



Political Parties

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Women activists at a meeting of the Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais, during the 2018 presidential election.

Credit: Florette Manedong (Cameroon)

KEY POINTS

- Women comprise just 12% of those in political party leadership in Africa ranging from 17% in the Horn to none in North Africa.
- In the 33 countries that have constitutional or legislated quotas at national or local level or both, only 20 political parties have institutionalised these quotas in their Constitutions or manifestos.
- Where political parties have institutionalised quotas countries generally have higher levels of women's representation in decision-making than those that have not.
- There is a direct correlation between countries with high levels of women's representation and ruling parties adopting voluntary quotas. The five countries (South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Cameroon) where the ruling parties' have adopted a quota are all in the top ten African countries with the highest levels of women's representation in parliament.
- Access to finance for nomination and campaigning is one of the biggest barriers to women participating in politics.
- Women's wings or leagues are a key support structure for women, but information on these structures is difficult to find. An Internet search found that just 34 of the 104 (29%) ruling and opposition parties in the 54 countries have women's wings. Lack of an online presence raises questions about their relevance especially to young women.

Political parties are often referred to as the gatekeepers of democracy and are the primary point of entry for women into politics. While women may feature as members, in large numbers, they are under-represented in political party leadership. According to International IDEA, “In relation to political parties in particular, the voice of women in decision-making remains insufficient, and, in some cases, is non-existent. Even though women are courted as voters and are often active supporters of political party mobilisation and campaigning, their participation does not generally translate into inclusion in party policy development and decision-making.”¹ Male dominance of party politics has been named as one of the key constraints for women to get through and participate especially as candidates.

Internally, political parties facilitate political recruitment and play a crucial role in candidate selection in the nomination process. Through

party structures, they provide support, financial and professional, to potential candidates that inevitably form legislative bodies as elected members of parliament and in some cases, the executive branch of government. Political parties and their support for women within their party structures and candidates is crucial to enhancing and sustaining women's representation in the electoral process and in decision-making as a whole.

This chapter outlines the role of political parties in promoting the equal representation and participation of women in political party leadership and structures. It covers the representation of women in political party leadership; the extent to which parties comply with national commitments; political support for women candidates including voluntary party quotas and financial support; conclusions and recommendations.

Representation of women in political party leadership

There are no legislative limitations to women participating in political processes, including through political parties as members and as part of the leadership. While some political parties have quotas for women's representation in parliament and local government, they do not necessarily apply these same quotas to internal party structures. International studies show the importance of holding office in political party

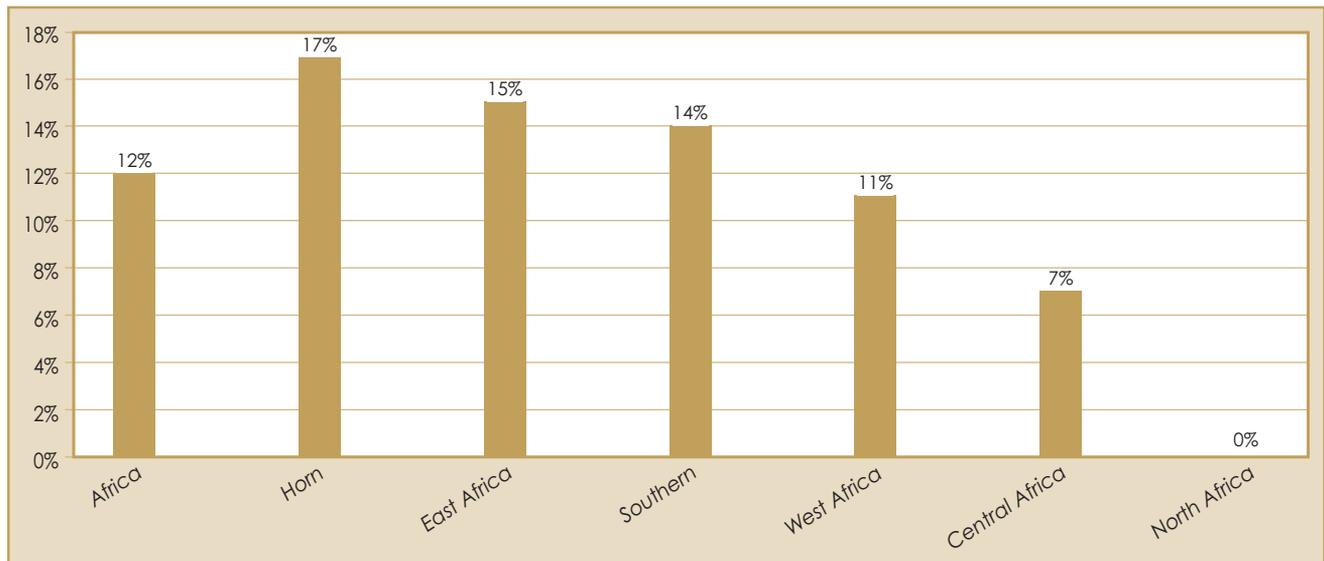
structures as a training ground for local and national politics.²

A review of the leadership structures (party leader, secretary general and deputy secretary general) in the ruling and main opposition parties in Africa shows that women remain under-represented in political party leadership. Only one political party, the African Party of Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV), has a woman leader.

¹ Kandawasvika-Nhundu, R. *Political Parties in Africa through a Gender Lens* (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2013) pp.6

² Lowe-Morna, C., *Strategies for increasing women's participation in politics*, paper prepared for the Fifth Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs, 1996

Figure 3.1: Women in political party leadership in Africa by region



Source: Compiled by GL with info from political party websites accessed in December 2020. See Annex 12.

Figure 3.1 shows that women are inadequately represented in political party leadership with just 12% of party leadership - as party leader, secretary general and deputy secretary general - being women. This ranges from 17% in the Horn to zero in North Africa.

When parties fail to ensure that women assume leadership posts within the party, this raises questions about their commitment to advancing gender equality more broadly. At a practical level, having women in decision-making within parties plays an important role in pushing for, and implementing quotas for women.

Compliance with national commitments

Most national Constitutions make provision for gender equality generally or at least prevention of discrimination based on gender or sex. Some Constitutions and national legislation go further by providing for affirmative action or temporary special measures to be put in place to increase women's representation in national and local decision-making (discussed in detail in chapter two). Thirty three African countries have either a Constitutional or legislated quota, but in most cases these are not reflected in party Constitutions

or manifestos and not implemented, as evidenced by the low representation of women in political party leadership and decision-making.

A review of the ruling party and main opposition political party commitments to gender equality shows that the majority of parties have not aligned their policies and practices to national Constitutions and electoral legislation, and commitments to gender equality are not necessarily reflected in party positions.

Table 3.1: Political parties, Constitutional/legislated quota provisions

Country	Legislated/ constitutional quota	Included in political party Constitution/ manifesto	National % women	Local % women
National and Local Government				
Rwanda	30%	Ruling RFP- Inkotanyi, Minority PDC (30%)	61%	62%
Senegal	50%	Minority SSP (30%)	43%	2%
Burundi	30%	No	38%	19%
Tanzania	30%	Ruling CCM (50%)	37%	34%
Uganda	33%	No	35%	46%
Angola	30%	Ruling MPLA (30%)	30%	No data
South Sudan	25%	No	28%	No data
Egypt	25%	No	27%	No data
Niger	10%	MNSD-NASSARA (10%)	26%	16%
Algeria	20-50%	Ruling NFL (2/5), Opposition HMS (1/5)	26%	18%
Tunisia	50%	Minority RCD	26%	No data
Somalia	30%	No	24%	No data
Kenya	33%	Ruling Jubilee party, Main opposition ODM and Minority DP, SAFINA, PNU, NARC (all 33%)	22%	34%
Lesotho	30%	No	23%	40%
Morocco	Reserved seats	No	21%	21%
Mauritania	20%	No	20%	3%
Guinea	33%	No	17%	15%
Libya	zebra list	No	16%	No data
Congo (Brazzavile)	15-20%	No	11%	No data
Eswatini	30%	Political parties are banned	10%	15%
Burkina Faso	30%	No	6%	13%
Lower House only				
Zimbabwe	Reserved seats	Ruling Zanu PF (30%)	32%	
Mali	30%	Minority ADEMA (30%)	27%	
Djibouti	25%	No	26%	
Sao Tome and Principe	30%	No	24%	
Togo	50%	No	19%	
Liberia	30%	No	11%	
Local only				
Namibia	30-15%	Ruling SWAPO (50%)		45%
South Africa	50%	Ruling ANC (50%)		41%
Cabo Verde	50%	No		28%
Mauritius	33%	No		22%
Sierra Leone	50%	Minority MOP (50%)		18%

Source: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas> accessed 16 February 2021, iKNOW Politics - Gender Quotas in African Countries.

Table 3.1 shows that in 33 countries that have constitutional or legislated quotas at national or local level or both, only 20 political parties have institutionalised quotas in their Constitutions or Manifestos. The table reflects a strong correlation between countries where ruling and main opposition political parties have institutionalised quotas and higher representation of women in decision-making.

How political parties have institutionalised these provisions in their policies and processes is an indicator of their commitment to gender equality. But in many cases these provisions are not strictly applied. In most cases political parties mirror the national commitments to women on electoral lists, but do not apply these to the party structures and leadership.



Kenya illustrates why it is important for political parties to align their policies to national commitments, through party gender quotas, and abide by them as well. In Kenya six political parties have institutionalised the Constitutional quota of 33% but women comprise just 22% of MPs. The ruling Jubilee party states that “In constituting party organs, no one gender shall comprise more than two thirds (2/3) of the *membership*”, but does not mention party leadership.³ The main opposition Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) provisions are stronger. The Manifesto stipulates affirmative action to ensure a minimum of 30% representation of women in *parliament, local government, the foreign service and all other areas of governance and decision-making*. The Party of National Unity (PNU) Manifesto states that it is committed to ensuring that all Kenyans, including women, are fully involved in the management of party affairs and ensuring that women obtain more than 30% representation in *all public appointments and elective positions*.

The party also commits to ensuring that women constitute at least 30% of *all newly recruited officers in the public service, top management positions in institutions of higher learning and development and management committees in public institutions*. The Democratic Party of Kenya (DP) Constitution includes a commitment to ensure that *at least one-third of the official positions of branch offices* are held by women, and undertakes to *empower women by creating special seats in parliament and local authorities*; ensuring that *50% of the government cabinet positions are held by women*. The Safina party Election Rules and Procedures provide that at least 1/3 of *all elected officials* in the branch or national level should be of either gender.⁴ The *National Rainbow Coalition (NARC)* gender policy states that a minimum of one-third of *all nominated persons should be of each gender*.⁵



In **Tanzania** the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party Constitution states a commitment to work towards achieving the equal representation of women and men (50-50) in all elective public bodies. It sets a lower target for women's representation in the party's internal leadership and decision making positions. For example, not less than four of the additional 14 members (28%) of the Central Committee of the National Executive Committee should be women. Only ten of the 34 members (29%) of the CCM's Central Committee are women, while 71 of the 379 members (18%) of the National Executive Committee are women, despite the party's commitment to gender parity in leadership and decision-making positions.



Tunisia has since its independence in 1956 been considered as a pioneer in the rights of women in the Arab and Muslim world. With the adoption of the Personal Status Code soon

³ Jubilee Party, *Party Constitution*, 2016, <chrome-extension://oemmnndcbldboiebnladdacbfmadadm/http://jubileepamoja.co.ke/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Jubilee-Digital-Constitution-2016.pdf> accessed 16 February 2021

⁴ Safina Party, *Nomination rules & Procedures Parliamentary & civic Candidates*, Article 1.1 pp.18

⁵ Kandawasvika-Nhundu, R. *Political Parties in Africa through a Gender Lens* (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2013) pp.41-43

after independence, Tunisia has pursued better representation of women, at least in the laws. The Tunisian Constitution of 2014 stipulates in its article 46 that “*the State is committed in protecting the acquired rights of women, to support and better them*” and guarantees “*equality of chances between men and women to shoulder the different responsibilities and in all sectors*”. Many mechanisms have been set up by this law to guarantee a fair representation, namely that the candidates list includes the same number of women and men alternating between them on the list (zipped list).

Since 2016 all the electoral municipal lists must also have an equal number of men and women alternating on those lists. However, the electoral law of 2014 was amended in 2017, and does not force political parties to comply with the horizontal and vertical parity principle. This opens the door for political parties to present a party list where men dominate as candidates. In the 2019 elections only 54 women won seats in the 217 member house (25%) - the lowest since 2011. In the previous national assembly, elected women accounted for 36% and for 27% in the Constituent National Assembly.

Evidence from other countries shows that where quotas are implemented by political parties representation of women exceeds the nationally stipulated quota for women in parliament.



With 61% women in parliament, **Rwanda**, has the highest representation of women in parliament globally. Rwanda has a mixed electoral system, Constitutional and legislated TSM at national and local level. The Rwandan Patriotic Front- Inkotanyi (RFP- Inkotanyi) and the Centrist Democratic Party (Parti Démocratique Centrist, PDC) both have voluntary party quotas of 30% women in all decision-making positions within the structures of the party⁶.



The Constitution of **Uganda**, the Parliamentary Elections Act of 2005, and the Local Governments Act of 1997 require 30% reserved seats for women at national and sub-national levels. The ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) has established a quota which is above the legal requirement of 30%. Its Constitution states that all members shall: “guard against sectarianism, tribal chauvinism, sexism, religious and political intolerance or any other form of discrimination.” It provides for the establishment of a Women's League, and gender quotas in party structures. Chapter Five of the NRM Constitution has a section on Gender Representation which states that: “in electing the leadership of the Organs of NRM, 40% of the positions shall be reserved for women except in cases where it is impracticable to do so.”⁷ The opposition party Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) stipulates a quota aligned with the national constitution and electoral laws. The FDC Constitution states that the party shall implement a programme of affirmative action, including the provision of a quota of at least one-third of all leadership positions and elective decision-making.⁸ With 35% women in parliament, Uganda has exceeded the national quota of 30%.



Morocco's electoral law stipulates a quota of 15% at national and 12% at the local level. Two political parties in the country, the *Socialist Union of Popular Forces (USFP)* and the *Party of Progress and Socialism (PPS)* have Constitutions that stipulate that women should constitute at least 20% of the members of *national and local decision-making bodies of the party*.⁹ Women constitute 21% of those in parliament. Ouafa Hajji, president of the International Socialist of Women and founder president of Jossour Forum of Moroccan Women comments that “Even with the article 19 of the Constitution, many obstacles persist because of the absence of a legal framework around this article and because of the

⁶ Ibid

⁷ National Resistance Movement (NRM), Constitution as amended in June 2010
<chrome-extension://oemmdcbldboiebfnladdacbdm/adm/https://www.politicalpartydb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UGANDA_NRM_2010.pdf accessed> 10 March 2021

⁸ Kandawasvika-Nhundu, R. Political Parties in Africa through a Gender Lens, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2013, p57

⁹ Ibid

political violence that exists in the field with regards to women. In political parties, when a women succeeds in affirming herself, there is a huge mobilization against her. Many women can tell you that.”

Political parties and gender gaps in Togo

In Togo, gender equality in politics is established in the Constitution and in many laws and codes. This equality is still mostly on paper despite many initiatives and measures taken by the government and political parties in 2020.



Yawa Djigbodi Tsegan, President of the Togolese National Assembly.
Picture taken by the communication cell of the National Assembly on the 1st November 2020 during the 206th session of the directorate of the Inter-Parliament

To be elected and participate in active politics, women have to join political parties. The party's way of conducting business and their values have a deep impact on women's political participation. Some political parties go to great lengths to promote women as politicians, through training, capacity building, the setting up of discussion platforms and lobbying.

While a large number of political parties have adopted codes of conduct or policies to promote gender equality, women are still under-represented in central committees and even politburos. They are visible but in less important roles. In the top ten most important positions in many political parties, less than three of them are occupied by women. Even when these parties have their own quotas, they are not applied or enforced. Some parties have rules and procedures to report sexual harassment, abuse and other violations but the complaints are rarely heard and taken into account.

In the 20 December 2018, elections, the Togolese elected 17 women in a parliament of 91 seats (19%). Yawa Djigbodi Tsegan became the first woman elected president of the National Assembly. The local government elections held

on the 30 June 2019, elected 184 women out of a total of 1494 councillors (12.3%). The new cabinet announced in September 2020, comprised 11 women and 23 men (34%). Togo has a woman Prime Minister Victoire Tomegah Dogbe, a veteran politician and former minister who occupied several portfolios. This nomination is also a first in Togo.

Only one woman has ever run for president in Togo. Brigitte Adjamagbo-Jonhson withdrew from the 2010 elections believing the results of the election would be rigged. She is the general secretary of the Democratic Convention of African People. The 2020 presidential elections attracted seven men and no women.

In 2013, a modification to the electoral code forces political parties to respect gender equality on the candidates' lists during the legislative elections and to halve the deposit required of women candidates. But gender gaps persist

To encourage and get effective women's participation in politics, it is important to raise awareness amongst the guardians of traditions so as to bring a change of mindset. The legislated quota system must also be reviewed with possible sanctions for the political parties which do not abide. Effective mechanisms to support women candidates financially and training women in politics and elections campaigning should be implemented.

Case study by Helène Doubidji



The ruling South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in **Namibia** adopted a 50% gender quota in 2013 which applies to *all the national and regional structures of the party*. Namibia has one of the highest levels of representation in Africa with 44% women in parliament, ranking number three out of 54 African countries.



The 2005 Constitution of **Burundi** and the 2009 Electoral Code stipulates that women should constitute 30% for *elected public decision-making positions* at all levels. Although the political parties' policy documents contain general texts on commitments to gender equality, they do not necessarily outline corresponding measures for ensuring the transformation of the commitments into effective actions and outcomes. Some political parties in Burundi have not aligned their policies and practices with the Constitution and legislation to ensure the implementation of the 30% quota within their own party leadership structures and publicly elected decision-making positions. An International Foundation for

Electoral Systems (IFES) report on the “Analysis of the Status of Women in Burundi's Political and Electoral Processes” comments that: “the advancement of women is not clearly expressed, or operationally programmed, as an active policy of most political parties. The inclusion of women is often merely aimed at addressing perceived imbalances in representation to external parties.”¹⁰ It adds that: “The functions typically assigned to women in leadership are almost identical from one party to the next. Women seem to have a certain “specialty” in decision-making, typically gender issues or socio-cultural affairs. When in charge of other duties, they are an assistant working under the purview of a man exercising ultimate responsibility for the function.”¹¹

The political parties most likely to adopt quotas are those established in the past decade or in countries emerging from independence struggles and armed conflict. The other strong correlation is with countries that have undergone national constitutional reviews. Examples include Burundi, Kenya, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda.¹²

Political party support for women candidates

The more women stand elections, the more this becomes the norm. Political party support for women candidates is critical for normalising WPP. Political parties can show their support through adopting quotas for women at all levels of decision-making; assisting with access to finance and promoting women's empowerment through capacity building and mentorship.

to gender parity is whether parties provide for voluntary quotas in their Constitutions or manifestos. In Africa ruling or opposition parties in 11 countries (Botswana, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Sierra Leone and South Africa) have done this.

Voluntary party quotas

In the absence of Constitutional or legislated quotas, the real test of political party commitment



Many women support political parties in Mauritius as agents and less as candidates. Photo: Beekash Roopun

¹⁰ International Foundation for Electoral Systems, *Analysis of the Status of Women in Burundi's Political and Electoral Processes*, (IFES, 2014) pp.10
¹¹ *Ibid*
¹² Kandawasvika-Nhundu, R. *Political Parties in Africa through a Gender Lens*, International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2013, p.40

Table 3.2: Political party voluntary quotas

Country	Political party	Status	Party Quota	% MPs
South Africa	African National Congress	Ruling	50%	46%
	Economic Freedom Fighters	Opposition	50%	
Namibia	South West Africa People's Organisation	Ruling	50%	44%
Mozambique	Front for the Liberation of Mozambique	Ruling	40%	42%
	Mozambican National Resistance	Opposition	30%	
Ethiopia	Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (Prosperity Party) ¹³	Ruling	30%	39%
Cameroon	Cameroon People's Democratic Movement	Ruling	25-30%	34%
	Social Democratic Front	Opposition (not main)	25%	
Malawi	United Democratic Front	Opposition	25%	23%
	Malawi Congress Party	Opposition	33%	
Equatorial Guinea	Social Democratic Convergence	Opposition	?	21%
Sierra Leone	Minority MOP	Opposition (not main)	50%	12%
Botswana	Botswana Congress Party	Opposition (not main)	30%	11%
	Botswana National Front	Opposition (not main)	30%	
Côte d'Ivoire	Ivorian Popular Front	Opposition	30%	11%

Source: <https://www.idea.int/data-tools/data/gender-quotas> accessed 16 February 2021, iKNOW Politics - Gender Quotas in African Countries.

Table 3.2 shows a correlation between countries with high levels of representation and ruling parties adopting quotas. The five countries (South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Ethiopia and Cameroon) where the ruling parties' have adopted a quota are in the top ten African countries with the highest levels of women's representation in parliament. All five parties, except in Cameroon, have one woman in their top three leadership positions. In Malawi both the ruling party and opposition have quotas, but only the ruling party in Malawi has a woman in the top three leadership positions.

In the four countries where only the opposition or minority parties have adopted voluntary quotas (Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea and Sierra Leone) representation is low. This is most

likely because these parties only win a small number of seats which are given to men; and because the quotas are not being implemented.

In FPTP electoral systems, which all five countries, except Equatorial Guinea, use, evidence suggests that women who make it through the nomination process are often put up to contest seats in districts they cannot win, leaving the men to contest safe winnable seats¹⁴. None of the opposition parties with quotas have a woman in their top three leadership positions.

When compared to countries that only have constitutional or legislated quotas, countries where political parties have adopted voluntary quotas out-perform those that have not illustrating the importance of political will.

¹³ The Prosperity Party was formed in December 2019 to replace the EPRDF through the merging of three former EPRDF member parties, the Amhara Democratic Party (ADP), the Oromo Democratic Party (ODP) and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (SEPDM) and inclusion of five others - The Afar National Democratic Party (ANDP), the Benishangul-Gumuz People's Democratic Unity Front (BGPDUF), the Ethiopian Somali People's Democratic Party (ESPDP), the Gambela People's Democratic Movement (GPDM) and the Hareri National League (HNL) were also included in the merger. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the dominant party in the former EPRDF for 27 years and the only one not to join the new party, were critical of it upon its formation. The refusal escalated into the Tigray conflict in November 2020. It was not possible to obtain the Prosperity Party's Constitution or Manifesto but we have assumed that the gender principle has been retained.

¹⁴ Ntho, M., *Lesotho in The Seat is Taken: Elections and the Under-representation of Women in Southern Africa*. (Gender Links, 2010)

“ Political parties should give women more space, in particular on the electoral lists. It is the responsibility of the political party leaders to do it. But the electors, women and men who are convinced that women are good leaders, have the power to vote. They should reject the electoral lists where women are absent. Women are not there just to do figuration but should be given due consideration and nominated in decision making positions. The constitution of political parties should be reviewed, as well as the cost related to be able to be a candidate and which excludes women. ”

Sylvie Ndongmo, president of the Cameroun branch of International League of Women for Peace and Liberty (WILPF Cameroon)

The power of political will

An interesting test of political party commitment is in countries that have voluntary party quotas. As observed in Table 3.2, **South Africa, Namibia and Mozambique** have 40% or more women in political decision-making as a result of voluntary quote adopted by their ruling parties (the African National Congress (ANC); South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) and Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO).

In 2006, the ANC adopted a voluntary 30% gender quota for local elections. In 2009, the party amended its constitution and increased this voluntary quota to 50%. Similarly, FRELIMO introduced a gender quota in 1994 that required 40% representation of women in the national assembly and the local assembly. In 2014, Namibia's ruling party, SWAPO adopted a 50:50 quota system known as zebra list to ensure that women were equally represented in not only parliament but in government as well.

Across the globe, the PR or “list” system favours women's political participation as parties have the power to place women strategically in the list, to ensure their electoral success. SWAPO and the ANC broke new ground by committing

to and largely implementing the “zebra” system (one woman, one man) in their past elections. In Namibia there is also a legislative requirement around women's representation, with the result that Namibia has the highest proportion of women in local government at 45%.

Ethiopia ranks 31 globally and sixth in Africa in terms of women's representation in parliament. There is no requirement in the Electoral Law for political parties to have gender quotas or any other gender provisions. However in 2004, the ruling Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) introduced a voluntary party quota with the intention of improving the political participation of women and their representation. The quota system reserves 30% of the candidacy in the party list for women. This is, however, not reflected in the party Constitution, which is dated 1999. There is a clear correlation between the adoption of the 30% quota and the increase in women's representation. Women's representation almost tripled in the 2005 elections from 8% to 21%. This figure has since increased steadily from 27% in 2010 to 39% in 2015.

Nomination and recruitment

The process of candidate recruitment and nomination is probably the most important for political parties to address if women's political participation is to be promoted. Parties are the vital link for achieving equality and inclusive participation, given that they maintain firm control over the nomination of candidates for elected office. Political parties vary substantially with regard to how they nominate candidates, the number of women selected, where women rank on party lists, and the proportion of women who make it to elected office.¹⁵

Proportional systems tend to result in the election of more women, primarily by eliminating the disincentive inherent in FPTP systems of needing to present a single "most acceptable" candidate. Electoral systems which use reasonably large district magnitudes encourage parties to nominate women on the basis that balanced tickets will increase their electoral chances. Some List PR countries also require that women make up a certain proportion of the candidates nominated by each party.¹⁶

“ We must look into the place given to women in political parties. Women should not forget that they have an important electoral power. It is nearly unthinkable for a political party to get into an election without courting the women voters. The challenge is to see how women are organized in the party structures. Are they confined in the feminine wings or are they integrated in the politburo? Women should have their say in their political parties . ”

Young women leader, Maimouna Astou Yade, president of the association JGEN Women Global Entrepreneurship



South Africa follows the PR electoral system. This means that each party submits a prioritised list to parliament, and is awarded seats in accordance with the percentage vote it garners,

using the order of the submitted list. In essence voters vote for a party, not a candidate. So what matters is what proportion of votes the party gets and where candidates (in this case women) are placed on the list.

Table 3.3: Quotas and women in the party lists for ANC and EFF 2019

PARTY	QUOTAS					
	Policy	Women in top five		Women in 25		Women overall
EFF	Voluntary 'zebra stripe' system in place, not implemented in top five or 25 of 2019 candidate list.	1	20%	11	44%	100 50%
ANC	Voluntary 'zebra stripe' system in place, not implemented in top five or top 25 in the 2019 candidate list	1	20%	9	36%	98 49%

Source, IEC and Gender Links, 2019.

Table 3.2 shows that both the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the opposition Economic Freedom Front (EFF) achieved or came close to achieving parity in their lists (50% and

49% respectively). But they fell short of this target in their top five, and top 25 of their lists. This shows that men still dominate decision-making in these parties.

¹⁵ Ballington, J. *Empowering women for stronger political parties: A guidebook to promote women's political participation* (UNDP and NDI, 2012), p21

¹⁶ Representation of women - <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/es/esd/esdo6/esdo6a> accessed 22 February 2021

In FPTP systems there are typically two rounds of elections. In primary elections voters indicate their preference for their party's candidate. This process can either be open to the general public or only to members of political parties. Candidate selection and support at the primary stage is critical. There is a clear link between women being elected in primary elections and their access to finance.

Candidate recruitment rules differ from party to party, but setting guidelines that are clear and transparent and incorporate rules guaranteeing women's participation are a significant advantage. "When the rules are unwritten and candidate

selection is in the hands of a few party leaders, it is very difficult for women to compete on equal footing with men as they are typically excluded from the 'all boys' networks. Opening the process up so it is more participatory can combat the tendency for leaders in some parties to handpick their candidates according to undefined criteria. Rules should set clear targets to be achieved.¹⁷

The most effective means of enforcing party quotas is to empower the party's executive committee and candidate selection committee to reject any party list or internal recruitment process that does not adhere to quota rules.¹⁸

“ The current political setup is designed to favour men, recruitment is done by existing leader, who in this case recruit new people into the parties that they are leading - another man. Mentorship will be men to men. Lack of resources for women hinders then to break through the hostile set up under the existing electoral system. I think we must call for Proportional Representation. ”

Joy Phumaphi - Former Minister of Health, Botswana; Co-Chair of the UN Secretary General's Independent Accountability Panel for Women, Children and Adolescent health

Financial support for women candidates

A major barrier to women's political participation is the lack of resources in comparison to their male counterparts. Women are less likely to have access to same kind of resources to support their political ambitions. This dissuades them from taking an active role in the electoral process.

According to UN Women's Julie Ballington, "One of the greatest challenges women face early on is raising early money to gain the party nomination. Early money is the initial financing required to launch a campaign for candidature, such as gaining exposure and building name

recognition, travelling and organizing a campaign team, and ultimately winning the party nomination. Much of a campaign's early money will often come from the candidate him/ herself, and this self-financing is often a major obstacle for women in particular. After winning the nomination, party support may increase, and greater visibility may attract additional sources of funding."¹⁹ Electoral financing is discussed in more detail in Chapter four. The following are some examples of the role played by political parties in ensuring that women have the requisite financial support.

¹⁷ Ballington, J. *Empowering women for stronger political parties: A guidebook to promote women's political participation* (United Nations Development Programme and National Democratic Institute, 2012)

¹⁸ pp. 26

¹⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁹ *Ibid*, pp. 29

“ In almost every general election held every five years, more women lose the race at the early stage of primary elections at party level. This deficiency is mostly caused by lack of resources to help women's campaigns; women start from a position of inequality to be competitive with their male counterparts. ”

Monica Tabengwa, Human rights lawyer, former Executive Director of Pan African ILGA



The cost of seeking political office is rising in **Kenya**. These costs make it extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the average person to seek political office, with women and youth disproportionately disenfranchised from key decision-making structures, as high costs effectively lock these large demographics out of representation in mainstream politics. The governance expert Tom Mboya underscores that in many parts of Kenya, the primary campaigns are more important, more competitive and more costly than the elections themselves.

For many aspiring candidates, the real competition is during the primary campaign, politicians interviewed said they spent more than USD 147,000 to get a ticket and one stated that he spent up to USD 245,000 USD to be nominated as candidate. A huge part of these expenses go to fuel, logistics, security, roadshows and rally and to the campaign team. “It is clear that one must invest very heavily in the primary campaign if one wants to get a parliamentary seat”.²⁰

Mboya says that if it is very difficult and costly for candidates to get an electoral ticket, the challenge is exacerbated for women candidates. The importance of the candidate selection process for women cannot be overstated. While trends indicate an increase in the number of women in elective positions, the numbers still fall short of Kenya's constitutional requirement of one-third. Whilst the rationale behind the creation of the

women's representative position - at the county level - may have been noble in terms of enhancing women's representation, it may have inadvertently produced undesirable results.” He quotes a 2015 report saying that “there are indications that the creation of special parliamentary seats for women county representatives created further challenges for women who wish to represent a party in an election for a regular constituency seat, requiring them to raise and spend even more money during the nomination phase because the regular seats are now perceived as ‘men's seats’”²¹.



Political parties have a role to play in mitigating the burden felt by women aspirants. For example they could encourage women's political participation in the electoral process by waiving nomination fees in part or in full. This is practised in **Ghana** where almost all political parties allow women to pay 50% of what their male counterparts pay for nomination forms, but there are no further provisions or legislation on political financing for women.

While there is empirical evidence that suggests, with little or no support from their political parties, access to finance for all electoral processes is a big barrier to women participating in politics. Further enquiry is needed to ascertain how political parties have addressed the gender funding gap such as internal fundraising mechanisms, in-kind contributions for campaigns and others.

²⁰ Mboya, T., *The Cost of Parliamentary Politics in Kenya*, (WFD and DFID, 2020) pp.7

²¹ Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy, *Political party financing and equal participation of women in Kenyan electoral politics: A situation overview*, (NIMD, 2015)

Training and capacity building

For women aspirants entering politics for the first time how political parties support them through training mentorship is an indicator of the party's commitment to principles of gender equality.



In **Togo** the Parti Démocratique Panafricain (PDP) for instance, regularly offers training to all women members of the party, to eventual to-be candidates, and to the executives of the party. Dédé Akpédjé Menssan, local councilor, member of the PDP, says that the training sessions offered by the party help to promote women's rights, to better their understanding on how to organize campaigns,

how to manage relations with the media, the public communication and the procedures during the meetings.

Lack of support in male dominated parties

While parties may commit to increasing women's representation through quotas, and may have commitments to gender equality in their Constitutions or electoral laws, how these are implemented and how women are supported by members of their parties is a crucial factor in their success.

Gender equality achieved on paper only in Algeria



Nabila Smail lawyer and member of the Front of Socialists forces and member of the collective of defense of detainees during a protest in Algeria.

Nabila Smail entered politics in 2012 and became a member of the Socialist Forces Front, an opposition party in Algeria. She found the experience of having a public mandate enriching, but she resigned as elected member of the popular assembly in September 2020, two years before the end of her second mandate. She said she encountered “masculine

resistance. It happened sometimes that I was the only woman during the visits and the meetings. Each time a woman asked a question, the men were making fun of her. There is a huge hypocrisy behind the adoption of the laws and there is a very paternalistic attitude in the political parties. They are constantly blocking our efforts so as to keep us on a leash”, she says.

For the civil society defending women's rights, the law on the quotas for women in Algeria is a first step towards the achievement of the principle of gender equality but it cannot be an end in itself, but the beginning of the application of egalitarian measures in favour of women, taking into account their capacities and their important numbers in the political sphere. “But in spite of this quota system inducing positive discrimination in favour of women, we are far from achieving effective equality and non-discrimination” emphasises Smail.

Case study By Dounia Z. Mseffer.

In some cases there is blatant obstruction to women's participation in politics.



Aïcha Aït Alla, a young Moroccan parliamentarian from a small rural commune in **Morocco**, entered politics in 2009 and has had to fight hard to be accepted in her own political party and by the voters. “I was often rejected by electors but mostly by the members of my own political party and by men who had been elected. They did not allow me to speak in public. They organized meetings at odd hours or in places where women are not allowed to go. When I wanted to be a candidate and be elected in the House of Councillors, I was locked up by the members of my party for a week because they did not want me to put my name on the list. I resisted and I will continue to do so. I have taken up my studies again and followed training on capacity building because I am convinced that if we want to change something in this country, one must get involved into politics. But we must resist and hang on because men will do anything they can to block our paths”.

High level political support for gender parity and the need for political parties to adopt quotas in line with legislation is crucial.



In **Tanzania**, Vice-President Samia Suluhu Hassan urged women ahead of the 2020 elections to ensure that the 50/50 campaign was taken in their political parties' manifestos to enable them to equally contest for political posts with men.²² President John Magufuli recently advised²³ political parties to consider reducing the wide gender gap as they dispatch representatives to vie for various positions, which essentially should sync with the new Political Parties Act Number 6(a). Of the 15 political parties that contested the 2020 elections, seven nominated women to key

decision-making structures - two as Presidential candidates and five for Vice-President.

Women's wings

Women's wings, branches or leagues are established to advance women's political participation within the party. These bodies can perform a range of functions, including advocacy within the party on women's rights issues; influencing party policy positions to promote women's leadership at all levels within the party; lobbying for and oversight of gender policies, mobilising women voters and supporting party candidates during elections.

Information on women's wings is difficult to find in the absence of access to the political party's constitution. An Internet search found that 34 of the 104 (29%) ruling and opposition parties in the 54 countries have women's wings. There may be others but they have no online presence bringing into question their reach and relevance, especially to young women.

Women's wings, where they exist, tend to play an ambivalent role. On the one hand, women's structures in parties have been an important mobilising tool for women in many countries. But they also often serve as the glorified hospitality wing of the party rather than as mechanisms for advancing the status of women in politics and in society.²⁴ Research from International IDEA suggests that the agenda's women's wings are often limited to the social and welfare affairs portfolio, therefore re-enforcing the marginalisation of women in politics. To increase the effectiveness of women's wings beyond its traditional remit, political parties should incorporate women's wing into the main party structure and increase their role in the candidate preparation, selection and mentoring of potential female candidates.²⁵

²² Xinhua, Tanzanian VP urges equal participation of women in 2020 general elections, 27 February 2020 <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-02/27/c_138821774.htm> accessed 16 February 2021

²³ Aljazeera, Tanzania presidential election to be held on October 28, 12 July 2020 <<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/07/tanzania-presidential-election-held-october-28-200721100331444.html>> accessed 16 February 2021

²⁴ Lowe Morna, C. Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African politics (Gender Links, 2004)

“ I see the current set up of women and youth wings, making men think they are the body and as such they are the PARTY. Let all have wings - women's wings, youth wings and men's wings. Then all have quota and certain percentage is elected to the central committee of the party. Unless men also have the wing; they will always think they are the main body and as such they are the party. ”

Prof Sheila Dinotshe Tlou - Former Minister of Health in Botswana Former UNADIS Regional Director, Co-Chair - Global HIV Prevention Coalition



Political parties have also constituted women's wings in **Togo**. According to Véronique Batalé, president of the women's commission of the Mouvement Patriotique pour la Démocratie et le Développement (MPDD), these branches, she says, contribute to maintaining a permanent women's representation at different levels in the party. “They have a double objective: these women support the party against the world outside and they better the relations between sexes inside. They give advice on policy relating to gender equality, they heighten awareness of the party members on gender, organise meetings and train women on the way to do politics”.



BDP Women's Wing Executive Committee during the interview - November 2020.
Photo: Chigedze Virginia Chinyepi



In a focus group discussion conducted for this research²⁶, the **Botswana Democratic Party (BDP)** Women's Wing executive committee

members felt that the party needed to make some structural changes to enable women members to participate equally and effectively. “BDP as well should use the 50/50 stated in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development to advance our women within the party. We are all in agreement on this as women of the party because it's not that women don't participate; they do and I believe they can juggle family and politics as it has been done for many years before. I believe it always boils down to money, if you don't have money you can't get visibility,” says Deputy Secretary General, Bridget Mavuma.²⁷

In addition to mobilising women, recruiting new members and supporting party candidates, women's wings or leagues should be setting the gender agenda within their parties. This should include clear positions and policies on promoting women's leadership at all levels within the party as well as on women's rights issues such as gender-based violence and sexual orientation and gender identity.



In South Africa, the ANC Women's League (ANCWL) has played an important role in preparing women for politics and public office. Many of the current ministers served at one time or the other as office bearers in ANC Women's League. However some of the controversial actions of the ANCWL and its office holders have brought into

²⁵ Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Compendium of good practices for advancing women's political participation in the OSCE region* (OSCE, 2016)

²⁶ By Chigedze Virginia Chinyepi

²⁷ BDP Women's Wing Executive committee - Interview (23.10.2020)

²⁸ Seale, L., *SA not ready for female president - ANCWL IOL*, 9 October 2013, <<https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/sa-not-ready-for-female-president-ancwl-1589121>> accessed 22 February 2021

question their feminist principles. In 2013 the ANCWL declared that South Africa was not ready for a female president. According to the then league's president Angie Motshekga, “We know the ANC, we understand the ANC, we understand the ANC processes, and no one wants to go into a futile battle. There are traditions, there are processes, and those processes have a long, long life.”²⁸



Provincial secretary in Mpumalanga, Clara Ndlovu, was quoted saying, “We want to have a female president in the near future. We are just not prepared for it now. We do not have capable leaders”.²⁹ The league came under fire from civil society who criticised them for undermining women in leadership.

The ANCWL also lost credibility with the women's movement over its

staunch support for former president Jacob Zuma, a polygamist accused of rape and later acquitted of the charges. Instead of supporting his late accuser (dubbed Khwezi) they stood alongside Zuma, in a country with endemic GBV. Outside the court Zuma supporters threatened her well-being and she was met with shouts of “the bitch must burn.”³⁰ She spent most of her remaining years in exile, with no support from the struggle organisation that she grew up in, let alone its women.

In 2017 after the then President Jacob Zuma publicly endorsed his former wife Nkosozana Dlamini-Zuma the ANCWL followed suit, raising questions as to whether this was genuinely a case of supporting a woman for president, or of blind loyalty to the then president. The league did redeem itself somewhat by taking a decision at their 2015 Congress to allow transgender women into their membership. In 2020 the league launched its newly established Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer and Intersex (LGBTQI+) desk to assist in the fight to end GBV, a step in the right of direction for a much-needed deepening of gender discourse in South Africa.

Conclusions and recommendations

Women's representation in political party leadership is low across Africa, with just 12% women in top party leadership. Political parties play a crucial role in providing access to the political realm for aspiring women politicians. In short, political parties can either help or hinder women's entry into politics. They can do this in a range of ways, by observing national constitutional or legislative provisions to increase women's representation; by adopting their own voluntary quotas and by providing support through access to finance for campaigning as well as capacity building and mentorship. Recommendations to political parties include:

Observing country constitutional and legislative provisions

- Where the constitution and electoral law provides for gender quotas, these should be operationalised in party constitutions and applied to all party structures.

Electoral/ legislative reform

- In FPTP electoral systems, law should require that parties field equal numbers of women candidates in FPTP seats and distribute women and men in a “zebra” style in the PR lists.

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Mugo, K., *Remembering 10 Years of Rape During Women's Month*, okayafrica, 9 August 2016 <<https://www.okayafrica.com/jacob-zuma-rape-trial-10-years-later/>> accessed 22 February 2021

- Ensure affirmative action is applied at both the national and local government level and is stipulated within electoral laws.

Promoting gender aware policies, norms and standards

- Political party Constitutions and manifestos should specifically include provisions to advance women's political participation e.g. quotas on nominations of women candidates and leadership within political parties
- Political parties should have clear guidelines on how they seek to achieve gender inclusiveness. This will require a review of party constitutions and re-alignment of women's leagues so that they can play more active roles to enhance women's engagement within the parties beyond dancing for party leaders.
- Policies should include prohibition of Violence Against Women in Politics (VAWP) and equal distribution of party resources for campaigning.
- Capacity building for political parties on women's rights and various principles in the constitutions and election laws.

Support to women candidates

- Provide timely financial support for women contestants during campaigning.
- Reduce nomination fees for women candidates.

- Field women candidates across the board-presidential, legislature and local government.
- Expose and train women on electoral processes and procedures, campaigning, media engagements, public speaking and fundraising.
- Ensure equal opportunities for media airtime/visibility for both men and women candidates.
- Establish or strengthen women's wings through stipulations in party constitutions and allocate a certain percentage of party funds to the women wings.

Safety and security of women candidates

- Political parties should adopt codes of conduct on or that include firm measures to address sexual harassment and gender violence in all party, political and election conduct and that these are effectively implemented,
- Capacity building for political parties and women leaders to understand dimensions of VAWP and available mechanisms for reporting and access justice.
- Investigate allegations of violence, assault or harassment of women elected officials and candidates and create an environment of zero tolerance for such offences and, to ensure accountability, take all appropriate steps to prosecute those responsible.



Women activists wearing the party dress of the Rassemblement Démocratique du Peuple Camerounais during a visit of the Secretary of State to Health at the beginning of the electoral campaign for the regional elections.

Photo: Florette Manedong