



Civil society organisations

6



International Conference of Women Leaders 2020 in Burundi.

Credit: Conférence Internationale des Femmes Leaders - CIFL

KEY POINTS

- The study mapped 80 civil society organisations (CSOs), especially Women's Rights Organisations (WROs), that play a key role in advocating for WPP (see Annex 1).
- The main focus is lobbying and advocacy for electoral reform, capacity building and support for women politicians and monitoring the electoral process.
- Evidence from across Africa shows that advocacy efforts of women's organisations and networks have contributed to long-term positive social change, by increasing women's participation and fostering equality.
- Advocacy and lobbying tend to happen just before elections or when resources permit. There is a need for long term planning and resource mobilisation to ensure aspiring women politicians can be supported throughout the process.
- Nascent efforts to include men in WPP need to be strengthened.

Across Africa, civil society organisations, especially Women's Rights Organisations (WROs) have been the driving force behind 50/50 campaigns. According to a report of the UN Secretary-General on *Women's full and effective participation in decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls* for the Sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):

Women play an influential role in public life outside formal public institutions through their involvement in women's organisations and feminist movements, as well as in other civic engagement, including the media, labour unions and academia. Through those channels, women and gender equality advocates successfully promote legislation and mechanisms to advance gender equality and eliminate discriminatory laws against women. They play a critical role in requiring decision makers to be accountable for upholding the human rights of women and girls.¹

Through their advocacy and awareness raising campaigns, WRO sensitise citizens to gender gaps and create momentum for legislated and constitutional reforms. These groups also play an active role in building the capacity of prospective candidates, serve as gender, media and election watchdogs, and help to mediate conflict in some instances.

Vibrant CSOs continue to emerge, a signal that a wind of change is blowing from 'state-centric' big government to 'people-centred' governance.² CSOs play a significant role in keeping democratic processes alive and reinforcing good governance, especially by their involvement in human rights advocacy, electoral accountability, and transparency of governance.³ Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights; they are also imperative for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development.

Women's political participation (WPP) is central to these goals. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are among the most important institutions for promoting and nurturing such participation.⁴ In turn, 'good governance and good public administration are essential aspects of democracy, and for achieving democracy, a freely functioning, well organised, vibrant and responsible civil society is indispensable.'⁵ Democracy presupposes free elections, functioning political parties, independent media and active civil society that can operate freely.

Civil society is of course a broad term. It "refers to the space for collective action around shared interests, purposes and values, generally distinct from government and commercial for-profit actors. Civil society includes charities, development NGOs, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organisations, professional



Nathalie Zemo-Efoua at the headquarters of the Femme lève toi Network, in Libreville, Gabon. Photo: Jerry Bibang

¹ United Nations, *Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*, in preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) 2020. E/CN.6/2021/3. pp.9
² Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) African Governance Report II (2009) 132. The African Governance report has been acclaimed as the most comprehensive report on governance in Africa and it focuses on political and economic governance, human rights and the rule of law among other things <https://unp.un.org/Details.aspx?pid=19191>
³ Ibid
⁴ Ibid
⁵ United Nations, Guidance Note of the Secretary General on Democracy, UN Democracy Assistance Areas of UN Focus and Comparative advantage', issued by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on 11 September 2009.

associations, trade unions, social movements, coalitions and advocacy groups.”⁶ In this chapter, due to the limitations of time and resources, we focus mostly on registered non-governmental organisations, especially WROs. Expanding the research to civil society more broadly is important in future research.

This chapter maps these diverse groups of NGOs and WROs and their roles in promoting inclusive elections and monitoring WPP. Mindful that efforts to promote gender equality should also include men and engage male allies in constructing inclusive democratic principles and institutions⁷ the chapter also explores efforts being made by men-for-change NGOs. The chapter concludes with recommendations for strengthening civil society efforts.

NGOs promoting WPP in Africa

Desktop research done by Gender Links mapping African NGOs promoting women's political participation shows strong networks of NGOs/WROs advocating for women's political participation on the African continent. Full details

including region, country, website and areas of work are at Annex 1. This mapping is by no means exhaustive. Further information will be added as the partnership progresses.

Table 6.1: Gender Organisations in Africa working on Women's Political Participation

Organisation	No of organisations	Elections monitoring & observation	Lobbying / advocacy for policy & electoral reform	Capacity building	Men's orgs & movements
Africa- wide	9	3	9	9	1
Southern Africa	23	15	19	12	1
East Africa	21	7	21	19	0
West Africa	14	8	13	1	0
Horn of Africa	9	5	7	6	0
Central Africa	2		2	2	0
North Africa	2	0	2	0	
Total	80	38	73	49	2

Source: Gender Links 2020.

Table 6.1 shows that there are at least 80 NGOs working on WPP in Africa. Nine of these are Africa-wide. Others are either sub-regional or country-specific. The desk top internet research found the largest number of such organisations (23) in Southern Africa; followed by East Africa (21); West Africa(14); the Horn (9) and two each in Central and North Africa. While these figures are not exhaustive, they do suggest a correlation between higher levels of WPP and of NGOs working on WPP.

At continental level, the following organisations stand out: Abantu for Development, Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), Make Every Woman Count (MEWC), Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE), the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), the Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) and MenEngage Africa.

⁶ World Health Organisation Social Determinants of Health https://www.who.int/social_determinants/themes/civilsociety/en/ accessed 14 March 2021.

⁷ Ace Project, Civil society advocacy for gender equality in politics and inclusive participation in electoral process <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge9/default> accessed 13 March 2021

At sub-regional level, there is an array of regional, multi country and in-country structures. Regional networks are connected and work in close partnership with respective African Union Regional Economic Communities (RECs) concerning Africa's women's political agenda, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.



Getting the right message: Gender Links training workshop with women parliamentarians in Lesotho. Photo: Ntolo Lekau

In **Southern Africa**, the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance, a regional “network of networks” that championed the adoption of the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development (adopted in 2008) coordinates 15 WRO networks in each member country across the region. The Protocol is a sub-regional instrument for promoting gender equality that brings together global and African commitments in one binding instrument. Gender Links based in Johannesburg, with offices in ten Southern African countries, provides the secretariat for the Alliance. The Alliance includes several regional networks such as Women in Law Southern Africa (WLSA) with chapters in various countries. Since the adoption of the Protocol, the Alliance has produced an annual Barometer to track progress in achieving gender equality in the SADC region against the Protocol's targets⁸. Several organisations at national level promote women's political participation. These include the Women in Politics Support Unit (WIPSU) in Zimbabwe and the Zambia National Women's Lobby (ZNWL).

The **Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI)** works in eight countries: Burundi, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania. Founded in 1996 after the Beijing Conference, EASSI monitors Eastern African governments' commitments towards gender equality⁹. Based in Uganda, EASSI led the campaign for an East African Gender Equality Act, and launched the first Gender Barometer for the region in 2017. FEMNET, an African advocacy network that coordinates inputs by WRO into African and global agendas, is based in Nairobi. Well known national advocacy groups include the Federation of Women Lawyers - Kenya (FIDA Kenya); South Sudan Women General Association (SSWGA) Community Empowerment program organisation (CEPO); EVE Organisation; South Sudan Women Empowerment Network (SSWEN); Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP); Tanzania Media Women's Association (TAMWA); Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) Action for Development (ACFODE) and Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE).

The **West African Civil Society Forum (WACSOF)** is the umbrella network of CSOs from the 15 member states of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Sierra Leone has witnessed growth in the number of CSOs post the civil war. These CSOs have been part of the reconstruction process. WROs constitute about 6% of all CSOs in Sierra Leone.¹⁰ In Nigeria, civil society has helped to promote and advocate for free, fair and credible elections in Nigeria since 1999. There are strong CSOs founded by women and working towards promoting gender equality. They participate in the mobilisation of communities especially women during elections using methods such as focus groups. Women in Nigeria (WIN) is a political interest organisation aimed at transforming class and gender relations. Women in Law and Development (WILDAF) is an African network with a strong presence in Ghana.

⁸ Gender Links <<https://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/sadc-gender-protocol/about-the-alliance-2/>> accessed 13 March 2021
⁹ Eastern African Sub-Regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women <<https://eassi.org/>> accessed 13 March 2021
¹⁰ Oxfam, *Civil society engagement with political parties during elections: lessons from Ghana and Sierra Leone* (December 2013)

The **Horn of Africa** has the Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA). Established in 1995, SIHA is a regional network that undertakes research, capacity-building, sub-granting and advocacy on women's human rights. In conjunction with its membership, SIHA tackles gender-based violence, and the threats faced by women human rights defenders and aims to bring the voices and interests of poor and marginalised women to the mainstream peace and political agenda¹¹.

No regional movement was found through the desktop research for **Central Africa**. **North Africa** is represented by the Arab Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), working to support the efforts of Arab women to increase their participation in public life and the political process throughout North Africa and the Middle East region. AWLI offers training, networking and mentorship opportunities to advance women in leadership positions¹².

Lobbying and advocacy for policy and electoral reform

In many countries, WRO mount advocacy campaigns, to convince governments, EMBs and political parties of women's political and electoral rights including gender balance among candidates; decision-making positions in political parties, observers, election administrators and other actors. They advocate for legal reform and review of electoral procedures; promoting gender-sensitive media coverage of the electoral process; and strengthening the gender component in election observation.¹³ The following are examples of how WROs across Africa are lobbying for WPP.



In 2020, Gender Links **Zimbabwe** worked with the Zimbabwe Local Government Association (ZiLGA) and Women in Local Government Forum (WiLGF) to petition President Emmerson Mnangagwa to consider a quota for women in local government. In a landmark pronouncement, Mnangagwa signaled his support for a quota for women in local government following intense lobbying at the inaugural Women Councilors Indaba meeting held in Victoria Falls in December 2020. While Zimbabwe presently has a Constitutional quota for women at the national level, women in local government have repeatedly been excluded from these provisions, despite a

commitment in the 2013 Constitution to gender parity in all areas of political decision-making.

“You are advocating for an improvement in your representation at local government level. We fought for democracy and there was a lot of sacrifice by the girl child and boy child for us to achieve that democracy,” President Mnangagwa told the Women in Local Government Forum (WiLGF) meeting on 11 December 2020. “I am in agreement with you, and that is granted, and I will ask the Minister of Local Government to begin the process.”



Gender Links Zimbabwe worked with the Women in Local Government Forum to present their case to the President.
Photo: Tapiwa Zvaraya

Women comprise just 14% of councilors in Zimbabwe. This figure has declined by two percentage points each election since 2013, when

¹¹ Strategic Initiative for women in the Horn of Africa Network <www.sihanet.org> accessed 13 March 2021

¹² The Arab Women's Leadership Institute <http://ww7.arabwomenleadership.com/> accessed 13 March 2021

¹³ Ace Project, Civil society advocacy for gender equality in politics and inclusive participation in electoral process <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge9/women2019s-associations-advocating-for-gender> accessed 13 March 2021

women comprised 18% of the elected representatives in local government. While there is a quota for women at the national level that is due to expire in 2023, this does not apply at the local level. Women councilors argued that whatever arrangements pertain in 2023, they need to be extended to the local level.

Presenting the WiLGF submission, Councilor Idirashe Dongo, Deputy Chair of Murehwa Council, declared that “women's representation at the local level is critical for prioritising women's practical and development needs as well as localising the Sustainable Development Goals through policy decisions on education, primary healthcare, water and sanitation, transport and a host of other services.” She argued that: “Our key concern is the under-representation of women in local government in Zimbabwe. We are therefore requesting for the institution of temporary special measures to increase the proportion of women at the local level. Specifically, that women at the local level be given 30% proportional representation seats.”

The details of the quota will now be up to legal drafters guided by WiLGF and other activists in the 50/50 campaign. What is important is that the issue is now squarely on the political agenda, with enough time before the 2023 elections for the necessary amendments to be made. To keep up the pressure, the President urged that the Women Councilors Indaba become an annual event. Should Zimbabwe adopt a quota for women in local government, it will join several Southern African Development Community countries that have done so. These include Lesotho, Namibia, and Tanzania.

Women in Law Southern Africa - Zimbabwe has drafted a gendered model electoral framework to promote the principles of inclusiveness and gender equality as prescribed in the Constitution, and International and regional instruments that

Zimbabwe has signed and ratified. Action-oriented research to inform the drafting of the model law was done. The discussion paper considers an alternative gendered Model Electoral Law Framework for Zimbabwe with the intent of reinforcing an electoral system that facilitates the equal representation of women and men in line with the foundational principles, values and fundamental rights¹⁴ entrenched in the 2013 Constitution, as well as the relevant international law norms and standards relating to gender inequalities.



WLSA also successfully filed a Declaratory Application with the High Court of Zimbabwe in partnership with the Zimbabwe NGO Forum. The Declaratory Order sets out that the President of Zimbabwe violated Section 17 (1) (b) (ii), Sec 90 (1) and Sec 104 (4) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe and the Gender Commission failed in its duty to monitor issues concerning gender equality as provided in the Constitution. The application challenges the Zimbabwe Cabinet appointment to be unconstitutional because it does not meet the gender parity requirement. The President of Zimbabwe appointed five women Ministers and 18 men in his Cabinet and five Deputy Ministers women and 13 men. The Government has since filed its Opposing Affidavit, and the matter is still pending before the Court.

¹⁴ The Centre for Applied Legal Research, *Model Gendered Electoral Law Framework Discussion Paper* (WLSA and WLPE, 2020).

WLSA also raised awareness and sensitised women on the outstanding electoral reform in collaboration with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Zimbabwe Gender Commission. A total of 632 women attended the meetings. The key statutes discussed were Section 17, 56, 80 and Section 155 of Constitution, the Constitutional Amendment number 2 and the Electoral Act.



In **Madagascar**, the National Council of Women conducted an advocacy campaign ahead of the 2013 electoral process, reaching out to political party leaders. This initiative included meetings with political party leaders to encourage an increased representation of women in the candidate lists and engage the party into progressive policy positions favouring women's rights. In addition to these advocacy efforts, the National Council of Women, the Independent National Electoral Commission for the Transition (CENI-T) and UNDP hosted a high-level inter-party dialogue with presidential candidates addressing gender equality policies¹⁵. In 2021, Gender Links Madagascar and the SADC Gender Protocol Alliance network partner in Madagascar, the Fédération Pour la Promotion Féminine et Infantile (FPPE) began a campaign for a “zebra” list system - i.e. one woman, one man, at the local level, following a change of the electoral system to PR (see Chapter two).



In **Zambia**, Alliance focal point Zambia National Women's Lobby Group (ZNWL) has mobilised more than 1,000 women, since its establishment, who have vied for leadership positions at various decision-making levels, some have succeeded while others have failed. ZNWL has successfully lobbied political parties and Government to appoint women in key leadership and decision-making positions. Zambia now has a female vice president, and most of the political parties have appointed women to key leadership positions. The ZNWL is working with key

community leaders to support women's participation in leadership at all levels. These are traditional leaders and church leaders. Women in Law Southern Africa (Zambia) and Gender Links Zambia, working closely with the Zambia Law Reform Commission, have started a campaign for a quota to be included in the Constitution, presently under review. Zambia has a FPTP system at both local and national level.



Women activists in Mali took to the streets to protest non respect of legislated quota.
Credit: Abdoul Momini Boukoum



Civil society advocacy efforts in **Mali** resulted in a gender quota bill being passed in 2015, requiring at least 30% of elected or appointed officials to be women. In this advocacy work, civil society organisations joined forces with women legislators of the Network of Parliamentary Women and the Ministry on the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family. Male allies, especially parliamentarians, also played a key role in the adoption of the law¹⁶.



The African Women's Development and Communication Network

In November 2020, FEMNET joined government officials and other key gender advocates to discuss Kenya's non-implementation of the two-

¹⁵ Conseil National des Femmes de Madagascar <<https://cnfmadagascar.wordpress.com/2013/06/>>

¹⁶ NDI, *Mali adopts law promoting gender equity* <<https://www.ndi.org/mali-adopts-gender-quota-law>> accessed 13 March 2021

thirds gender quota (see Chapter two). The Nation Media Group hosted the televised National Leadership Forum - Gender Agenda. This followed advice from the Judiciary to the President to dissolve parliament for its failure to implement the two-thirds gender representation principle.¹⁷ FEMNET facilitates sharing of information, ideas, strategies and experiences amongst its members who are in over 40 countries across Africa and the Diaspora. It plays a critical role in informing and mobilising African women to participate and influence policies and processes that affect their lives. FEMNET convened the #WomenMustLead policy dialogues forum for the Nairobi County Assembly Women Caucus to enhance women political participation, champion solidarity, reconciliation and resource mobilisation strategies for their constituents.

FEMNET works with EMBs to ensure fairness, integrity, transparency and a level playing ground for both men and women vying for elective positions. Through partnerships with national Offices of Political Registrars, Political Parties, and the Independent Electoral Commissions in Kenya, DRC and Tanzania, FEMNET strengthens the capacities of EMBs on gender mainstreaming. FEMNET also advocates for adherence to the affirmative action clauses contained in national constitutions.



WROs in **Tanzania** have been at the forefront of advocacy efforts for the 50/50 gender parity in decision-making campaign. Some 56 WROs formed the Women, Constitution, Elections and Leadership Network ahead of the 2020 elections. Led by the Women Fund of Tanzania and the Tanzania Gender Networking Programme (TGNP), the women's organisations launched *Ilani Ya Uchaguzi Ya Wanawake* - the Women's Charter outlining losses, gains, and recommendations for the 2020 elections. During the 2014

constitution review process, several CSOs in Tanzania actively collected citizens' views, created public awareness, and monitored change.



In October 2020 in **Morocco** the collective Parity Now (Mounassafa Daba in Arabic), launched a vast civil initiative comprising women's and human rights organisations; leaders of political parties and unions; associations of civil society, academics, men and women in the media, artists and intellectuals advocating for the rights of women. They started a national petition for constitutional parity by 2030. At the time of going to publication, 12 000 signatures had been collected. Social media played a huge role in sensitising Moroccans to that cause.

Parity Now is a parallel community initiative sent to the House of Representatives citing Article 15 of the Constitution. This says that men and women citizens have the right to send their petitions to public authorities. In November 2020, Parity Now made further effort to get a framework law establishing parity between men and women in line with Article 19 of the Constitution. The objective of this law is to go from provisions for positive discrimination to substantive equality.

A White Paper aims to introduce amendments to make equality and parity between men and women a reality. A second White Paper will cover economic, social, environmental and cultural sectors. “We wish to establish parity by 2030 in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, provided that the forthcoming elections in 2021 mark the effective start of this progressive shift. While awaiting to reach the critical mass of 30% of women, we are forced to accept the mechanism of positive discrimination”, notes Ouafa Hajji. She adds that “we must encourage political parties to put more women as candidates, namely during local elections and to empower women.”

¹⁷ FEMNET, Q4 Report Enhancing Women's Political Participation in Africa

Capacity building and support for women candidates

There is no “school” for politics. Women and men in this field come from different walks of life, with different educational backgrounds, experience and skills. Most politicians learn on the job - whether in the campaign or in parliament. This is true for women and men. But because of women's position in society, the odds against them are much higher. Any mistakes they make are more likely to be amplified. In developing country contexts, they do not have researchers or support staff to help them prepare speeches and interventions.

On the other hand, WROs have many of these skills. They need women politicians to champion legislative reform on various fronts. This opens the possibility of a symbiotic relationship between politicians and activists. If well managed, this can yield win-win results. The examples that follow demonstrate how this is being achieved.



The Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) is a research institute based at the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, **Senegal**. The Gender and Scientific Research Laboratory in IFAN was established in 2004. IFAN's Gender and Scientific Research Laboratory conducts gender research, creating female politician caucuses that promote parity of women in politics. They produce tools that enable candidates (local level and national) to learn about their constituencies and what is expected of them on a specific seat. The gender laboratory creates an environment for female politicians to learn from research collected on how they can do more for women in their communities and countries, and aspire to be leaders and not just subordinates/supporters of political leaders who are usually men.



FAWE Forum for African Women Educationalists
Forum des éducatrices africaines

The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) was founded in 1992 by African women ministers of education upon the realisation that without putting measures to accelerate girls' education, no African country in Sub-Saharan Africa would be able to meet the 'Education for All' goals. It was registered as a pan-African NGO in 1993 in Nairobi, Kenya. FAWE Africa membership consists of prominent African women educationalists and researchers, serving female ministers and/or deputy ministers of education and female Vice-Chancellors of universities, education policymakers, and planners. FAWE has expanded across Sub-Saharan Africa, creating a network of 34 National Chapters in 33 countries of registered NGOs. FAWE is active in monitoring the implementation of the Maputo Protocol through a process of equipping national youth and women-led civil society organisations with skills to develop and disseminate scorecards on the Maputo Protocol Articles that relate to women's political participation.



**The African Women's
Development and
Communication Network**

FEMNET has made it priority to actively engage women in political leadership in policy dialogues, enhance their visibility, strengthen their leadership capacity, and link them for peer learnings with their sisters across Africa. Equally, FEMNET is working with women's rights and

grassroots organisations in enhancing awareness on full, effective and meaningful participation of women in political decision-making spaces through training, cross-generational, and peer to peer mentorships.



In **Nigeria**, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) provided women's rights groups and other civil society organisations

with training on election observation from a gender perspective in the 2015 general election. Participants discussed methodologies for collecting gender-disaggregated data and information gathering and analysis from a gender perspective during election observation.¹⁸ This training strategy allowed participants to strengthen their skills and improve their methodologies for election observation.

Nigeria ElectHER

Established in December 2020, ElectHER has strategically positioned itself as a force within the women political participation space. In only one year of existence, the organisation already played a pivotal role in changing the narrative and setting the context for increased female participation in Nigerian politics. The female leadership deficit in Africa remains a collative problem which largely hampers our development as a continent.

With its slogan **Decide * Run * Win**, ElectHER is on a mission to support 1000 women to run for office in 2023, through behavioural change communications, skills development, human capital mobilisation and the development of an endowment fund, with an end-goal to enable capable women competitively win elections.¹⁹

In its first year, ElectHER successfully embarked on a communications campaign towards organisational visibility and promotion. Through its initiative **ElectHER Webinar Series**, the organisation successfully employed social media to convene thought-leadership series geared towards building citizen consciousness, drive active engagement on issue surrounding women's political participation and leadership in Nigeria. The experiences of females in Nigerian politics was often left untold, this

spurred the need to create a safe place where women aspiring to run for office could easily share their experiences, led to the launch of the DecideToRun Community which can proudly boast of over 100 members.

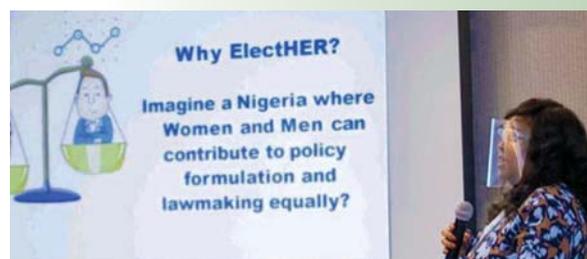


Photo: ElectHER

In October 2020, with the startling evidence of the under-representation of women in decision making at all levels- in political and public office at the Federal, State, and local government in Nigeria, ElectHER successfully hosted a **Consultative Forum** in Abuja Nigeria. The forum provided an opportunity for organisations playing a strategic role in the advancement of women's political representation and leadership in Nigeria to come together to forge a way forward. ElectHER is positioned as a thought leader and policy expert in the field of women's political participation, hence in December 2020, ElectHER received an invitation to present recommendations on the Electoral Act amendment, at the National Assembly.

¹⁸ UNDP Nigeria, Observing elections from a gender perspective; UNDP builds capacity for women CSOs (2015) <<https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/presscenter/articles/2015/02/03/observing-elections-from-a-gender-perspective-undp-builds-capacity-of-women-csos-.html>> accessed 13 March 2021

¹⁹ ElectHER <<https://www.ng.undp.org/content/nigeria/en/home/presscenter/articles/2015/02/03/observing-elections-from-a-gender-perspective-undp-builds-capacity-of-women-csos-.html>> accessed 13 March 2021

Through its capacity building institution, ElectHER Academy in June 2021 will be launching the first ever **ElectHER Future Lawmakers Programme** - a six month intensive legislative and leadership development programme for aspiring female lawmakers. The Academy will deliver on ElectHER mandate to develop a multidimensional empowerment model of capacity building that equips women with the requisite skills and knowledge to run for elective office competitively.

Agender 35 is scheduled for launch during the first quarter of 2021. The initiative aims to directly support 35 women candidates by 2023 through a US\$ 10 million fund. The initiative includes policy advocacy and legislative engagement on the implementation of 35% women's representation quota. The campaign will also engage in massive citizen and voter sensitisation on women's political leadership ahead of 2023 general elections.

Source: ElectHER Nigeria



WLSA Zimbabwe conducted the inaugural Transformative Feminist Leadership Winter School that brought together 40 participants from Bulawayo, Harare and Mashonaland East. The training focused on Transformative Feminist Leadership, including a wide range of topics: Political career development; Building and managing a campaign; Introduction to Public Service and Volunteerism; Negotiation and consensus-building skills; Non-violent campaign strategies; Constituency outreach and voter mobilisation strategies; Resilience building and social accountability; Public speaking and mastering the art of convincing audiences; Introduction to Feminism; Etiquette and Confidence building.

Women who are already active leaders received refresher training in leadership development and mentoring. These were intergenerational meetings that provided a platform for younger women to be connected with a mentor for continued mentoring and support. WLSA engaged a total of 200 women who are already actively involved in politics and leadership at various community levels. The women were trained on leadership skills, effective communication skills, confidence and assertiveness skills, and mentorship.



In **Madagascar**, in the lead-up to the 2013 legislative election, UNDP organised a series of seven training workshops for women candidates, in partnership with the Independent National Commission for the Transition (CENI-T) and the Federation of Women in Politics in the Indian Ocean. A total of 140 women candidates participated in these workshops, which covered gender and elections, electoral legal framework, communication, and media²⁰.



In **Sudan**, UNDP administered over US\$1.2 million worth of small grants to 41 CSOs in 2009. The grantees were trained on voter education methodology for the registration process, including outreach to women²¹.



In **South Sudan**, UN Women, in partnership with the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) Elections Team Gender Unit, supported training of trainers in all 79 counties of South Sudan around the registration process. "You must register" posters and a civic education guide were widely distributed²².

²⁰ UNDP, *Atelier de renforcement des capacités des femmes candidates aux élections législatives sur le cadre juridique et les médias*, (2013) <<http://www.mg.undp.org/content/madagascar/fr/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2013/11/20/atelier-de-renforcement-des-capacit-s-des-femmes-candidates-aux-lections-l-gislatives-sur-le-cadre-juridique-et-les-m-dias.html>> accessed 13 March 2021

²¹ UNDP and UN Women (2016): op. cit., p. 62.

²² Ibid

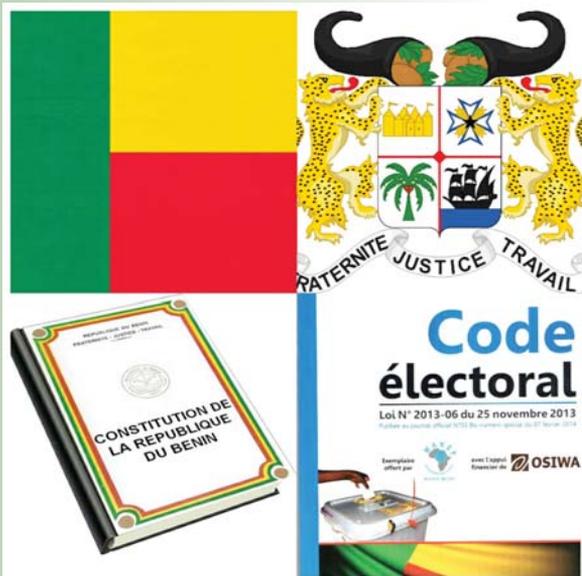


In **Burundi**, the “Vote and Be Elected” campaign trained almost 260 women to work around the country and educate other women about registration and voting and to support female candidates to develop their campaigns²³.

In a number of countries, EMBs and civil society groups have launched civic and voter education campaigns to educate voters and the general public on the importance of LGBTI rights and motivate this community's participation in electoral process. In some cases, civic and voter

education campaigns aimed at providing citizens with information on the candidates' positions on LGBTI rights, holding candidates accountable before their electorate and helping voters make an informed choice. Some civic and voter education campaigns are specifically addressed to LGBTI persons to motivate their participation as voters. In the case of campaigns especially addressed to transgender and gender non-conforming people, key messages often deal with ID requirements and procedures to facilitate the identification process in polling stations.

CSOs in Bénin organise to include women more in the electoral process



The Constitution and the Electoral Code of Benin are favorable to gender equality.
Credit: Isabelle Otchoumare

Women's political participation is still problematic in Bénin where women are underrepresented in all areas of decision-making. Women comprise 20% of President Patrice Talon's cabinet, 8% of parliamentarians and 4% of councillors and of mayors. According to the president of the Network Peace and

Security for the Women CEDEAO Benin branch (REPSFECO-Bénin) Blandine Sintondji Yaya: “The consultations with civil society never concern women's organisations. Nobody has consulted us except the Mediator of the Republic who came to visit the Electoral platform of the CSO.”

For Mariette Montcho, the president of the West African Network of Young Women Leaders, Bénin section (ROAJELF-Bénin), this situation is frustrating. “Women's organisations fight daily for parity and women's representation. Are they heard? When we look at the statistics in terms of women's participation in decision making instances, my answer is no. We are not heard. The women's structures and organizations are not really consulted”.

Nonetheless, women's organisations work to build the capacity of new and existing candidates. These sessions cover how to organise an electoral campaign, how to speak in public, plan an electoral campaign and budget.

²³ Ace Project, Male allies and social norm change in politics and elections: building transformative masculinities < <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge9/male-allies-and-social-norm-change-in-politics-and> accessed 21 March 2021

In 2009 WROs formed a platform (Pfid-Bénin) to enhance synergy. This platform aims to “build synergy in view of increasing women's participation in the decision-making processes, to develop advocacy campaigns and mobilization of human and financial resources. The final aim is to ensure the judicious presence of women in all decision-making positions and to build the capacity of networks and associations within the platform”.



Fatoumatou Batoko-Zossou,
Head of Electoral Platform
of CSOs, Benin.
Photo: Isabelle Otchoumaré

Fatoumatou Batoko-Zossou, president of the Electoral Platform of the Civil Society Organisations in Bénin, and a founder member of West African Network for the Edification of Peace in Bénin (WANFP-Bénin), explains that this programme “makes the promotion of young women's participation in the political life of their country. In this respect, capacity building sessions, advocacy and information meetings are organized to encourage political parties to open up to women in Bénin”.

This platform is committed to assist “from beginning to end”, the effective participation of women in electoral processes. Batoko-Zossou, its manager, explains that: “we make recommendations to the National Autonomous Electoral Commission (CENA) at the end of each

election with the aim of improving women's participation”.

After each election, some CSOs conduct a gender audit, explains Montcho, “The last audit concerned the legislative elections. Social Watch has developed an equality charter on politics in Bénin in which the statistics on the numbers of women and men mayors and councilors are compared”. For the legislative elections, the working group Women, Youth, Peace and Security whose focal point is REPSFECO-Bénin, did an evaluation on women and young people in the electoral process. “The report is already available and it highlights that women participate more and more in the electoral processes as agents in the polling stations and in the technical survey room of CSOs”, explains Batoko-Zossou. She adds that media players regularly organise roundtables where gender is the main subject of the debate.

Sintondji Yaya says that “in spite of all the actions that we take, all the media hype, the buzz, things do not really change. I really think we need a law for sure to overturn this situation. In countries where laws have been passed, women's political participation has improved. I am thinking about Rwanda where women outnumber men now. The solution is to enact a law. Bénin needs a law on quota or on outright parity”.

Case study by Isabelle Otchoumaré

Gender and election monitoring

Election observation can contribute to democratic development by collecting information on the electoral process, assessing its quality, considering the domestic legal framework and international standards, and constructive recommendations to improve future elections.²⁴

Election monitoring and observation 'can be instrumental in deterring fraud and malpractice by exposing those problems if they occur, as well as in increasing the credibility of the process by building trust among relevant stakeholders'²⁵. In October 2020, leading NGOs in **Tanzania** wrote

²⁴ Ace Project, Enhancing a gender approach in election observation and monitoring <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge6/developing-a-gender-approach-in-international-and> accessed 13 March 2021

²⁵ Ibid

to the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to seek reasons for their disqualification from observing the 2020 Tanzania General Election. Institutions left out included the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC), Tanzania Constitution Forum (TCF), the Tanzania Human Rights Defenders Coalition (THRDC) and the Tanzania Election Monitoring Committee (Temco).²⁶



Gender Links staff observing elections in the 2019 Mozambique. Photo: Graca Ricardo

Over the last decades, election observation has evolved to integrate a long-term perspective instead of focusing exclusively on election day operations and procedures. There is increasing consensus that election observation should consider the election day and other key stages of the electoral process, such as the legal framework, voter registration, the verification of results or election complaints, among others.



The Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa (EISA) is an NGO that evolved from an election-focused NGO working in the Southern Africa sub-region, into a more diversified organisation working on broader governance issues throughout the African continent. The Institute works with national, regional, Pan-African and global partners.

Its work extends beyond electoral support to include other democracy and governance fields such as political party support, legislative strengthening and civil society engagement of the African Peer Review Mechanism and other political processes such as constitution-making processes. EISA has current and past field offices in Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Egypt, Gabon, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mozambique, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Since the establishment of EISA in 1996, the Institute has supported and/or observed over 100 electoral and political processes in Africa.²⁷ EISA has increasingly sought to mainstream gender in its work.



In Southern Africa, Gender Links has conducted gender audits, including media monitoring of several Southern African in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, Madagascar,

Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia and Tanzania. Gender and media monitoring aims at bridging the gaps between women politicians and the media, “bringing them together to deliberate on the gendered nature of elections coverage.”²⁸ Gender Links has devised a holistic approach to gender and elections capacity building and monitoring that includes:

- Gender audits of elections.
- Capacity building for women aspirants and candidates on campaigning and using media (mainstream, new media and traditional media).
- Gender and elections training for the mainstream media.
- Gender and elections monitoring training for civil society.
- Gender and elections media monitoring for media students.

²⁶ The Citizen, 'NGOs excluded from observer list to contest decision', 19 July 2020 <<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/--NGOs-excluded-from-election-observer-list-to-contest-decision/1840340-5595626-56ck11/index.html>> accessed 13 March 2021

²⁷ Ace Project, Electoral Institute for Sustainable Democracy in Africa <<https://www.aceproject.org/about-en/full-partners/EISA#--:text=Electoral%20Institute%20for%20Sustainable%20Democracy%20in%20Africa%20%28EISA%29,on%20broader%20governance%20issues%20throughout%20the%20African%20continent>> accessed 21 March 2021

²⁸ Gender Links, Gender media and elections <<http://genderlinks.org.za/what-we-do/media/training/thematic-training/gender-media-and-elections/>> accessed 13 March 2021

- Conducting comprehensive gender audits of elections that draw on all the above components.



Several women's rights organizations are members of the **Zimbabwe** Electoral Support Network (ZESN) that represents domestic observers during elections. The ZESN produced a consolidated set of recommendations on the 2018 elections. Gender was mainstreamed into these recommendations. For example:

- The need to develop strong legal mechanisms to encourage and support women's adoption as candidates and to ensure gender parity in political and decision-making positions in line with the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.
- Several recommendations related to quotas for women. The AU and Commonwealth recommended moving from reserved PR seats to reserved candidacy seats for women in the FPTP elections, similar to Uganda. The Commonwealth Observer Group recommended that the new parliament should negotiate the quotas prescribed for women under Section 124 of the 2013 Constitution before its expiration in 2023. The ZESN recommended that Zimbabwe “Institute appropriate provisions in electoral law that makes it mandatory for parties to observe quotas for women.”

In May 2019, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission convened a “Great Debate” to reflect on the outcomes of the 2018 elections. This brought together representatives of the Chapter 12 institutions, civil society, political party representatives and other key gender and elections stakeholders. This debate examined several electoral systems and quotas scenarios to ensure that Zimbabwe rises above minimum standards in 2023.



In the 2013 electoral process in **Madagascar**, the Independent National Electoral Commission for the Transition (CENI-T) organised a series of three-day workshops for journalists, in partnership with UNDP, UNESCO, Médias en Action pour la Formation (MAF) and the National News Agency (ANTA). This initiative's main goal was to “deepen the professional and ethical skills of journalists from the written press, radio and television”. Three workshops were held across the country, in Antsirabe, Mahajanga and Fianarantsoa. The training sessions covered the topics of media ethics, the role of media in the electoral process, conflict prevention and gender, media and elections.²⁹



In 2016, **Ugandan** CSOs launched the Citizens Election Observers Network - Uganda (CEON-U) to monitor Uganda's 2016 General Elections. This was a collaborative effort of 15 CSOs working together with the Uganda Electoral Commission supported by international organisations such as National Democratic Institute (NDI), the European Union (EU) and USAID. Some of CEON-U mandates included voter registration, voter education, media monitoring, women's participation, participation of persons with disabilities, security and human rights defenders.³⁰ The Women's Democracy Group (WDG) published a gender audit of the 2016 elections and provided recommendations on how to increase women's participation in Uganda. The WDG is a coalition of five women civil society organisations that include Action for Development (ACFODE), Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO), Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter (WDN-U). WDG is coordinated by Uganda Women's Network. The WDN-U working with

²⁹ UNESCO, Media in conflict and post conflict situation <<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/freedom-of-expression/dialogue-for-peace/media-in-conflict-and-post-conflict-situation-and-countries-in-transition/media-and-election-coverage/africa/>> accessed 13 March 2021

³⁰ Democratic Governance Facility, *Civil Society Launches Effort to Monitor Uganda's 2016 General Elections* (2016) <<https://www.dgf.ug/news/civil-society-launches-effort-monitor-uganda%E2%80%99s-2016-general-elections-0>> accessed 13 March 2021

International Idea published a report entitled: “Early warning signs for Violence in Uganda's 2021 Elections and Structures and Strategies for Mitigation.”



In **Ethiopia**, the right to freedom of association is recognised under Article 31 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. It provides that: “Every person has the right to freedom of association for any cause or purpose. Organisations formed, in violation of appropriate laws, or illegally subvert the constitutional order, or which promote such activities is prohibited.” The involvement of Ethiopian community and non-governmental organisations in good governance, democracy, human rights and peace building is a comparatively recent development, consistent with maturing democratic practise.

In the 2015 elections, 35 civil society Organisations formed an election monitoring network called the Organisation for Social Justice in Ethiopia (OSJE). With the support of the UNDP co-ordinated Election Support Project of the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), which provided awareness-raising training to over 600 domestic election observers drawn from CSOs licensed by NEBE to observe the fifth general election. The participants included representatives of the Consortium of Ethiopian Civil Societies for Election Observation (CECSEO); Professional Associations/Federations of Teachers, Employers, and Trade Unions and Youth and Women Mass-based Organisations (MBOs).



In the 2014 legislative and presidential elections in **Tunisia**, civil society launched a gender and election observer mission to assess women's participation in the electoral process. This focused on voter education, media coverage, election day procedures, training and support for elected women.

This initiative included the Tunisian League for the Defence of Human Rights (Ligue Tunisienne de Défense des Droits de l'Homme), the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates) and the Association of Tunisian Women for Development Research (Association des Femmes Tunisiennes por la Recherche sur le Développement), in collaboration with Gender Concerns International.

The mission deployed ten international election observers and 100 domestic observers in polling centres across the country, especially in rural areas. The recommendations contained in its final report include strengthening registration campaigns for women voters, particularly in rural areas, publishing sex-disaggregated data and statistics, establishing effective procedures to ensure equity in media coverage for all candidates, as well as developing voter education and information programs specifically targeting young, illiterate or rural women.³¹

The Arab Working Group for Media Monitoring carried out gender and media monitoring in partnership with the Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates) and other NGOs. The monitoring found that women candidates only received 7% coverage in print media, 8% in radio and 11% in television³².

³¹ Gender Concerns International, Rapport Final de la Mission d'Observation des Élections Basée sur l'Approche Genre, Tunisie 2014 (2015)

³² Amirouche, N., Couverture électorale sensible au genre: vers l'égalité dans l'espace public”, in Femmes et médias au Maghreb. Revue d'analyse n° 7 (2014)

Engaging Men and Boys

Men and women worldwide, both individually and organised into groups, have started to challenge well-established notions of patriarchal masculinities, promoting a deep positive transformation of social attitudes and norms. However, “in moving forward with efforts that engage men and boys, it is important to remember that change is not easy to achieve, particularly because challenging men's notions of masculinity may in some ways be akin to challenging their notions of self.”³³

In the last few years, “there has been a strategic shift in emphasis [...] from women's issues to those concerning gender equality, in which the focus has moved from women exclusively to both men and women and mutually beneficial social and economic development.”³⁴ This evolving approach is partly due to the realisation that, to

be effective, efforts to promote gender equality should also include men in the conversation, engaging male allies in the construction of inclusive democratic systems.



Men from Murehwa training men in Epworth on supporting women's political participation.
Photo: WLSA Zimbabwe

“Men are now conscious of Gender equality and have to support women in politics and decision making. WLSA sensitised 585 men, of the total number 100 men were Traditional leaders. The groups were intergenerational and included a participant with a disability. This composition was important in that it managed to cut across all perceived barriers in the different age groups, different educational backgrounds and different social circumstances.”

WLSA Zimbabwe

Male parliamentarians and political leaders can become strategic allies and powerful advocates for gender equality, contributing to open the political space for women. In contexts of weak representation of women in the decision-making process, men sitting at the table can tip the scales in favour of women's rights and promote a gender equality agenda with the adoption of relevant legislation. Furthermore, educating the public, and especially young men and women, on the importance of equality and women's political and

social inclusion can promote positive social change in the long run, transforming social attitudes and mentalities.



The International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) has developed the training module Male Allies for Leadership Equality (MALE) to sensitise women and men on the importance of working

³³ Men Engage, UN Women and UNFPA, *Men, Masculinities and Changing Power: A Discussion Paper on Engaging Men in Gender Equality From Beijing 1995 to 2015* <<https://www.unfpa.org/es/node/9655>> accessed 21 March 2021

³⁴ Palmieri, S., *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice*, (Inter-Parliamentary Union 2011) pp. 61

together to achieve gender equality and supporting broad coalitions to advocate for more inclusive electoral processes. The MALE module was created through focus group discussions in Syria and Nigeria³⁵. Since then, IFES has organised MALE workshops in different countries, including Libya, Haiti, Ukraine, and Libya³⁶.



International Gender Champions is “a leadership network that brings together female and male decision-makers determined to break down gender barriers and make gender equality a working reality in their spheres of influence.” The network is formed by over 200 Gender Champions and Alumni, who are heads of international organisations, permanent missions and civil society organisations. All Gender Champions sign a pledge to no longer sit in single-sex panels and commit to treat every person with respect and fairness, value diversity, create and maintain safe workplaces and work together with other Champions in a spirit of openness, honesty and transparency³⁷.

UN Women's HeForShe campaign “invites men and people of all genders to stand in solidarity with women to create a bold, visible and united force for gender equality.”³⁸ In 2016, the Southern African Development Community - Parliamentary Forum (SADC-PF) Vice President and several National Parliament Speakers from the region signed up as HeForShe Champions for Gender Equality.³⁹



Padare/Enkundleni Men's Forum on Gender (Padare) is an organisation that works with men and boys for a just society.



A movement of men advocating for Gender justice in Zimbabwe. Founded in 1995 as a platform to identify, capacitate and support men and boys who believe in gender equality and to mobilize and influence other men. It seeks to create safe spaces for men and boys to redefine masculinities through a self-introspection processes in a safe space where they are not judged. This platform brings together men with same beliefs and willingness to change and embrace transformative masculinities.

Padare's engages men from all political backgrounds, and community leaders who have a role in addressing women's political participation from cultural or faith perspectives. Padare also engages male students from higher learning institutions to influence students' union's election processes, support young women's participation, and further speak out against GBV and SGBV in politics and elections within their institutions.

Strategies and approaches used by Padare in Zimbabwe, Kenya, Botswana and Tanzania include dialogues, capacity building and production of knowledge materials such as situation analyses and policy briefs. Padare realises that it is more impactful to engage men to debunk and begin to identify and challenge some harmful practices by using other men to discuss and hold dialogues on women's political participation issues.

This strategy for men by men is one Padare has tried, tested, and used to mobilise a critical mass of men by targeting male political party actors, male Members of Parliament, male traditional

³⁵ IFES, *Male Allies for Leadership Equality: Learning from Nigeria's Experience*, (IFES, 2016) < <https://www.ifes.org/news/male-allies-leadership-equality-learning-nigerias-experience> > accessed 13 March 2021

³⁶ IFES, *Bridging Perspectives: Engaging Male Allies for Gender Equality and Women's Leadership* (IFES, 2018) < <https://www.ifes.org/news/bridging-perspectives-engaging-male-allies-gender-equality-and-womens-leadership> > accessed 13 March 2021

³⁷ International Gender Champions < <https://genderchampions.com/> > accessed 13 March 2021

³⁸ HeForShe < <http://www.heforshe.org/> > accessed 13 March 2021

³⁹ UN Women, *HeForShe gains momentum in the SADC region* < <http://africa.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2016/04/heforshe-gains-momentum> > accessed 13 March 2021

and faith leaders, male students from tertiary institutions, and men the communities. The idea behind engaging men in politics and communities is to address the negative social norms that are rife in every African country. The engagements lead to consciousness of men to the realities

of what women candidates, and aspiring ones, face. Gender champions are identified, and their capacities built on how they can support women politicians and those who might want to be candidates.

Conclusions and recommendations

CSO actors play a key strategic role in building the case for gender aware electoral processes. This chapter has illustrated that the women's rights CSO sector is vibrant in Africa and there are inspiring examples from across the continent which show the power of women's organising. Recommendations to civil society:

Networking and alliance building

- Forge regional and sub-regional alliances and networks with CSOs for collective advocacy at the continental level.
- Conduct study and exposure visits between countries bringing on board government officials to share lessons learned and develop in-country strategies to increase women's participation in political processes.
- Engage with men and boys organisations and movements as key partners and allies in the fights for gender equality in all electoral process and to challenge the belief that this is just 'woman's issue'.

Documenting and telling Herstory

- Up to date research and documenting her story is essential to grow the body of literature about women's struggles and successes, and the difference they make to political decision-making.

Targeted 50/50 campaigns well ahead of elections

- Each country has a different context and while there are common general principles, each campaign should be tailor made for each country.

- 50/50 campaign strategies should be informed by evidence-based research, such as the Africa Barometer, drawing lessons from what has worked in countries that have adopted quotas and undergone electoral reform which have resulted in increased representation of women in all areas of political decision-making.
- CSOs need to be more responsive and seize advocacy and lobbying opportunities as they arise to push the 50%/50% agenda.
- Link 50/50 campaigns with SDGs to ensure that politicians relate the 50/50 effort and advocacy with the SDGs and Beijing +25 - "If you want to reach the SDGs let us in!!"
- It is essential that campaigns begin well ahead of elections to ensure enough time for campaigns to be effective and yield results.

Capacity building for CSOs

- WROs should work together to build the capacity of CSOs in effective organizing.

Ongoing support to women candidates

- Support for women candidates should not end with the election - women politicians need support from WROs throughout the electoral process as well as when they take office.
- Support women politicians to engage with their political parties to get nominated and to make changes within their own political parties to be more gender aware and responsive.
- Conduct capacity building with women political wings.
- Provide technical support on electoral reform and policy change.

- Support candidates by encouraging them to engage in the women's movement.
- Encourage women politicians to support other women when they come to power.
- Hold women politicians accountable for promoting increased representation of women in decision-making and other women's rights issues.

Election monitoring

- Reflect and take stock of what they have been doing in this area and identify where they can add value.
- Strengthen their capacity and role in this area and raise more funding to support this process.
- Provide EMBs gender expertise to ensure the entire electoral process is gender sensitive.

- The monitoring should not be separate for women rather it should be part of the broader agenda.
- Monitoring should be a threefold exercise:
 - 1) Gender audit of elections and shadow reports;
 - 2) Capacity building; and
 - 3) Organize debates post-elections on the electoral gender audit itself in order to make the agenda central.

Recommendations to donors:

- Provide sustained financial support throughout the electoral process so that CSOs can continue to influence the electoral cycle past election day.



Speaking truth to power: Widows at an empowerment session during the International Day of the Widows at the Palace of the 15th January in N'Djamena, Chad, 21 December 2019.

Photo: Joseph Domboro