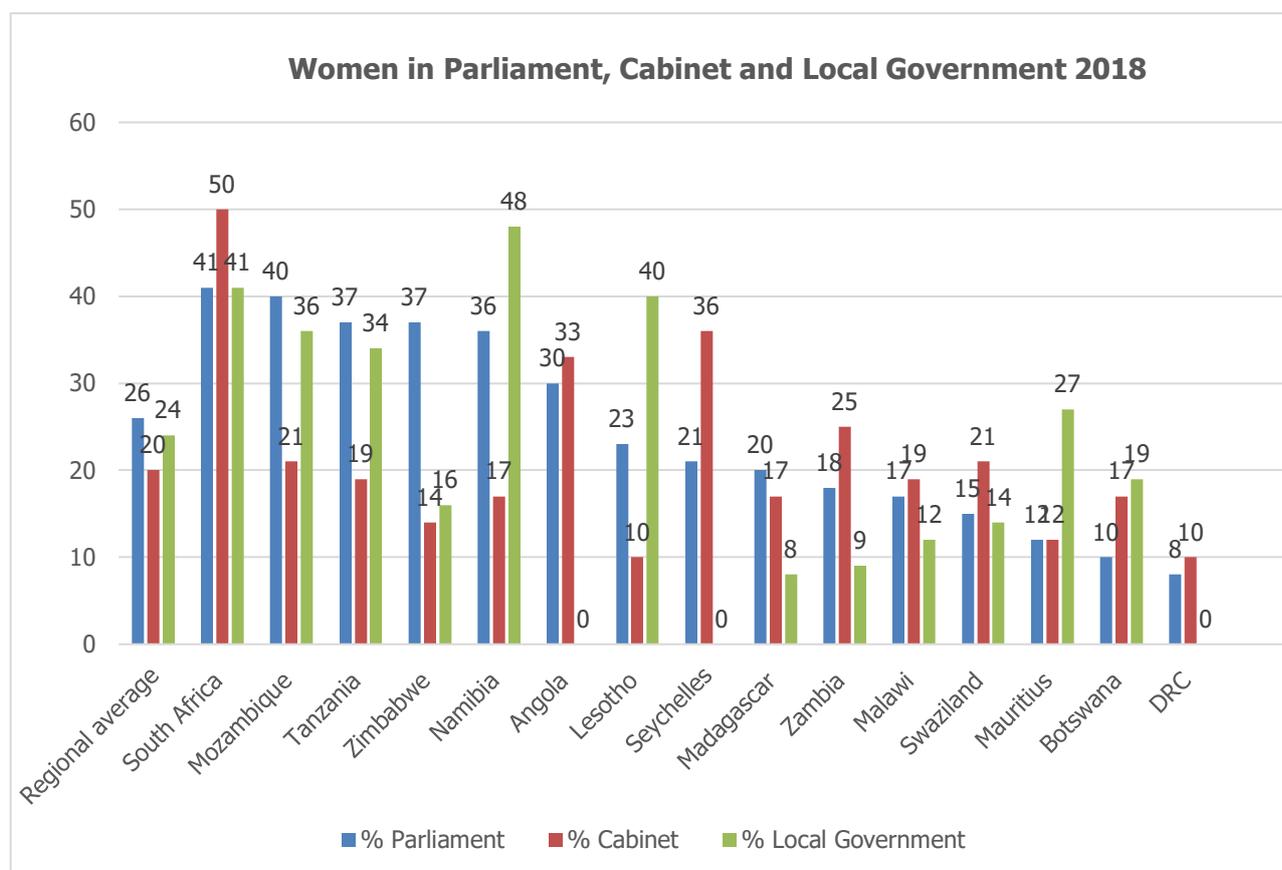
The National Policy on Gender and Development was adopted in 2015 prioritises six national development areas for gender mainstreaming including **(iii) Political Power, Democratic Governance and Decision-making**. Under this priority area, the NPGAD acknowledges that good governance and leadership are critical elements for sustainable development. The Policy further highlights that a growing body of evidence suggests that they have considerable influence on gender equality and empowerment. The NPGAD commits to advocate for strengthened core institutions of democratic governance at national and community levels, using participatory processes that are gender-responsive. The policy also affirms that to ensure meaningful participation by men and women in political governance and leadership structures, it will advocate for and support governance, leadership skills development, as well as improved awareness and understanding of gender issues.

Despite the good policy framework in Botswana, the number of women in the Botswana Parliament Botswana has decreased to date since the 2014 General Elections. While meaningful policies, and strategies have been put in place to improve equality and equity among men and women, their implementation and enforcement remains a daunting challenge. The political will to reduce general inequality has not sufficiently translated into desired gender equality outcomes. The picture reflected in the candidates standing for the 2019 General elections does not represent the policy measures in place to achieve gender parity in Botswana.

Status of women's Representation in Politics in Botswana:

Botswana has overall not performed very well on women's representation in politics and decision making over the years as the numbers continue to remain very marginal. Currently, the representation of women in Politics stands at 9% of women in Parliament, 17% in Cabinet, and 18% in local government. The under-representation of women in politics occurs despite the policies in place. The Parliament of Botswana consists of 63 Members, being 57 elected members and four specially elected members, as well as the State President and the Attorney General, who are ex-officio members of Parliament. Six of the current Members of Parliament are women, being two members elected in 2014 elections, two specially elected members, the Attorney General and the Speaker, giving a 9.5 percent proportion of women in Parliament. Representation of women in Parliament has generally been low in Botswana, increasing only in the year 2000 when it reached 18.2 percent. Botswana is ranked 13 out of the 15 SADC Member States regarding representation by women in Parliament, with a global ranking of

163.¹ Women constitute 55 percent of registered voters – that is, 403,000 women voters of the total 725,000 registered voters.



Nomination of Candidates

The Electoral Act provides for the nomination of local government and Parliamentary candidates. This nomination will be done on the 23rd September 2019 where all those that meet the criteria set by the Independent Electoral Commission will be registered as candidates for the coming general elections. The nomination for Presidential Candidates is provided for in the Constitution of Botswana. This will be carried out on the 21st September 2019 at the High Court of Botswana.

Barriers to Women’s Representation on Politics:

There are several factors that contribute to the unequal representation of women in Politics such as Patriarchy. Male domination in politics remains one of the major stumbling blocks for effective participation of women. Cultural stereotypes perpetuate perceptions that politics is not a female domain.² Some of the structural obstacles for women’s participation in politics include the gender roles and responsibilities that lead to the burden of multiple roles of women. This hinders women’s involvement and participation in politics. Economic and educational limitations also affect the representation and participation of women.³ Another major barrier is the lack of legislated quotas and or affirmative action for gender parity in politics. Both the constitution and the Electoral law are silent on gender parity.

¹ [Inter-Parliamentary Union](http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm), Data of National Parliaments compiled by 1st September 2017, <http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

² UN Women, 2017, Women in Leadership,

³ SADC, 2008, SADC Framework for achieving gender parity in political and decision-making positions, <https://www.sadc.int/>

Electoral systems and quotas

Despite the provisions in the Post 2015 SADC Gender Protocol for “special measures” the uptake is patchy across the region and in Botswana. Botswana electoral system in First Past the Post. By way of background there are two main types of electoral systems: In the **Proportional Representation (PR)**, or “list system,” citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidates get in according to where they sit on the list. In an open list system, voters determine where candidates sit on the list. In a closed list system, the party determines where candidates sit on the list. In the constituency, or “**First Past the Post**” (FPTP) system, citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus, a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament, because in this system “the winner takes all.”

Table One: Pros and cons of electoral systems and quotas in the SADC region

	FPTP	PR	Mixed
Arguments for the electoral system.	Good for accountability especially at local level; voters have an MP or councillor who has been elected.	Good for inclusion as all parties get seats relative to their performance in the elections.	Draws on “the best of both worlds.”
Arguments against the electoral system.	Winner takes all means that a party can do well in the popular vote but still get no seats.	Party cadres are deployed to constituencies where they may have no base or roots.	Those deployed on a PR basis are seen as “token” compared to those who contested for elections.
Examples of Constitutional or legislated quotas in the SADC region.	All parties in Mauritius are required by law to field at least 30% candidates of the opposite sex.	The Namibia local government electoral law requires political parties to field at least 30% women candidates in their party lists.	Zimbabwe (national); Tanzania (national and local); Lesotho (local) have 30% seats reserved for women on a PR basis in addition to those that won through the FPTP.
<i>Advantages</i>	Parties are obliged to field women candidates	The combination of a PR system and legislated quotas is the most fool proof as long as women are distributed evenly in the list	This compromise has helped countries with a FPTP system to get around the challenge under “disadvantages FPTP”.
<i>Disadvantages</i>	There are no guarantees that women will be fielded in constituencies where they will win. Mauritius overcame this through training women candidates, public education and awareness.	Men in the party may complain that they have been overlooked. The party and the Electoral Commission have to ensure that women and men are alternated in the list.	Women who come in through the “reserved” PR seats are often regarded as more “token” to the few women and all the men who come in through this avenue.
Examples of voluntary party quotas in the SADC region.	Various political parties in Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Botswana have professed 30% quotas	Ruling parties in South Africa, Namibia, Angola and Mozambique have voluntary quotas ranging from 30% to 50%.	The ruling party in South Africa has a 50% quota for women that has been applied at the local level where elections are run on a mixed system.
<i>Advantages</i>	Quotas are owned and driven by the parties.	Voluntary party quotas are easier to implement in the PR system where voting is	Quotas are owned and driven by the parties.

	FPTP	PR	Mixed
		for the party not individual candidates. They have the added advantage of party ownership.	
<i>Disadvantages</i>	They are seldom if ever implemented in the highly competitive "winner takes all" system	Women's representation is left at the whim of a few willing parties whose strength may wane. There is no obligation on all parties to uphold Constitutional provisions for gender equality.	

Table one summarises the pros and cons of the different electoral systems, and the use of legislated and or voluntary quotas in conjunction with these systems. There is overwhelming evidence internationally and in the region to suggest that women stand a better chance of being elected under the PR (and especially the closed list PR system) as opposed to the constituency electoral system.⁴ The chance of women being elected is even higher when the PR system works in concert with a quota.

Table Two: Electoral systems and quotas in Botswana

Level	Electoral system	Constitutional quota	Voluntary party quota
National	FPTP	No Constitutional Quotas	No Voluntary Party Quotas
Local	FPTP		

Table Two shows that at the Botswana uses the FPTP electoral system at both the national and local levels, and there are no quotas for women. Botswana has since 1966 used the First Past The Post (FPTP) electoral system despite the fact that evidence shows that women stands a better chance of making it when the PR system is used. This method does not take into consideration other factors such as popular vote and it does not cater for the needs of special populations. Botswana has never exceeded 25% women representation at either local or national level.

Review of Botswana Political Party Quotas by 2019 Elections:

Only BCP has legislated a 30% quota in their party constitution. The Alliance for Progressive mentions setting up of a quota system through the review of the constitution in their manifesto. The other party manifestos do not mention this. The UDC has indicated that should they win elections they would reserve at least two thirds of the positions of specially elected members of parliament and councils for disadvantaged minorities, women, youths and other marginalised groups. The ruling party BDP manifesto mentions GBV as a priority for action, however does not speak to gender parity or quotas.

Table Three: Audit of Political Parties and quotas in Botswana 2019

Political parties	Quota and Nature/None	Name of Leader	Number of national executive members	% Women
Botswana Democratic Party	None	Mr Mokgweetsi Masisi	18	20%
Botswana Congress Party	30% for all leadership positions	Mr. Dumelang Selashando	9	44%

⁴ For more information on the comparative global data on quotas for women in politics see www.idea.int/quota.

Botswana National Front	Yes	Mr. Duma Boko	3	14%
Botswana Movement for Democracy	Yes	Mr. Sidney Pilane	Party going for elective congress	
Alliance for Progressives	No quotas but speak on gender equality	Mr. Ndaba Gaolatlhe	47	30%

Source: *Gender Links Botswana 2019*

Table Three shows that for the parties that provided information, none has reached gender parity in its structures. Only the Botswana Congress party comes close to doing so since they made a deliberate move to include a 30% quota for women in their constitution and actually implement it. Other parties make mention of gender equality but have not made efforts to ensure women are equally represented in Central Committees.

Violence against Women in Elections (VAWIE)

There is potential for VAWIE at every stage of the elections. VAWIE is a threat to the integrity of the electoral process – it can affect women’s participation as voters, candidates, election officials, activists, and political party leaders, and it undermines the free, fair, and inclusive democratic process.

Botswana is one of the most peaceful countries in the region and for the past 50 years it has had peaceful elections. The selection of candidates starts at party level a year prior to elections. Prospective candidates submit their names and then an election is held to select one member to represent the constituency during National elections. Most women report abuse at this stage as they are intimidated by their male counterparts in the same political parties. In some instances even women in different campaigning teams are hostile.

The campaign also poses danger to women. During the 50/50 campaigns by Gender Links in 2018, some women reported not being safe during house to house campaigns as some men made sexual advances on them. In all the years Botswana has experienced violation of women candidates in the media. Not much has been done regarding the safety of women during election periods.

Election management

Election Management Bodies (EMBs) ensure that the environment in which elections takes place is conducive to conducting credible elections.⁵ EMBs are responsible for the management and conduct of elections and play a crucial role in ensuring that fair elections are held and in the end accepted.⁶ EMBs need to begin, “in their own institutions, by ensuring that women are given positions of responsibility and that the policies and practices of the institution work to improve the status of women in society. This might involve creating incentives for women to become election administrators; training all members of staff to be sensitive to gender issues; and collecting gender-disaggregated statistics in order to evaluate women’s participation; and, identifying aspects of the democratic process that can be improved.”⁷ In Botswana out of seven EMB functionaries, only one is a woman, meaning women constitute just 14% of this body.

⁵ SADC Gender and Development Monitor 2016.

⁶ Commonwealth Secretariat (2016) Election Management: A Compendium, of Commonwealth Good Practice.

⁷ Commonwealth Compendium of Good Election Management Practice.

The role of the media

The 2015 Gender and Media Progress Study measured the proportion of women sources in the media overall, as well as in the political topic category. In Botswana, women comprised 28% of sources overall, and 17% of sources in the political topic category. The study found that

- The views of women candidates are often not profiled or are trivialised. During the 1999 elections one female candidate was depicted as a castrated bull. This incidence was strongly condemned by the general population.
- Male spokespersons of political parties dominate
- The views of women voters are seldom canvassed

Key recommendations for 2019 and beyond:

1. Promote the effective implementation of the SDGs and Agenda 2030 SADC Gender Protocol to achieve 50% women's representation in all areas of decision-making in Government legislation and political parties laws and policies;
2. Lobby for political parties to adopt quotas in party manifestos.
3. Lobby for permanent electoral systems reform from the FPTP to a PR system that is more inclusive and conducive to women's participation. At worst, there should be a constitutional quota to facilitate more women gaining access to political leadership.
4. Remove structural barriers and perceptions rooted in culture, customs, religion and tradition; and invest in efforts that build strong political will and leadership by all to effect change. There is a crucial need for more civic education about women and men's equal participation in politics and decision making in public service especially ahead of 2019 elections.
5. Work with media houses to make sure "every voice counts" pre, during and post the 2019 general elections. Use the media as a critical platform and tool to effect change.