



Forgotten by families

Anushka Virahsawmy



CHAPTER 2

Governance

Articles 12-13



Namibian Member of Parliament, Ndapewa Nombilli, arguing a point at the 50/50 seminar organised by the GMDC at the Gender Links offices.
Photo: Jabulani Sithole

KEY POINTS

- Namibia's SGDI score for gender and governance of 58 % shows that the country has made some progress in women's representation though there is still a long to go achieve the full rating of 100%. The country ranks six out of the 15 SADC countries.
- Based on the citizen's score card (CSC) that gauges women and men's perceptions of the country's performance towards meeting the targets on gender and governance, Namibia scored 61%
- Performance in terms of at the different levels of governance in politics is varied. Only 19% of cabinet ministers, 25% of parliamentarians and 42% of the councillors are women.
- Namibia has a legislated quota at the local level hence the higher proportion of women.
- In the two main parties in Namibia, there is an under presentation of women in political party structures.
- The Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance made a formal submission to the Law Reform and Development Commission calling for the adoption of a 50/50 quota at national level.

Table 2.1: SGDI and CSC score for governance sector

	SGDI	CSC
Scores	58%	61%
Ranks	6	8

Table 2.1 shows the SGDI for Namibia is 58% just above the halfway mark of the SADC target to achieve the 50:50 ratio of women and men in all decision-making positions by 2015. The country is doing well at the local level with

women representation at 42%. However, women are under-represented in cabinet and parliament. Namibia ranks six out of the 15 SADC countries, with a score comfortably above the 47% regional average.

The citizen scorecard captures the qualitative nuances not necessarily captured by the SGDI. The rating is based on perceptions of women and men on the country's progress towards achieving the SADC Gender Protocol targets related to gender and governance.

Participation



The Protocol provides for state parties to ensure that, by 2015, at least 50% of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors are held by women, including the use of affirmative action measures as provided for in Article 5.

It further provides for member states to ensure that all legislative and other measures are accompanied by public awareness campaigns which demonstrate the vital link between the equal representation and participation of women and men in decision making positions, democracy, good governance and citizen participation are put in place at all levels.

Despite the several rhetorical commitments to achieving gender parity in decision-making, the only area in which this has come close to being achieved is at the local level (where Namibia has a legislated quota). A decline in women's representation in the national parliament in the 2009 elections caused serious concern and has underscored the need to resuscitate the 50/50 campaign.

Gender and political parties

There is an under-representation of women in the two main parties in Namibia within the party structures. Males dominate in the top decision making positions of these two political parties, with only one out of six women in the top party structures in both cases.

Table 2.2: Overview of women in politics in Namibia

Level of government	Members/Cllrs	No of women	% women
Cabinet	26	5	19%
National Assembly	78	19	24%
National Council	26	7	27%
Regional Council	107	13	12%
Regional Governors	3	13	23%
Local Authority	323	135	42%
Mayors	8	30	27%

Source: Gender Links 2011.

Table 2.3: Representation of women and men in key party structures

Party	Head		Treasurer		Secretary general		4th top position		5th top position		6th top position	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
SWAPO	✓		✓			✓	✓		✓		✓	
Congress of Democrats	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓			✓

Parliament website (2009).

The Gender Research and Advocacy Project of the Legal Assistance Centre in Namibia compiled a comparison of gender issues in ten of Namibia's 14 political parties, published in Issue No. 7 of *Election Watch* produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR). The Namibian newspaper also did a gender analysis of party manifestos in its coverage leading up to the national elections.

According to the Gender Research and Advocacy Project's analysis, the most comprehensive programme on gender is presented in the manifesto of the National Unity Democratic Organisation of Namibia (NUDO), but on

the whole, the parties' manifestos fail to mainstream gender throughout their policy discussions.¹

References to women are found in discussions of gender-based violence; on increased representation of women in decision-making bodies, and a few make reference to women's economic contribution or their role in child-bearing. But gender issues are not integrated into the parties' discussions of broad issues like health, land ownership, agricultural production, environmental issues and economic and development policies.² Table 2.4 provides a summary of a gender analysis of the party manifestos.

¹ Gender Research & Advocacy Project of the Legal Assistance Centre, in *Election Watch*, Issue No 7, 2009, Produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

² Gender Research & Advocacy Project of the Legal Assistance Centre, in *Election Watch*, Issue No 7, 2009, Produced by the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR).

Table 2.4: Gender in political party manifestos

PARTY	GENDER ISSUES IN PARTY MANIFESTOS
All People's Party (APP)	<p>The manifesto includes a section entitled "Gender Equality at all levels". This section says that APP "is for total gender equality". It cites the following specific policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "50/50 in decision making structures must become a reality in our lifetime". APP undertakes that every minister will have a deputy minister of the opposite sex, and that there will be 50/50 balance in the management cadre of the public service, in all positions of state-owned enterprises, and in local authorities. APP will also offer incentives to private companies which implement a 50/50 policy. • "tax incentives for people who employ domestic workers in order to ensure working women do not have to suffer when they have small children." • Gender issues are not specifically mentioned in any other sections of the manifesto.
Congress of Democrats (CoD)	<p>The manifesto includes section entitled "Valuing the Contribution of Women". This section says that women constitute the majority of the population but that society "still does not fully value the contribution of our women." It notes that women are victims of "violence, rape and passion murders" and asserts that "Government has done little over the last 20 years to mainstream women's causes into the country's development agenda". It cites the following specific policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Put a premium on women's contribution to society. This is the only way in which we can benefit from the contribution and ingenuity of more than half of our citizens." • "Working with NGOs and CBOs to remove all legal impediments raising barriers to equal participation by women." The section on skills development and employment notes that "a growing number of our women are reduced to prostitution" as a result of poverty and unemployment. Amongst the health problems cited in the section on poverty and welfare are maternal mortality, infant mortality and teenage pregnancies.
Communist Party	-
Democratic Party of Namibia (DPN)	-
Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA) of Namibia	<p>The manifesto includes a section entitled "Gender issues" in the section of the document on basic principles of policy. This section says that the DTA "is committed to the total elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and their complete recognition in all spheres of society." The DTA recognises women's careful role in the domestic, economic and political spheres, and promises to "actively pursue equal rights for women before the law". It furthermore "recognises the leading and stabilising role of the women of Namibia in society and will support their cause in all walks of life". There are no other specific mentions of gender. A summarised version of the manifesto published by the party contains no references to gender issues at all.</p>
Monitor Action Group (MAG)	<p>The policy document of MAG calls for clear definitions in the Namibian Constitution for the concepts "equal opportunities" and "free association", and pledges to "get rid of quotas based on race, ethnicity or gender." This is the only mention of sex or gender.</p>
Namibia Democratic Movement for Change Namibia	<p>The manifesto includes a section on "Women empowerment." It says that the party will set up a commission which will promote the representation of both men and women in government and private institutions, as leaders and on decision-making boards, "so that women can play a very big role which men are playing currently and by not discriminating women as they are our mothers who are taking care of men from a baby-boy to become a boy or a man." In the section on representatives in Parliament, NDP pledges 50/50 men and women on its party lists for Parliament and local authority elections.</p>
National Unity Democratic Organisation of Namibia (NUDO)	<p>Nudo's overall aim includes a commitment to create a society "where justice is accessible and the rule of law applied to all" irrespective of gender. The manifesto contains a lengthy section on "Gender and Women Empowerment" which opens with the statement that Nudo "is truly committed to equality between women and men". Because women constitute a majority of the population, "all problems affecting Namibian society are affecting women the most". The manifesto also cites specific problems affecting women: domestic violence, rape, poverty and unemployment (especially amongst rural women), HIV and AIDS (which affects women most severely), illiteracy and ignorance. These problems make women more prone to alcohol and drug abuse. Ignorance of their rights causes women to be lacking in self-confidence. It cites gender disparities in access to power and decision-making across various spheres as a source of differentiated development for males and females.</p> <p>The manifesto states a commitment to "revitalizing women's roles in social, economic, cultural and political arenas", and says that under a Nudo government "women shall be free to choose their own paths to self-fulfillment and responsibilities to their families and communities". It cites the following specific policies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen legal instruments to protect women, review and repeal laws which discriminate on the basis of gender and strengthen legal obligations of paternity • Require equality in property and inheritance rights • Introduce a human rights education programme that will sensitise society to women's rights • Introduce special schemes for female-headed households

PARTY	GENDER ISSUES IN PARTY MANIFESTOS
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove barriers to women's access to credit and provide training to increase the productivity of women in the informal sector • Provide incentives to companies and groups that support women's economic projects, especially in rural areas • Introduce special health clinics for women, increase women's capacity to promote their own health and ensure the delivery of sexual and reproductive health services • Make education and training more accessible to women and make educational curricula gender-sensitive at all levels, starting with pre-school • Train women in assertiveness & leadership to increase their self-confidence so that they can compete effectively with men for leadership positions in schools • (10) Use short-term affirmative action to facilitate women's entry into fields where they are most under-represented • (11) Introduce education programmes that raise women's political consciousness and educate both women and men to recognise the abilities of female candidates • (12) Implement quotas in the electoral system to ensure fair representation of women in local and national government. <p>The foreword to the manifesto notes Nudo's concern "for women who have been marginalised". The section on education mentions the problem of teenage pregnancies. The section on disabilities identifies women with disabilities as a priority group (amongst others).</p>
Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP)	<p>The manifesto contains a section on "Women and Youth". With respect to women, under the subheading "prevention of violence against women and children", RDP promises to promote public awareness of the evils of violence and crime against women and children. Related policies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To "introduce awareness programmes at all levels of the educational system" • To collaborate with community, traditional and religious leaders and NGOs "to fight the scourge of violence" and • To "impose stiffer sentences on those who rape women and children". <p>Under the subheading "women's empowerment", RDP promises to increase the role of women in government "to participate in key decisions and make policy work", in order to address the concerns of women more adequately and boost development by improving the health and education of women.</p> <p>Related policies are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strive for at least 50% representation of women in government, and the party's own "political and organizational activities" • To "promote and increase the retention of women in education" • To "increase public information to stop practices that harm or discriminate against women" • To "make reproductive and other female health issues central to social and health policy" • To "enact legislation to safeguard the dignity and rights of women and to "effectively return" to affirmative action policies for women" <p>The section of health mentions the increase in infant and maternal mortality, and specifically mentions the prevention of mother-to-child transmission as a component of its HIV and AIDS strategy. The section on the economy mentions homeless women and youth as the two priority groups for a national housing strategy. The section on corruption and crime once again highlights violence against women and children.</p>
Republican Party of Namibia (RP)	-
SWANU of Namibia	The manifesto does not mention gender. However, the section on health mentions the promotion of preventing mother-to-child transmission as a component of an educational programme on HIV and AIDS.
SWAPO Party of Namibia	<p>The manifesto includes a section on "Promotion of Gender Equality and Equity", which says that "gender mainstreaming and the equitable representation of women in positions of power will remain a priority" and that SWAPO Party will "intensify the implementation of laws and programmes to combat violence against women and children and will ensure that offenders in this regard shall face the full force of the law." It cites the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • continue to improve policies affecting professional and working women, "including the improvement of maternity leave benefits and the creation of child-friendly working environments" • "provide leadership to all structures of society in gender mainstreaming along with equal access for women to all socio-economic and political activities and in the enforcement of laws prohibiting gender-based violence" <p>Both the section on economic management and sustainable growth and the section on social upliftment and empowerment mention the need to ensure that finance for small and medium enterprises is available to female entrepreneurs (amongst others). The section on health pledges to improve and expand reproductive healthcare for pregnant women to reduce maternal mortality rates.</p> <p>There are two points pertaining specifically to women in the section of the manifesto on past achievements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV prevalence in pregnant mothers fell from 22% in 2002 to 17.8% in 2008. • In 2005, Namibia exceeded the SADC target of 30% women representation in parliament, reaching 30.8%
United Democratic Front of Namibia (UDF)	-

Gender in electoral processes

The parliament of Namibia consists of two houses: the National Assembly (NA) which has 72 elected seats and the National Council (NC) which consists of 26 members, two from each of the country's 13 regions.

Elections for the National Assembly are run on a simple Proportional Representation (PR) system. Chapter 12 of the Constitution provides for regional and local government. Article 102 (1) empowers parliament to decide on the form of these. The main legislation that has been passed is:

- The Local Authorities Act 1992.
- Regional Council Act 1992.
- Decentralisation Enabling Act 2000.
- Trust Fund for Regional Development and Equity Provisions Act 2000.

Each region is run by a regional council whose members are elected on a constituency-based or First Past the Post (FPTP) system. The political head of the region is a governor, elected by the councillors from among themselves.

Since independence, Namibia has been reforming its system of local government to devolve more responsibility to local level. The Decentralisation Policy (March 1998) states that: "the political leadership of Namibia has chosen the path of decentralisation to enhance and guarantee democratic participation of people at lower/grass roots levels in order to achieve sustainable democratic development."

There is no lower or upper tier in local government. The 48 municipal, town and village councils are

autonomous from the regional councils. Local government elections are held entirely on a PR basis. National, regional and local elections take place at the same time.

Namibia has three different electoral systems. In presidential elections the candidate that receives the most votes is elected as long as the candidate has over half the support. In National Assembly and Local Authority elections a proportional representation (PR) system with party lists is used. For Regional Council elections the FPTP system applies.

Namibia held its first internationally recognised elections in 1989 under UN supervision. It has since held regular national, regional and local elections. The most recent elections took place in 2009, with all three levels of government holding elections.

The PR system at national level is conducive to greater women's participation, but as this has not been accompanied by either a voluntary or a legislated quota, Namibia has fallen short of achieving the 30 percent mark on this front.

Typical of FPTP systems that are not accompanied by any quota, the representation of women is lowest at the Regional Council level.

However, until Lesotho trumped Namibia, this is the country in the region that consistently had the highest level of women's representation at local level (currently 42 percent) thanks to the combination of the PR system and a legislated quota.

Legislated quota at the local level

Since the 2009 elections, women's representation in top-level positions has increased; there are now more female mayors and council chairpersons. The Gender Links' Gender and Governance's Centres of Excellence in gender mainstreaming in local government project in partnership with Botswana Association of Local Authorities (BALA) is contributing to creating awareness on the importance of equal representation of women and men in decision-making in local government structures.

Deputy Mayor of Lobatse town, Malebogo Kruger challenges the Setswana proverb which says "*ga di etelelwe ke namagadi pele*" (women cannot lead). A member of BDP, Kruger represents the Peleng East ward, and is one of the five women in the 13 member council, and has had to develop the skill of making her voice heard in council where men have dominated discussions and sought to marginalise the women. She says in cases where there has been intimidation and attempts to block her advancement of an agenda within



Brigitte Horases from Women support Women organisation presenting at the regional Gender Justice and Local Government Summit - Johannesburg, March 2011. Photo: Trevor Davies

council, "I faced it head on." She refuses to believe that she belongs to the "weaker sex," and she points to the need to have a mix of skills and tact to have influence and a strong presence in council.

She is upfront on the many challenges women face entering politics; "finance is an issue - it is very expensive to campaign." Some of the considerations include transport, communications, publicity materials (although political parties often provide basic publicity materials for all their candidates). In her case Kruger also had support staff and a small office to manage the mobilisation of the electorate.

She is also clear about focusing on strategic ways of reducing women's poverty. She points out that when she works with women from poor communities, she does not take out money from her pocket to give them, she tries to create opportunities for them to be economically empowered and self sufficient. Likewise Salome Lesole, BDP councillor Central District Council, assists men and women from the Basarwa community with marketing their products in Orapa town. This is more sustain-able than providing aid.

Kruger lives in Thema, and has noted that it is a new area and there is very little street lighting, so she has

been pushing for something to be done in order to increase women's safety, particularly those coming from work or market places in the evenings.

Councillor Maleboge Kruger says, "The training I received improved my campaign skills. I became confident in public speaking and became one of the best public rally speakers." The advocacy skills she acquired also improved her house-to-house campaigns during the 2009 elections. As a result of the gender training workshops she became a trainer and advocate for the mainstreaming of gender issues in local government. In 2010 she was nominated deputy Mayor and deputy secretary general of the BDP. She in turn encouraged other women in her party to stand for councillor positions. In 2009, 50% of the women candidates won the primary elections.

In the Lobatse Town Council, the Mayor and deputy mayor are women and 46% of the councillors are women; they have the highest representation of women out of all the councils.

Like Lesotho, one of the key questions in Namibia, and in the region generally, is why the country has been willing to take bold "special measures" for increasing women's representation at the local but not the national level. The fact that there has been a substantial proportion of women at this level for some time also makes Namibia a valuable case study for testing what difference women make.

As the only country in the region with a purely PR system at local level (where it is often argued that this system is not suitable, because citizens need to be able to hold individuals, not just parties accountable) Namibia is also an interesting test case for how electoral systems at this level either help or hinder women's effective participation.

The Election Commission of Namibia consists of 5 Commissioners (three male and two female).

South Africa and Namibia debate legislated quotas and draft 50/50 layperson bills

Prompted by recent electoral declines in women's political representation, activists in Namibia and South Africa have revitalised draft layperson 50/50 bills as a possible way to get more women elected.

South Africa's May 2011 elections saw the proportion of women in local government drop from 40% to 38%. In Namibia, the decline following the 2009 national elections was even worse, from 30.9% to 23%.

This spurred a national debate about 50/50 legislated quotas at national and regional-level elections. In contrast, Namibia has adopted affirmative action legislation at the local authority level, which has ensured more than 40% representation of women in local councils since 1998. These figures show that without affirmative action legislation, reaching parity at the national and regional levels by 2015 will be impossible. The next elections are scheduled for 2014.

South Africa currently holds local elections under a mixed system and employs a PR system at the national level. The ruling ANC party has applied a voluntary quota. Those gains made in increasing women's representation in political decision-making positions in the country have largely been achieved because of political will on the part of the ANC.

The Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) strategised about how to push forward the campaign for 50/50 quotas in South African electoral laws during a roundtable discussion on International Women's Day on 8 March 2012.

The campaign has recently received renewed interest and the Independent Electoral Commission's Chair, Pansy Tlakula has spoken out about the need for a legislated quota system to achieve parity in women's

representation in the country. The Ministry of Women, Children and Persons with Disability also addressed the issue in green paper discussions which led to the draft of a Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill. In a televised interview on 4 March 2012, the deputy minister said the bill will be tabled by March 2013.

Meanwhile in Namibia, NANGOF Trust, the Namibia focal point of the Southern Africa Gender Protocol Alliance, with support from the regional Alliance Secretariat and the regional governance cluster, took advantage of public consultations on electoral reforms to submit demands for a 50/50 legislated quota there.

The Alliance delivered the formal submission to Sacky Shangala, chairperson of Namibia's Law Reform and Development Commission, at a consultative meeting on 14 March 2012. This is part of a submission that will eventually be presented to the minister of justice.



A Namibian woman calls for 50/50 legislated quotas while sporting a zebra list campaign t-shirt. Photo: Liz Frank

The campaign builds on work begun in 2002. The team provided Shangala with a copy of the research paper on 50/50 options for Namibia that was commissioned by Sister Namibia and produced by the Legal Assistance Centre under the banner of the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network in 2002.

Shangala welcomed the submission and supporting documents and asked the women's organisations to commission a lawyer to review the draft 50/50 bill in the current context of impending electoral law reform.

Namibia and South Africa are among the 13 SADC countries which have signed, and nine that have ratified, the SADC Gender Protocol, a binding instrument that calls on States to put in place measures to increase women's representation in decision-making positions in all SADC countries by 2015. A key target is achieving gender parity in all areas of decision making by 2015.

While South Africa has a relatively strong showing of women in political decision-making positions, it cannot continue to rely solely on the voluntary efforts of the ANC - 50/50 legislation is necessary to continue to advance women's equality throughout society.

Amendments to the Electoral Act 73 of 1998

3.1 The following subsection is inserted as Section 27(1)(A) in the Electoral Act 73 of 1998, as amended:

- “(1) (A) the lists referred to in subsection (1) shall be comprised as follows:
- (a) The numbers of men and women on each party list may not differ by more than one;
 - (b) The names of the men and women on each party list shall alternate, so that each group of two candidates as they appear on the list contains one man and one woman.”

The Women's Legal Centre (WLC) in South Africa tabled compelling legal research indicating that the principle of equality and positive discrimination is firmly established in the country's constitution. In addition, it noted that the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act imposes a positive obligation on the state to enact equality legislation - and on political parties to develop equity plans - and provides for affirmative action measures in this regard.

It further noted that international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the 2008 SADC Gender and Development Protocol underscore a state duty to implement measures to promote women's representation, remove barriers, set targets and apply legislative and other measures to attain parity in decision-making positions.

The WLC tabled suggestions that would be necessary to enact a constitutionally sound quota system. These include specific amendments to the Electoral Act, Municipal Electoral Act and Municipal Structures Act. It also proposed provisions and sanctions for non-compliance.

In addition, the group emphasised extending focus beyond numerical targets, noting the importance of creating an enabling environment for women to advance within the political realm. This includes the need for measures to ensure women's access to campaign funding and coaching, child care facilities and maternity benefits. It also requires political parties to squarely address sexual harassment within political parties, and the issue of women's representation in senior party leadership positions.

Following the International Women's Day meeting, the CGE and partners agreed to take forward the development and tabling of legislative proposals for a quota system in meetings with key stakeholders such as the Department for Women, Children and People with Disabilities and the IEC. These stakeholders will engage with political parties and convene public forums to raise awareness about, and build support for, such legislation.

In addition, the CGE was tasked with urgently lobbying the South African government to deposit its instruments of ratification for the SADC Protocol.

Namibia has suggested the following in its layperson's 50/50 bill:

- **National Council:** The two provisions require that regional councils, which have male and female members, must send one male and one female to the National Council. The draft retains the basic election procedures that exist at present. However, the draft requires separate voting for the male representative and the female representative.
- **Local Authorities:** The draft provides for gender-balanced "zebra lists" which alternate women and men candidates on electoral lists. In the case of local

authority councils with uneven numbers of members, the numbers of men and women on the list can differ by one (for example five candidates made up of three women and two men). The draft requires that women's and men's names alternate on each party list so that each group of two contains one candidate of each sex. Parties would be free to choose whether to put a man or a woman at the top of the list. The provision would apply to residents' associations as well as political parties.

- **National Assembly Elections:** This provision provides for "zebra lists" of candidates for the National Assembly. The current law requires that parties submit lists containing at least 24 but not more than 72 names. Thus, parties could submit lists of odd or even numbers of names. In the case of lists with uneven numbers of candidates, the numbers of men and women on the list can differ by one. Parties would be free to choose whether to put a man or a woman at the top of the list.
- **Regional Council Elections:** This requires any political party which contests more than one constituency in a region to include equal numbers of men and women amongst its candidates for that region. If the party fields an uneven number of candidates in that region, the numbers of men and women may differ by one.

While affirmative action measures have helped Namibia boast a strong showing of women representatives at the local level, special measures should also be applied to the regional and national level. South Africa can only guarantee its high level of women's representation in political decision-making if it adopts a legislated quota so that women's representation is not left to the whims of the leaders of political parties.

Gender and voters

The Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN), established in 1992, is responsible for all electoral activities including voter registration and education, political party registration, candidate nomination and conducting of the polling. Two females and three males constitute the five-member ECN.

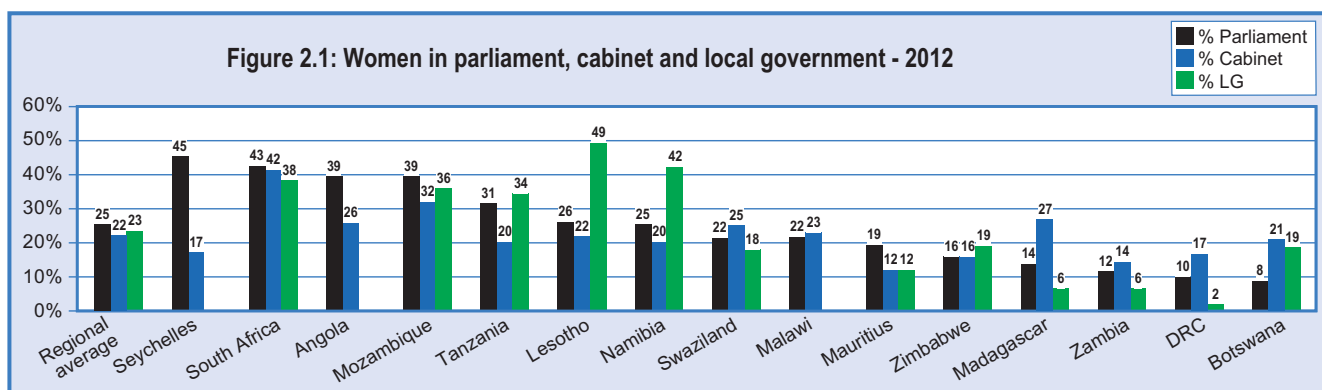
Civil society organisations and opposition parties raised concerns regarding the voters' roll for the elections. One of the concerns was that the voters' roll was not

updated and included names of people who had died. The ECN, however, said that this had no impact on the election processes.³

The number of voters on the voters' roll was said to be 822,344, according to information political parties indicated they had received from the ECN.⁴ This election held particular significance because for the first time, young women and men born after the first democratic elections in 1989 were able to vote. This group, called the "born frees" was estimated at around 300,000.

³ Updated voters' roll hard to keep because people die everyday - ECN, Africa Elections Project/Namibia, <http://www.africanelections.org/namibia/news/page/php?news=4732>

⁴ Nangula Shejavali, Opposition parties claim 'possible rigging', The Namibian, Tuesday December 1, 2009.



Source: 2012 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer, Gender Links.

Figure 2.1 highlights that Namibia with a 25% proportion of women in parliament is doing much better compared to other SADC countries. However, this is a far cry from the 50% target in the SADC Gender Protocol. Political parties and government will have to redouble efforts to reach gender parity in this sphere of decision making.

Table 2.5 shows that between 1994 and 2009 there have been a marginal increase of 4% and that in 2009 the representation of women dropped from 26.9% to 24.4%. The figures below exclude non-voting appointments by the President. It will take nothing short of a miracle to achieve parity by 2015.

Table 2.5: Comparison of women's representation in the national assembly between 1994 and 2009⁵

Year	Total seats	Women's seats	% women
2009	78	19	24.4
2004	78	21	26.9
1999	75	18	25
1994	75	13	17.3

Table 2.6: Global and regional ranking of women parliamentarians

Country	Women in lower or single houses (%)				Global rank				SADC rank			
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012	2009	2010	2011	2012
Seychelles	23.5	23.5	24	45	41	43	42	5	7	7	7	1
South Africa	44.5	44.5	43	42	3	3	4	7	1	1	1	2
Mozambique	34.8	39.2	39.2	39	15	9	10	12	3	2	2	3
Angola	37.3	38.6	38.6	38.6	9	10	11	15	2	3	3	4
Tanzania	30.4	30.7	35	36	23	23	15	18	4	4	4	5
Lesotho	25	24.2	24.2	26	28	40	40	42	6	6	6	6
Namibia	26.9	26.9	25	25	21	32	39	45	5	5	5	7
Malawi	20.5	21.2	21.2	22	52	54	52	56	8	8	8	8
Mauritius	17.1	18.8	18.8	19	66	72	60	72	9	9	9	9
Madagascar			12.5	18			90	75				13
Zimbabwe	15.2	15.0	15	15	78	80	75	88	11	11	10	11
Swaziland	13.8	13.6	13.6	14	83	87	84	92	12	12	12	12
Zambia	16	15.2	15.2	12	77	79	81	103	10	10	11	13
DRC	8.4	7.7	8.4	8.9	108	110		114	14	14	15	14
Botswana	11.1	7.9	7.9	7.9	95	114	114	122	13	13	14	15

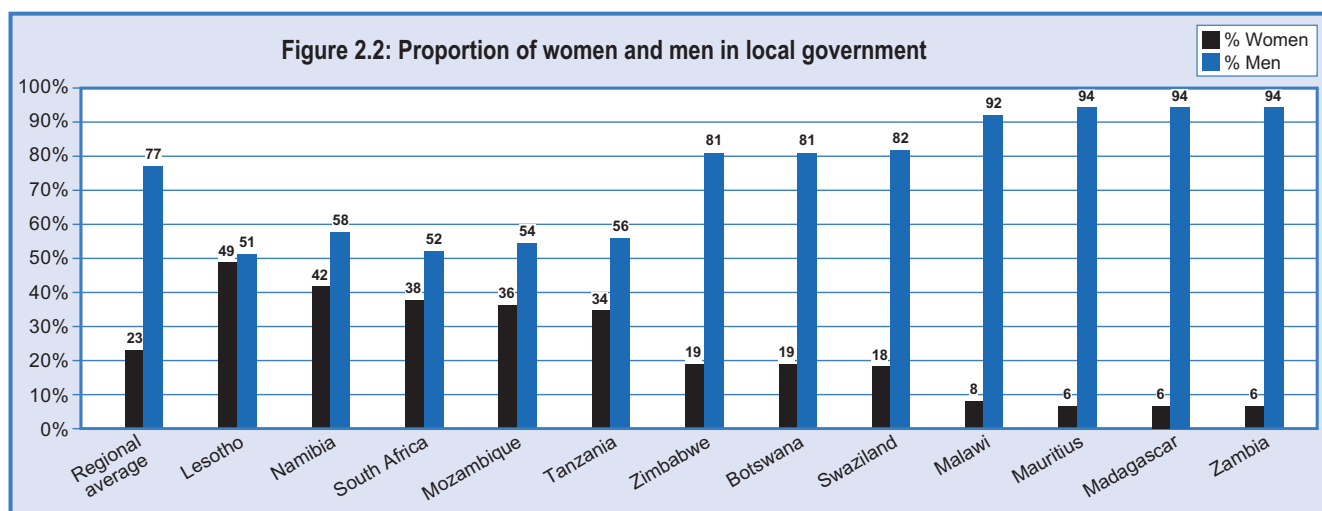
Source: www.ipu.org, accessed 30 June 2012.

Table 2.6 shows that at 25%, Namibia ranks seventh compared to other SADC countries with regard to women's representation in parliament in the lower or

single house only. South Africa, with 44% of women in parliament, is closest to achieving the 50% target.

⁵ http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/reports/arc/2225_94.htm

Local government



Source: 2012 SADC Gender Protocol barometer.

Figure 2.2 shows women in local government in all SADC countries that have council structures. Namibia has the second highest female representation in local government in the region. This has been fairly consistent over time between 40% and 42%.

What is of concern is that only SWAPO has adopted the zebra system hence women's political participation has not advanced beyond 40%. Women are also under represented in key decision-making positions such as mayors and chairs of councils. The representation of women at the local level is also in stark contrast to the regional councils (12% women) where elections are held on a FPTP basis.

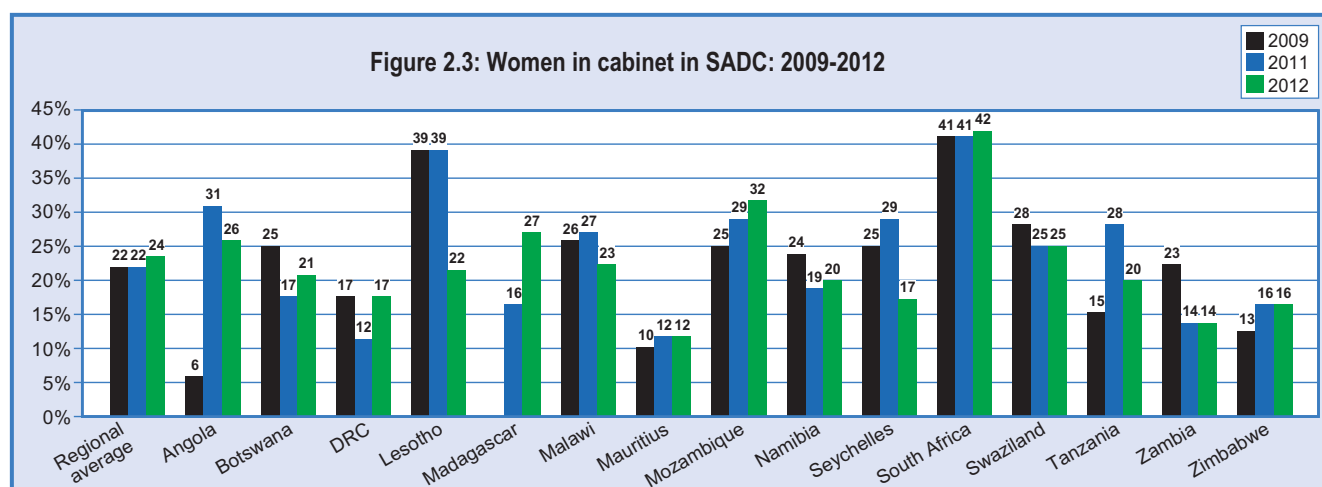
Cabinet

Table 2.7: Women and men in cabinet

	No of women	No of men	Total	% women	% men
Ministers	5	22	27	19%	81%
Deputy ministers	5	18	23	22%	78%

Table 2.7 shows that women are under-represented in cabinet: 20% overall, 19% ministers; 22% deputy ministers, even though this is an area where change

could possible come about quickly as these are presidential appointees.



Source: 2012 SADC Gender Protocol Barometer.

Figure 2.3 shows that Namibia has been inconsistent in terms of women representation in cabinet. At 20%, the country is slightly below the regional average of 24%.

The variations however do not translate into large numbers, given the small size of cabinets.

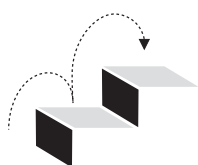
The public service

Table 2.8: Women and men in the public service

	No of women	No of men	Total	% women	% men
Secretary to cabinet	0	1	11	0	100
PS	6	21	27	22	78
DPS	4	19	23	17	83
Under Secretary/Regional Officer	10	32	42	24	76
Directors	100	107	57	32	68
Deputy Directors	107	191	298	36	64
Total				32	68

Source: Namibia Country Report 1995 to 2009 on the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.

Table 2.8 shows that Namibia has achieved 30% women in the public service. This is still far from the 50/50 by 2015 target. But if sufficient mechanisms and political will to transform is there the country could come close to achieving gender parity within the next few years.



Next steps

- There is a need to advocate for affirmative action to increase women's participation in other levels of governance beyond the local government level.
- There is a need for a robust advocacy strategy to ensure the adoption of a 50/50 bill to increase women's representation political decision making positions at national level.
- There is need to educate political parties so that they mainstream gender sufficiently and effectively in all party structures and policies.
- There is need to carry out voter education so that they vote for women.
- Parties should ensure that debates on socio-economic issues such as health, land ownership, agricultural production, environmental issues and economic and development policies are gender responsive.
- Training for women aspiring candidates so that they have confidence to enter into politics.