

50/50 POLICY BRIEF MADAGASCAR



NOVEMBER 2020



8 March International Women's Day celebration Antananarivo.
Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

Key facts

This policy brief analyses the National Assembly and Local Government elections that took place in Madagascar on 27 May 2019 to elect 151 members of the National Assembly, and 21,279 Members of Local Government in 1695 councils on 27 November 2020. The results show that women now constitute 18% of Parliamentarians in the National Assembly and Senate; and 7% Local Councillors. The issue is critically important given:

- The persistent low levels of women's representation at all levels of government in Madagascar.

- The national First-Past-The-Post (FPTP) electoral system which disadvantages women's representation in political decision making.
- The mixed FPTP and Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system without a gender quota at the local level. While the system leads to a more equitable sharing of seats between parties within municipalities, it has not resulted in an increase in women's representation.

Table 1: Results of the 2019 Elections

	Last election	Next elections	Electoral system	No of seats	No of women elected	% of women elected
National Assembly	2019	2024	FPTP	151	26 ¹	17%
Senate	2015	2020	Mixed ²	63	13 ³	21%
Both houses				214	39	18%
Presidential elections	2018	2023	FPTP	36	5 ⁴	14%
Cabinet	2020		Appointed	24	8 ⁵	33%
Local Government Mayors	2019	2023	FPTP	1695	87 ⁶	5%
Local Government Councillors	2019	2023	PR	21 279	1532	7%

¹ <http://www.lagazette-dgi.com/?p=30796>

² This is mixed with PR system and presidential appointments - explained below

³ <http://www.hcc.gov.mg/arrets/arret-n02-hccar-du-22-janvier-2016-portant-proclamation-des-resultats-officiels-de-lelection-des-membres-du-senat-du-29-decembre-2015/>

⁴ <https://www.lactuallite.mg/politique/8020-presidentielle-madagascar-decouvrez-les-numeros-des-candidats-sur-le-bulletin-unique/>

⁵ <https://www.madagascar-tribune.com/Dix-ministres-retrants-et-quatorze-ministres-revenants.html>

⁶ Provisional results of the CENI for Mayors and Councillors: the administrative courts decided to cancel the votes of local government's elections of 24 councils of the country. Thus, they will redo their elections within 120 days (by mid of May) as indicated by law no 2008-008.

Barriers to women's political participation

Women's political participation remains low in Madagascar due to the patriarchal nature of the Malagasy society. Factors such as discriminatory traditional practices, lack of education and low levels of gender awareness amongst political parties and institutions⁷, as well as the lack of gender quotas for women in politics, are barriers to women's political participation. Gender-based violence is also high, with two women out of three experiencing it across the island.⁸

Malagasy women, especially those at the grassroots level, still face many challenges owing to social stereotypes used to restrict women in various fields, including political decision-making.

Constitutional provisions

Article 6 and 28 of the Constitution of the Republic of Madagascar, 2010 outlines principles of equality and non-discrimination stating that:

“All individuals are equal before the law and enjoy the same fundamental freedoms protected by the law without discrimination founded on gender, the level of instruction, wealth, origin, religious belief or opinion.”

“The law favours the equal access and the participation of women and men in public employment and to the functions in the domain of the political, economic and social life.”

“No one may be prejudiced in their work or in their employment for reason of gender, of age, of religion, of opinions, of origins, of belonging to a trade-union or of political convictions.”

Article 14 of the Constitution provides that citizens, either male or female, can freely create associations or political parties “Any person has the right to freely constitute associations, under reserve of conforming themselves to the law.”

This same right is recognised for the creation of political parties. The conditions of their creation



Office of Parliament.

Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

are determined by a law on political parties and their financing: “The associations and the political parties that jeopardise the unity of the nation and the republican principles, and that advocate totalitarianism or segregation of ethnic, tribal or religious character, are prohibited.”

There are therefore no legal barriers to women participating in political life, as voters or politicians, but the Constitution is gender-neutral with no special measures in place to increase women's participation in political decision-making

Electoral system and quotas

The electoral system is based on a simple majority voting system, with variations for each level of government.

The Parliament has two chambers - Lower House is the National Assembly (*Antenimieran-Pirenena/Assemblée Nationale*) and the Upper House is the Senate (*Antenimieran-doholona/Sénat de Madagascar*).

National assembly

The Constitution (2010, Article 69-70) states that the number of seats and the manner of election be determined by a decree of the Council of

⁷ Naroarisoa Ravaozanany, 2010, Madagascar in Gender Links (Ed), This Seat is taken: Elections and the under-representation of women in seven Southern African Countries. EISA, Johannesburg, p81, 9192
⁸ <http://www.laverite.mg/dossier/item/7448-violences-conjugales-quand-l%E2%80%99amour-g%C3%A9n%C3%A8re-l%E2%80%99enfer%E2%80%A6.html>
⁹ EISA, June 2019, Madagascar Electoral System <https://www.eisa.org.za/wep/mad4.htm> accessed 16/12/2019

Ministers; in the 2019 National Assembly election this was Decree no 2019-189.⁹

The 151 members of the National Assembly are elected by two methods: 87 are elected from single-member constituencies, which are districts with population less than 300,000 by FPTP voting, and, the remaining 64 elected from two members constituencies, which are districts with more a population of more than 300,000.

“Deputies are elected by direct universal suffrage by first past the post, by one (1) majority vote. The candidate who obtains the greatest number of votes is declared elected. In the event of a tie between two candidates, the oldest candidate is declared elected.”¹⁰ According to Article 70 of the Constitution “A decree taken in the Council of Ministers establishes the number of members of the National Assembly, the distribution of the seats on the whole of the national territory as well as the divisions of the electoral circumscriptions.” Decree 2019-189 fixed the number of Deputies as 151 in accordance with population of the country.

Currently the President of the National Assembly is a woman, Razanamahasoa Christine.



RAZANAMAHASOA Christine, President of the National Assembly.
Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

Decree no 2015- 1413, which fixed the number of seats as 63.

Article 6 of the Organic Law 2015-007 states that the Members of the Senate are elected using two methods: two thirds are elected using PR system in equal number in each province by the electoral college, which comprises the Mayors, Municipal and Communal Councilors, Heads of Regions and the Regional Councilors and the Head of Province and the Provincial Councilors.¹¹ The remaining one third are appointed by the President.¹² In total 42 are indirectly elected by the electoral colleges and 21 are appointed by the President.

Local Government



RABEARISOA Hanta, Mayor of Bongatsara Council.
Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

Just before the November 2019 elections, decree 2019-1541 changed the electoral system for local elections from an FPTP system to a Mixed system. In this system, Mayors are elected by direct majority through the FPTP system. The candidate with the greatest number of votes is elected Mayor. Councilors are elected by party-list Proportional Representation system using the highest averages method (no voting for candidates from different lists, preferential vote or partial list).¹³ The PR system is generally more favourable to women's representation than FPTP, especially if accompanied by a “Zebra” List system of one woman, one man on the candidate lists.

Senate

The number of seats allocated for Senate is determined by a decree of the Council of Ministers. In the 2019 Senate election it was the

¹⁰ Organic law 2018-010, article 4. Deputies are members of parliament

¹¹ <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2367.htm>

¹² <http://www.hcc.gov.mg/arrets/arret-n02-hccar-du-22-janvier-2016-portant-proclamation-des-resultats-officiels-de-lelection-des-membres-du-senat-du-29-decembre-2015/>

¹³ <http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/2193.htm>. The same system is used for the Senate is used at the local government level

¹⁴ <https://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/governance/advocacy/madagascar-gender-and-elections/ accessed 16/12/2019>

The most significant change brought about by the 2019 election was that the vote for Mayors and Councilors was simultaneous on Election Day. A consultation on 22 February 2019 between the government, the Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI) and CSOs led to recommendations on a Zebra List system for the PR seats

in the elections. The Council of Ministers eventually opted to adopt a party list system without a gender quota in decree 2019-1541. The ruling party failed to field female candidates in major cities. This resulted in a one percentage point decrease in women's representation from 8% in 2015 to 7% in 2019.



RAZANADRAKOTO Noeline, current elected councillor at the Andoharanomaintso rural council.
Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

Noeline Razanadrakoto is a Councillor at the Andoharanomaintso rural council, one of GL Madagascar Centre of Excellence for Gender in Local Government. A Gender Champion in the council, who has worked with GL since 2008. She understands well the importance and benefits of women in political decision making. She was at the head of the list of the independent *Fitambolagnela* political party during the last local elections. The party won four out of seven seats and appointed two women and two men. The other political parties appointed only men. "This is the problem," she argued. "The quota should be included in Manifestos of the political parties, because we cannot just count on parties' political will." Her political party's success in the last elections has resulted in greater voter awareness on gender mainstreaming at all levels. The 2019 elections mark Razanadrakoto fourth term, showing that women and men have confidence in her.

Political parties

The Ministry of Interior registered 195 political parties in February 2018¹⁵ to contest the 2019 elections.

Article 11 of Law No 2011- 012 governing political parties provides for balance between the two sexes in all the work undertaken within political parties, as well as the choice to join the parties:

"The creation of a political party must not undermine national unity, to the integrity of the national territory and to democratic principles. It must not in any way be discriminatory on the basis of sex, level of education, fortune, origin, race, physical fitness, or religious belief. Only natural persons can be members of a political party."¹⁶

¹⁵ <https://www.madagate.org/politique-madagascar/analyse/7098-madagascar->
¹⁶ Law No 2011- 012, Article 12

Table 2: Gender analysis of the political party manifestos

PARTY	GENDER SPECIFIC REFERENCES IN MANIFESTOS	GENDER MAINSTREAMED IN MANIFESTOS
TGV ¹⁷ Tanora mala GasyVonona	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pledge to the respect of human rights in general, the rights of women and children in particular, and human dignity • Ensuring that all members, without gender discrimination, have the right to discuss freely all political issues in accordance with the discipline and hierarchy of the party, to elect and be elected at the levels of the membership structure, to benefit from training provided within the party and to enjoy social and moral benefits acquired through party activities • No quota 	Will promote sustainable development through the adoption of a solidarity economy that benefits all
TIM ¹⁸ Tiako I Madagasikara	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aiming at the unification of all Malagasy people into a true national unity filled with love and respect, without discrimination of race, ethnicity, political affiliation, religion, gender, or property • No quota 	The manifesto recognises the rules and regulations of the African Union and the United Nations. TIM will therefore emphasise the freedom and security of all people as the main objective of all activities undertaken.
MMM ¹⁹ Malagasy Miara-miainga	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting and defending the universally recognised rights and values that constitute the soul of the Malagasy nation. MMM embraces the republican principles of democracy and good governance. It develops, particularly in its political and governance actions, the culture of dialogue and "accountability", the gender promotion • Giving opportunity for women and young people by the Vehivavy Malagasy Miara-Miainga (organisation of women members) and the youth (Tanora Miara-Miainga) to be elected among the members of the political staff board • No quota 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will enhance the creation of firms that generate capital gains and quality job opportunities for all. • Will ensure local participation by establishing the rule of decentralised governance, in which municipalities and regions are privileged spaces and where government and state institutions are the guarantors of a development process.
LEADER FANILO ²⁰ Libéralisme Economique et Démocratique de l'Action de Redressement (LEADER FANILO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Viewing to the establishment and the defence of the democratic liberalism in Madagascar; a condition of the socio-economic development of the nation and the integral fulfilment of the Malagasy citizens, either male or female without exception • No quota 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will drive out ignorance and illiteracy through the implementation of an appropriate and coherent educational system, to make every Malagasy a responsible citizen, capable of initiative and persevering in their efforts

Election outcome over the last three elections

The following table shows women's representation in political decision-making in Madagascar over the last three elections. Following a political crisis

in the country in 2009, a transitional government led the country until 2013. Elections did not take place in accordance with the electoral calendar.

¹⁷ Statut du parti politique Tanora malaGasy Vonona

¹⁸ Sata mifehy ny antoko Tiako I Madagasikara

¹⁹ Statut du parti Malagasy Miara-Miainga

²⁰ Statut du parti Leader Fanilo

Table 3: Representation of Malagasy women in politics over the three last elections

Level of Government	Election year	% Women	% Men
Senate	2015	21	79
	2010-2014	13	87
	2008-2009	15	85
National Assembly	2019	17	83
	2014	19	81
	2009	17	83
Cabinet	2020	33	67
	2019	27	73
	2018	27	73
Mayors	2019	5	95
	2015	5	95
	2008	4	96
Councillors	2019	7	93
	2015	8	92
	2008	8*	92

*This is unofficial data gathered by Gender Links Madagascar as CENI did not disaggregate data by sex at that time.

Figure 1: Women in politics over the last three elections 2008 - 2019

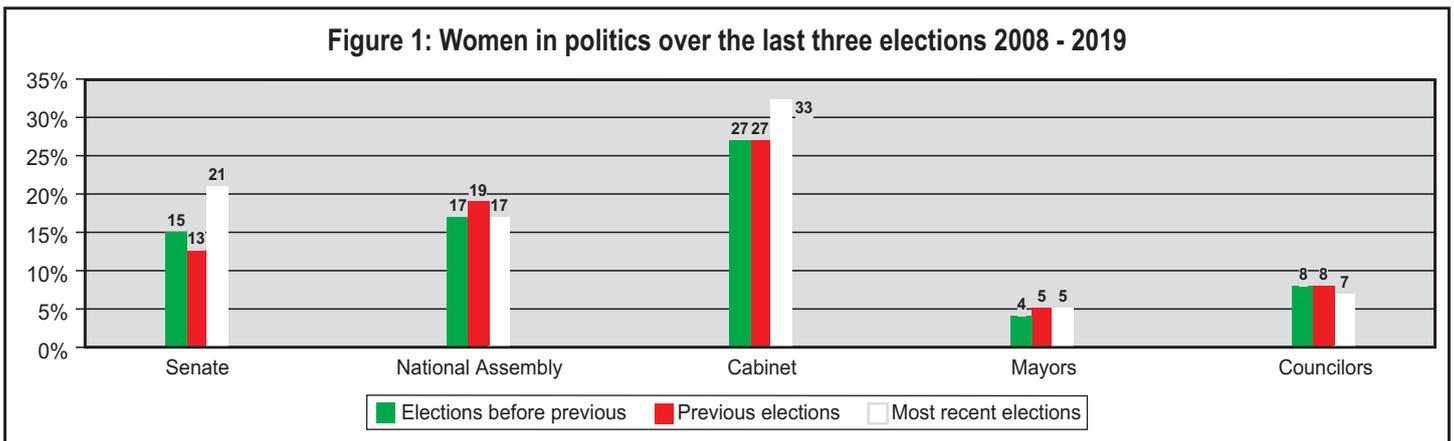


Figure one tracks the representation of women in various areas of political decision-making over the last three elections. It shows that progress in increasing women's representation at all levels has been slow and remains well below the SADC Gender Protocol target of 50%.

The proportion of women in the National Assembly and Local Government Councillors decreased in the 2019 elections, despite a last-minute decree changing the electoral system for local elections from an FPTP system to a mixed system, where Mayors are elected through the FPTP system and councillors are elected through the party-list PR system. This illustrates the importance of political parties adopting the 'zebra list' system alternating women and men on the candidates list to give women an equal chance of being elected.

The proportion of women in the Senate increased by eight percentage points and in Cabinet by six percentage points. This reflects political will at the highest level as the president is responsible for appointing one third of all Senators and all Members of cabinet. For the Senate, seven women out of 42 (17%) were directly elected and six out of 21 (29%) appointed by the President. The President also appointed eight women (33%) to his Cabinet although women are mostly appointed to traditional positions and key Ministers such as Economy and Finance, Interior and Decentralisation, National Defense, Youth and sports, Telecommunications and digital development remain the domain of male ministers.

Options for increasing women's representation

The slow progress in increasing women's representation in political decision-making points to the need for electoral reform and the adoption of Temporary Special Measures or quotas. Mada-

gascar can learn from a few countries in the region that have undergone electoral reform or implemented quotas or both to increase women's representation in political decision-making.

- In Namibia, which has one of the highest levels of women's representation in Parliament (36%) and Local Government (48%), elections at both national and local level are on a PR basis. When combined with a legislated quota (local) this produces good results for women. A motion has been introduced in parliament to legislate quotas at national and local level. 
- Lesotho has a Mixed Electoral System of FPTP and Proportional Representation (PR) at the national and local levels with 

a 30% legislated quota at the local level. This has enabled Lesotho to make progress at local level, with 40% women's representation at this compared to 23% at the national where there is a quota for the PR seats but not the FPTP seats.

- Mauritius runs its elections largely on a FPTP basis. It is the only country in SADC that has implemented a gender-neutral quota in a purely FPTP system (local elections), which resulted in an almost fourfold increase in women's representation in local government in 2013. 

Electoral laws

The Electoral Act (Organic Law No 2018-008) on the general system of elections and referendums regulates the electoral system, processes and procedures. Articles 2, 3, 4, and 17 of the electoral law provide for the right to vote regardless of sex. However, none of the Articles of this electoral law provide for affirmative measures leading to the achievement of the 50/50.

As it is currently written, the law is gender blind in that it uses the French word "un", which only refers to singular male person. In order to fully integrate gender into the law, this should be amended to include gender sensitive language.

There are three decrees regulating the functioning of local elections, namely decrees 1) No 2019-1540 on the "convocation of voters for communal and municipal elections", 2) No 2019-1541 "fixing the modalities of organisation of communal and municipal elections" and 3) No 2019-1542 "fixing the amount each candidate should pay according to the categories of councils they wish to represent."

Campaign finance

The deposit fee for each candidate is divided in two distinct ways, one for Mayors and another one for councilors. The average deposit for candidates' nomination has doubled compared to 2015. These high fees are a further disadvantage to women candidates

The campaign finance regulations mentioned in organic law no 2018-008 state that "By a declaration of probity made when submitting the application, the candidates and lists of candidates competing in an election, or entities in favour of options in referendum, undertake to respect the provisions in force concerning the financing of election campaigns, including those related to transparency, the fight against money laundering and corruption."²¹

However, the respect and efficiency of this Organic Law provision is questionable. Candidates spend a lot on printing, advertising, publishing in media and recruiting singers for their electoral campaigns.

²¹ Organic law 2018-008, article 64

Electoral candidates have to pay an election deposit fee which varies between \$158 to \$2634 (depending on the population of the Council). This fee has doubled since 2015 and is an obstacle to women participating in elections.

In addition, contesting elections requires financial means to campaign, which women cannot generally afford, and political parties prefer to select wealthy men, to appear at the top of the party lists.

Other contraventions include fraud within the voters list as well as the distribution of money to voters during campaigning and voting.

The most violence perceived experience was the invasion of the dahalo (cattle rustlers) in Mahady's poll station. This situation prevented voters from casting their votes and is also risky for women who are victims of rape. However, here are no specific statistics on violence against women during elections.

Violence against women in Elections (VAWIE)

The Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI) and some CSO's noted during their election observation high levels of verbal incitation between candidates themselves and their supporters is the prevailing type of violence. They also found certain contraventions such as the existence of pre-checked ballots or not observing the secrecy of the ballot.

Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante (CENI)

The Constitution provides for the functioning of the Independent National Electoral Commission, *Commission Electorale Nationale Indépendante* (CENI). It is responsible for organising, managing the electoral and referendum operations and publishing the provisional results,²² and "It has legal personality and enjoys administrative and financial autonomy".



Women mayors in Madagascar march for equality.

Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

The CENI is a permanent office composed of nine members each appointed by President, the from Senate, National Assembly, Constitutional High Court, Supreme Court, the Bar Association, the Order of Journalists, and two by CSOs that conduct electoral observation. These are the central members who are helped by representatives on provincial, regional, district and communal.²³

In line with Commission's motto "Credible and democratic electoral governance", CENI, in collaboration with all actors involved in elections, organised a multi-stakeholder dialogue, including political parties, civil society organisations and

public bodies on 11 May 2018 in Antananarivo on political processes and procedures. At this event, women accounted for about half of the participants for civil society and public bodies but were under-represented in political parties. The report published following the dialogue proposed improvements to the electoral processes and procedures.²⁴

²² Law No 2018-008, article 198

²³ Law no 2015-020 on the independent national structure responsible for the organization and the management of electoral operations called "Independent National Electoral Commission", article 89

²⁴ Summary Report of The National Consultation; May 11, 2018; In Le Pave Antananarivo

Voter enrolment and education

Voter registration is voluntary and updated each year. Unlike other SADC countries in which women constitute the majority of voters, In Madagascar this is still not the case, reflecting the deeply patriarchal nature of the society.

In the 2018 Presidential election, women constituted 46% of the 9,767,098 voters. Only 48% voters cast their votes in the presidential election.²⁵

Table 4: Voter registration in Madagascar during the 2018 Presidential election

	Women		Men		All
Malagasy population	13,191,000	50,1%	13,131,000	49,8%	26,325,000
Malagasy population of voting age	6,295,000	50%	6,146,000	49%	12,441,000
Malagasy population registered on the list of electors on February 8th, 2018	4,490,869	46%	5,276,000	54%	9,767,098

Source : Rapport synthèse, un processus électoral inclusif favorisant la participation des femmes et des minorités, réseaux des compétences électorales francophones, p45

After the annual revision of the list of electors (RALE) in 2019, resulted in 10,299,583 voters registered for the legislative and the Local Government elections.

Table 5: 2019 voters' registration

	Women		Men		All
Malagasy population	13,516,485	50%	13,453,157	50%	26,969,642 ²⁶
Malagasy population registered on the list of electors on RALE 2018-2019	4,745,851	47%	5,553,732	53%	10,299,583 ²⁷

Source : Rapport synthèse, un processus électoral inclusif favorisant la participation des femmes et des minorités, réseaux des compétences électorales francophones, p45

Women again constituted 47% of those registered to vote in the 2019 elections, despite comprising over half the population. This is a 1% increase from the 2018 election's registration, which is updated annually. This progress is mainly due to CSOs voter education on the importance of voting.

In 2011, in partnership with the Malagasy National Television, GLM organised a T.V debate on quotas entitled: "Quota in Madagascar: Legal or voluntary?" Six major political parties participated in the debate with around a hundred participants. Those against the quota used arguments such as women's lack of political interest and education, while those for quotas made the case for the need to for affirmative action measure to increase women's political representation.

Role of civil society

Gender Links Madagascar (GLM), the Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA) and the National Council of Women of Madagascar known as Conseil National des Femmes de Madagascar (CNFM) are the main civil society actors working for the participation of women in Madagascar's political sphere.

In 2012, with the support of civil society, a first attempt of the Bill n° 3 2012 / PL, ref: V / L n° 093 CT / P / SG of October 26, 2012 on the quota, was presented to Parliament by a female deputy (MP), Lanto Rakotomanga. Despite the advocacy, this Bill was eventually not adopted for the following reasons: (i) tradition and custom in

²⁵ <https://www.lactualite.mg/resultat-election-2018/>
²⁶ <http://www.electionguide.org/elections/id/3187/>
²⁷ Excel file from CENI

certain regions of Madagascar (Great South, South-West and South-East), (ii) Parliament did not accept a quota system, (iii) gender was not discussed in political parties.

In a 2013 GLM organised a study-visit to Mauritius, with key stakeholders, including Lanto Rakotomanga to learn about how the country implemented their gender-neutral quota, which resulted in an almost four-fold increase of women's representation at local level. The lessons learned were: (i) The country should start with the implementation of the quota system in Local Government, (ii) The use of neutral language is important, the word "quota" is not contentious, the use of the expression "proportional representation of men and women" is more appropriate, (iii) Quotas should be accompanied capacitation measures for women including through training of women candidates.

In 2014, another attempt was made to present a Bill on the PR electoral system. The Ministry of Justice organised a consultative conference with the support of the Electoral Cycle Support Project in Madagascar (PACEM), the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the National Council of Women of Madagascar (CNFM) to draft a Bill. The Ministry of Justice failed to follow through on the initiative.

GLM has systematically conducted media campaigns on the importance of women's participation at all levels, through television, radio, print and social media. During these interventions, GLM explains the benefits that women bring if they are in a decision-making position and urges government to change Madagascar's electoral system to a PR system at both national and local level and to accompany this with a gender parity quota.

Ahead of the appointment on Senators in 2015, GLM conducted advocacy calling on the President, who nominates one third of all Senators, to appoint at least 50% of the women in his appointments. GLM with other Women's Rights Organisations put forward names of the women that the President could appoint. In 2019 the President appointed six women out of 21 (29%) as Senators.

Role of the media

The Constitution provides for freedom of opinion and expression, communication, of the media, of association, assembly, circulation, conscience and religion.



Interview, Paulbert, Parlement member.

Photo: Zotonantenaina RAZANADRATEFA

CENI is responsible for ensuring equitable share of airtime to candidates and parties during the electoral period, and especially on the campaign."²⁸

Radio remains the primary means of communication and more particularly, the national Malagasy Radio (RNM), which covers the whole island. Mass media is dominated by the state and prominent male owners of media rooms.

Gender and elections media monitoring of 16 newsrooms in Madagascar, from 14 November to 10 December 2019, shows that men dominated the news, especially TV and radio largely because they constitute the highest proportion of candidates. In the study, women made up only 21% of sources.

During the election monitoring period the ruling party candidate in Antananarivo urban council, which this round had no women candidates, questioned the competence of former Mayor, Lalao Ravalomanana. *La gazette* on 29 November 2019, called Mayor Lalao Ravalomanana incapable "l'équipe incompétente de Lalao Ravalomanana". In *La vérité*, on 7 December 2019, ran an article: "Time to report for Lalao Ravalomanana and Riana Randriamasinoro", demanding accountability for her Mayoral term.

In more positive coverage of women politicians, on 3 December 2019, just after the elections Nicole Veronique Rajerison, a national assembly candidate in the election, called for citizens to be calm until the publication of the official election results. On 5 December 2019, *Free news*, reported on the election of Hanta Rabearisoa to the Bongatsara rural council acknowledging all the people who elected her during the Local Government elections.

²⁸ Law 2018-008, article 110

Conclusions and recommendations

Women's participation in politics is one of the rights enshrined in international and regional Conventions, including the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, which calls for 50% women in public and private sectors. However, across the SADC region, participation is still far below parity at 28% in Parliament and 25% in Local Government. Madagascar lags even further behind with only 18% women in both Houses of Parliament and a mere 7% in Local Government, showing the need for concerted measures to be taken to increase women's representation in political decision-making. Some recommendations for the country are:

Electoral law reform: Review Madagascar's electoral system for the House of Assembly and the Local Government and change to a PR system with a legislated gender quota. The Constitution and the electoral law should be amended to require political parties to field 50% women candidates at both the national and Local Government levels.

Political Parties should set quotas for equal representation of women within their structures and should use the 'zebra' list system, and this should be systematically verified by the Ministry of the Interior.

Election Management Body: CENI

- Provide gender disaggregated data for candidates' list, voters, and results to evaluate women's participation.
- Advocate for legislative reforms that will ensure equal representation of men and women.

- Develop a Gender Policy to ensure that policies and practices of the Commission work to improve the status of women.
- Advocate for legislative reforms to address violence against women in elections.
- Ensure women are given positions on the Commission.

Media

- Review the communication code and include gender parity as a requirement.
- Balance and equalise views, especially for women candidates, sources and voters.
- Strengthen media houses' capacities on gender awareness and how to cover elections in a gender sensitive way.

Civil Society Organisations should work collaboratively to strengthen their monitoring and lobbying and advocacy roles, through:

- Increasing fundraising efforts for lobbying and advocating for the equal representation of men and women in politics.
- Beginning advocacy campaigns and lobbying for quotas and electoral reform well in advance of the 2024 elections.
- Building capacity of women candidates to campaign and take up political decision-making positions.
- Lobbying political parties to implement quotas within their parties.
- Raising the awareness of voters about the 50/50 campaign and the importance and benefits of electing women into political decision making.

²⁹ Article 12, SADC Protocol on Gender and Development
³⁰ <https://genderlinks.org.za/gender-links-community/sadc-gender-barometer-data-portal/gender-and-governance/> accessed 16/12/2019

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Gender Links Madagascar, Immeuble le Premium Workspace, rez-de-chaussée
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