

Women's Political Participation (WPP) Checklist



1. Normative frameworks

- ✓ What international, regional and sub-regional instruments and protocols on women's political participation has the country ratified?
- ✓ What provisions do these make for women's representation and effective participation in the political process?
- ✓ Have these instruments and protocols been domesticated?

2. Women's representation in politics

- ✓ How many and what percentage of women were elected a) in the lower house; b) in the upper house if this exists; and c) in total?
- ✓ If the elections included local government, how many and what percentage of women councillors were elected?
- ✓ How do these figures compare to the last election? Has there been an increase or decrease in the percentage of women? If so, why?
- ✓ Are there differences in the proportion of women's representation in the different tiers of governance? If so, why?
- ✓ How do the figures break down by political party? Has there been an increase or decrease for each political party? If so, why?
- ✓ What proportion of women were re-elected, i.e what is the retention rate? How does the retention rate compare to that of men?
- ✓ Do the parties accept the election outcome? If not are any of the seats won by women contested in court or through other means? What is the outcome of this?

3. Structural barriers to Women's Political Participation

- ✓ What are the key barriers preventing women from participating in politics? For example, traditional and cultural barriers, lack of education, lack of adequate financing, violence (and especially gender-based violence). Please give examples.
- ✓ What factors facilitate women's effective representation and participation?
- ✓ Specifically what role do traditional authorities play in facilitating or inhibiting women's political participation?
- ✓ What particular challenges do young women face?

4. Electoral systems and Temporary Special Measures

Constitution, National laws and Policies on Gender

- ✓ Does the national Constitution explicitly promote gender equality?
- ✓ Is there a conflict or potential conflict between customary and or religious laws and the Constitution? If so, does the Constitution state that statutory laws take precedence, especially with regard to women's rights?
- ✓ Is gender equality reflected in the Constitution as a central feature of democratic citizenship?
- ✓ Does the Constitution provide for affirmative action for women in political decision-making in all areas and at all levels?
- ✓ Does the Constitution allow for independent candidates?

- ✓ Does the Constitution provide for independent body/bodies to promote gender equality? What role do these play in the conduct of elections?
- ✓ Has the country adopted a National Gender Policy? How effective has this been in mainstreaming gender?
- ✓ Does the National Gender Policy include targets, time frames, and a strategy for attaining gender parity in political decision-making?
- ✓ Does the electoral law/code provide men and women equal rights to participate in the electoral process; for example, the right to vote, to stand for public office, to choose a political party, to access information on registration, campaign, and associate freely?
- ✓ Does the electoral system in the country help to enhance women's representation in political decision-making?¹
- ✓ Are there special measures to enhance women's political participation? For example, constitutional or legislated quotas; safe constituencies; reducing and/or waiving nomination fees; voluntary party list quotas; mandated party list quotas and double-member constituencies; quotas for executive appointees (where these exist)?
- ✓ Does the election act prohibit sexual harassment and gender violence in all areas of elections?
- ✓ Is there a mechanism to enforce such provisions? How effectively has it been applied?
- ✓ Does the election act list gender discrimination as one of the grounds for contesting an election result? Has this been tested?

5. Political parties

Commitment, codes and party statutes

- ✓ Is there a commitment to gender equality on the part of political parties? How and where is this reflected?
- ✓ Have the parties set norms and standards for promoting gender equality?
- ✓ Has gender been mainstreamed in the constitution, manifesto, policies and structures of each political party?
- ✓ To what extent do the procedures for the selection of candidates for decision-making within the party enhance or hinder gender balance and sensitivity?
- ✓ Do the political parties offer gender awareness training for all cadres?
- ✓ Do the political parties offer capacity building, mentorship and other initiatives to enhance the political empowerment of women?
- ✓ Do political parties have codes of conduct on or that include firm measures to address sexual harassment/gender violence in all party, political and election conduct? To what extent have these been effectively implemented?
- ✓ How do parties work to ensure peaceful elections, including the absence of gender violence?

Women in political parties

- ✓ Is the right of women to join, or together with others to establish, a political party for purposes of competing in an election respected?
- ✓ Does the election act oblige political parties to take measures to enhance gender equality?
- ✓ Have the parties themselves instituted special measures to enhance gender parity in all their structures, at all levels? For example, does the party have quotas for women's participation within the party?
- ✓ Out of the top six positions, how many are held by women?
- ✓ To the extent that women are missing from decision-making in the party, what is being done to redress this imbalance?

¹ Research shows that there is a much higher representation of women in Proportional Representation (PR) electoral systems than in the First Past the Post (FPTP) system. Mixed electoral systems are also more favourable for women than the FPTP system.

Women's wings

- ✓ Do the parties have women's wings? How effective are these in promoting gender equality within the parties?
- ✓ How has the women's wing they supported women in electoral process? e.g. providing mentoring, sponsorship and training for women in politics?
- ✓ How free are women in the party to take a stand on women's rights, especially where these may be contrary to party positions?

Selection of candidates

- ✓ Are women involved in the processes to select candidates for the party (for specific seats in the case of FPTP, and position on the lists, in the case of the PR system)?
- ✓ Is the right of women citizens to present themselves as candidates for election respected?

Women candidates

- ✓ How many women and men ran for office for each party?
- ✓ How does this compare with the last election? How is the variance explained?
- ✓ If this is a FPTP system, what percentage of women were fielded in safe seats for the parties? In a list system, where are women candidates situated on the lists?
- ✓ What proportion of the women candidates are new, and how does this compare with the proportion of new male candidates?
- ✓ How many women are running as independent candidates? Is this more or less than before? Why?
- ✓ Are there any women candidates for the post of Prime Minister or President? Are they treated equally (by the media, public opinion, the EMB etc)?

6. Electoral Management

- ✓ Does the election act or law that establishes the independent electoral body or structure provide for equal representation of women and men at all positions and at all levels within the organisation?
- ✓ Is the EMB committed to gender mainstreaming? Where and how is the reflected?
- ✓ Does the EMB have a balance of women and men commissioners? If not what measures have been taken to address this consistent with the appointment procedures in the country? For example, are there data bases of potential women commissioners?
- ✓ Does the EMB have a balance of women and men officials at all levels? If not what measures have been taken to address this? For example, how are positions for the EMB advertised? Are women encouraged to apply?
- ✓ How are EMBs supporting women candidates? e.g. reducing and/or waiving nomination fees?
- ✓ Has the EMBs engaged in gender targeted interventions?
- ✓ Does the EMB collect sex-disaggregated data in all parts of the electoral process?
- ✓ Is this information routinely analysed and used to take corrective action?
- ✓ Does the GMB ensure gender aware training for the administration of an election?
- ✓ Is gender taken into account in election monitoring, before, after and during?
- ✓ Are gender indicators written into the KPIs for elections? Are these analysed and commented on?
- ✓ To what extent does EMBs reporting reflect this gendered analysis of the elections?

Voter rights

- ✓ Are women citizens able to express political opinions without interference otherwise than as reasonably permitted by law?
- ✓ Do all citizens, women and men have the right to receive and impart information and to make an informed electoral choice?

- ✓ Is the right to freedom of association, assembly and movement for women and men equally respected, other than as reasonably permitted by law?
- ✓ Do citizens have the right to vote for a political party which has a record of addressing issues which affect women?
- ✓ Are citizens inhibited in any way from voting for a political party which has women in leadership positions?
- ✓ Is the right of every citizen to be eligible as a voter, subject only to disqualification in accordance with criteria established by law that are objectively verifiable, respected for all women and men?
- ✓ Is there provision of information about the polling process; venues, times, etc. in languages and formats accessible to all women and men, especially in remote rural areas?
- ✓ Is the right to vote in secret strictly observed for women and men?
- ✓ Are voting stations equally and easily accessible to women and men?
- ✓ Are all voting stations safe, including safe from gender violence of any kind?

Voter registration

- ✓ Do voter registration procedures affirm the right of women citizens to an effective, impartial and non-discriminatory procedure for registration of voters?
- ✓ Is information on voter registration (dates, timing centres) made a minimum of three months in advance, in languages, formats and media (e.g. radio) that are equally accessible and non-discriminatory to women and men?
- ✓ Do the times for registration take account of the multiple roles of women and are they flexible enough to allow either early or late times for registration?
- ✓ Does the registration take place in safe and easily accessible venues?
- ✓ Do the procedures cater for all levels of literacy and illiteracy, including functional illiteracy?
- ✓ Do voter registration procedures set efficiency standards and are these adhered to, mindful of the multiple roles women play, and the opportunity cost for them of spending long hours in queues?
- ✓ Are there clear criteria for the registration of voters such as age, identification and citizenship and are these fair to men and women?
- ✓ Is every eligible citizen, woman and man, registered as a voter, subject only to disqualification in accordance with criteria established by law that are objectively verifiable and not subject to arbitrary decision?
- ✓ Is the right of the individual to prompt, effective review or correction of procedures when voter rights are negatively affected by an action or omission of the state or its officials adhered to?

Voter education

- ✓ How gender-aware are voter education materials? Do they reflect and depict all relevant aspects of diversity (such as race, ethnicity, disability, urban/rural divides)?
- ✓ Are there voter education programmes specifically targeted at women? Do these reflect the particular needs and concerns of women?
- ✓ Do women access and participate in voter education programmes?
- ✓ Does the electorate become familiar with gender equality as central to electoral issues and procedures through national programmes of civic and voter education?
- ✓ Do voter education programmes explain complex electoral processes in a manner which will be understood by illiterate voters (the majority of whom are women in many countries)?
- ✓ Do voter education workshops take place at times that accommodate the domestic and economic roles performed by women?
- ✓ Do voter education workshops take place in venues accessible to women (for example, are these venues child friendly?)

- ✓ Do voter education workshops take place in safe venues that will not inhibit women's attendance?
- ✓ Do voter education workshops take place in an environment in which women feel confident that they can express themselves without fear of disruption and ridicule, or harassment by political parties following such meetings?

Special provisions

- ✓ Have special provisions been made for women and men with particular physical disabilities, pregnant women, the elderly and those with children?
- ✓ Do these include facilities as well as systems and measures to reduce waiting time?
- ✓ Are there provisions for “special votes” for those who may not be able to make it to the polling station?
- ✓ Is this information readily accessible to women and men needing it?
- ✓ Does the EMB keep sex disaggregated data on special votes? Is this analysed as part of understanding the gendered nature of elections?

Campaign finance

- ✓ Are there campaign finance regulations? If yes, how do these regulations impact on the equal participation of women and men?
- ✓ Do these regulations include strategies to prevent corruption? How are these applied, and with what effect on women candidates?

7. Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP)

- ✓ Is the right to campaign on an equal basis with other political parties, including the party representing the existing government, respected?
- ✓ Is the right to move freely within the country in order to campaign for election equally observed for women and men?
- ✓ Is the right of women party members, candidates and voters to campaign on an equal basis with their male counterparts respected?
- ✓ Do women in opposition parties face even greater barriers in their campaign?
- ✓ Are campaign rules clear and gender aware? Do they include protection from violence, including gender based violence in all forms, which may affect women's participation?
- ✓ Do security arrangements take account of the particular challenges that women face, such as misogyny, abusive language and GBV? Is this effectively prevented/addressed during the elections?
- ✓ Do the campaign processes ensure the right of party members, candidates and voters, especially women, security of person and property during the campaign and throughout the electoral process?
- ✓ Are women visible in campaign events, as candidates, voters, spokespersons, and commentators?
- ✓ What kinds of violence do women experience in politics - physical, sexual, cyber harassment, verbal abuse? Please give examples of both blatant and more subtle forms of violence. What effect do these have?
- ✓ How have women taken up cases of violence, within their parties, with the police etc. What response have they had?
- ✓ Is VAWP changing over time - improving or getting worse?
- ✓ What can be done to ensure that women participate fully and effectively in a safe and secure environment?

8. The Media and social media

- ✓ Do the laws, policies and practices that cover media conduct during elections require gender balance and sensitivity? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Does the media give equal space/air time/weight to women candidates? What has been the experience of women candidates? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Does the media make an effort to profile women candidates? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Are there complaints mechanisms for women politicians/ the public with regard to unequal or unfair treatment by the media? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Is there training for the media on gender responsive coverage of the elections? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Is there training for women politicians on making strategic use of the media, including new media? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Does gender form part of media commentary and analysis during elections? What action needs to be taken?
- ✓ Are women politicians on social media? Which social media? How has this affected them - positively or negatively - please give examples.

9. Civil society

- ✓ Are women's rights organisations among the civil society stakeholders consulted in the elections?
- ✓ Do civil society organisations (CSOs) promote the 50/50 campaign as part of voter education?
- ✓ Do CSOs support capacity building of women candidates regardless of political affiliation?
- ✓ Do CSOs support gender mainstreaming efforts of the EMBs?
- ✓ Do CSOs form part of election-monitoring processes?
- ✓ Do CSOs conduct a specific gender audit of the elections?
- ✓ How are the results used to enhance gender awareness of the electoral process?

Gender in election analysis

- ✓ Is there a stand-alone gender audit of the election? Who conducts this (civil society, statutory body, a consortium)?
- ✓ Do gender considerations and data form part of the EMB and election commission reports?
- ✓ Are these in stand-alone sections or is gender mainstreamed throughout these reports?
- ✓ Does gender form part of the media analysis, panel discussions and debate following the elections?
- ✓ Overall, to what extent do the elections contribute to women's equal and effective participation in political decision-making in the country?

10. Effective participation

- ✓ Are women represented in leadership positions within political decision-making - eg as speakers, mayors, chairs of committees, in cabinet?
- ✓ If so in what areas - for example do women lead only in the “soft” portfolios? Are they also in non-traditional portfolios - please give examples.
- ✓ What tangible difference have women made in these public spaces - laws, policies, services. Please give examples.
- ✓ How is this contribution viewed - by other women, men, the public.
- ✓ What opportunities are being created for young women to begin to claim these spaces?