

# POLICY BRIEF

## NOVEMBER 2013

Third edition

# 50/50 by 2015? Women in politics in Southern Africa

# 50/50



## YES WE MUST!

### FACT BOX

- In August 2013 President Joyce Banda of Malawi became the first woman ever to chair the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Heads of State Summit. SADC also appointed its first female Executive Secretary, Dr. Stergomena Tax.
- The global average for women in parliament is 21.3%<sup>1</sup>, a 7.4% increase of women parliamentarians over the last decade.
- The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development signed in 2008 sets a target of women in all areas of decision-making by 2015.
- The average for women in parliament in the SADC region has gone up to 25.3% an increase of 7.5 points over the last decade.
- Two SADC countries (Seychelles and South Africa) are in the global top ten of women's representation in parliament.
- Only six countries (Seychelles, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) have achieved or surpassed 30% women in parliament.
- At the local government level, Lesotho (with the highest, at 49 % women), South Africa, Mozambique, Tanzania and Namibia have surpassed the 30% mark.
- With ten national and eight local elections before 2015 the 50/50 campaign has its work cut out. However, best estimates suggest that by the end of 2015 SADC countries will just fall short of the original 30% target and not reach 50%.
- Calculations in the 2013 Barometer reflect the critical importance of electoral systems and quotas in increasing women's representation. Overall, women constitute over double (38%) the women in parliament in Proportional Representation (PR) countries compared to countries with the First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) system (15%).
- Women constitute 16% of parliamentarians and 9% of councillors in countries without quotas, compared to 38% of parliamentarians and 37% of councillors in countries with no quotas.
- The key to change is political will. The fact that women are still underrepresented in cabinet (with some exceptions, like South Africa) calls into question the political commitment of leaders. This is one area where leaders can and must walk the talk in the countdown to 2015.
- The 2010 Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) found that women constitute only 13% of news sources in the political topic category: a 4% increase compared to the 2003 Gender and Media Baseline Study (GMBS) but still far from the gender parity target required by the Protocol.



With less than two years before the 2015 deadline for achieving the 28 targets of the SADC Gender Protocol, progress towards equal representation of women in political decision-making over the past thirteen years has been slow and uneven. This policy brief places the SADC region in the global context, highlighting some of the gains and losses since 2000. Local government elections held between 2010 and 2011 show that this sphere of governance has become a testing ground for some of the best and worst trends of women's representation in political decision-making.

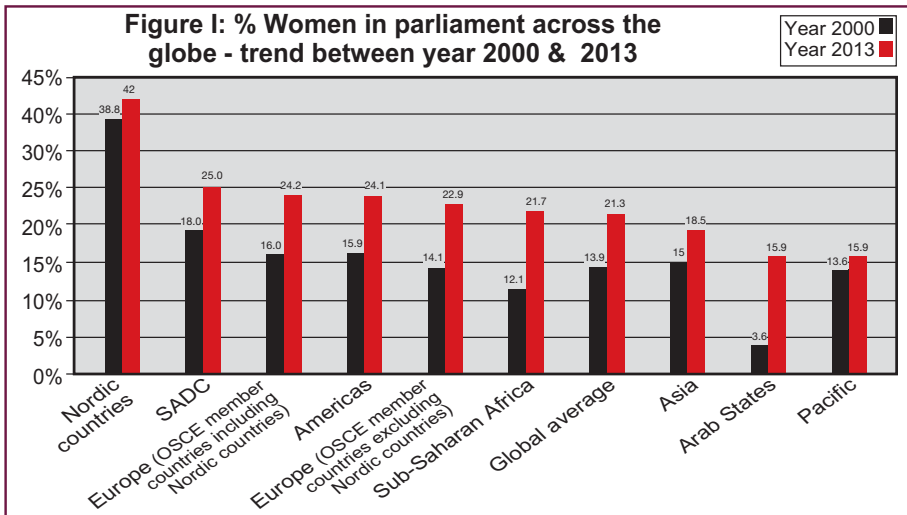
The policy brief examines some of the reasons for this, highlighting the roles that electoral systems, quotas, political will, campaigns and the media can play in achieving the target. A key point made is that if some countries are able of achieving or coming close to achieving this target then all countries in the region are capable of doing so.

### Global context

The global average of women in parliament (both upper and lower houses combined) has increased by a mere seven percentage points from 13.9% in 2000 to 21.3 % in 2013<sup>2</sup>. Figure 1 shows that at 42% the Nordic countries lead the way while the SADC region at 22% has remained on second position since 2012.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm> Last accessed on 16 April 2012.

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm> Last accessed on 25 November 2013.



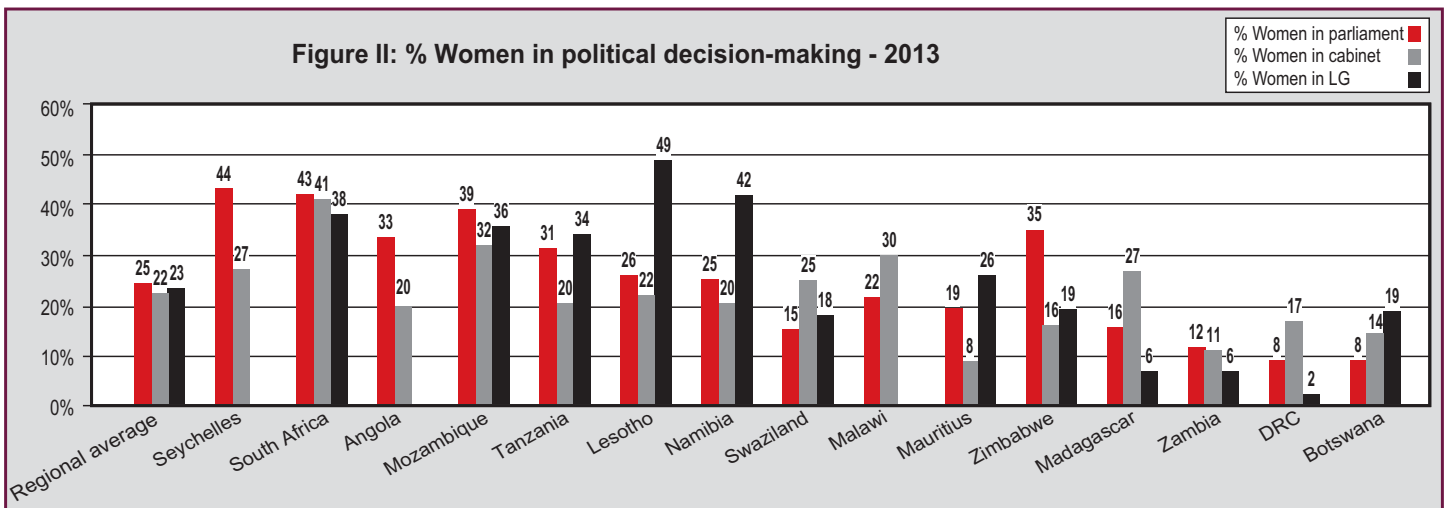
Source: IPU website accessed 25 November, 2013.

points from 18% in 2000 to 25% in 2013; a slow move since the signing of the Protocol in 2008. The region is, however, above the global average by five percentage points.

## Regional context

Despite the fact that most countries had not come close to reaching the initial target of 30% representation of women in decision-making in the 1997 SADC Declaration on Gender and Development adopted in Blantyre, Malawi, Heads of State upped this target to 50% in the more binding 2008 Protocol on Gender and Development.

Over the last twelve years the proportion of women in politics in the SADC region has increased by seven percentage



Source: SADC Gender Protocol Barometer 2013.

Figure II shows women's representation in decision-making in parliament (a regional average of 25%), cabinet (22%) and local government (24%). The figures show that:

- There is only one area of decision-making in which SADC is close to achieving parity - local government in Lesotho (49%).
- Seychelles leads the way on women's representation in parliament (44%) but South Africa has the most even spread of women across cabinet, parliament and at the local level.
- The four worst performing countries are Swaziland, Zambia, Botswana and the DRC.

## Cabinet

Because cabinet consists of presidential appointments, it is a key test of political will. South Africa leads the way at the executive level with 40% women, but in most other countries the level of women in cabinet hovers between 10% and 20%. Unexpected events in Malawi changed the course of the country's history with the appointment of the region's first woman head of state. In August 2013 Banda became the first ever woman to chair the SADC Heads of State Summit.



Role model: A little girl emulates President Joyce Banda at the SADC Heads of State summit. Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

In her acceptance speech at the SADC Heads of State Summit Banda said: “I am pleased to note that SADC has done well in promotion of women in leadership and decision making positions. Since the signing of the historic Gender and Development Declaration in Blantyre in 1997, and the adoption of the SADC Gender Protocol in 2008, the region has demonstrated its commitment to empowerment of women. We have ushered women into positions of power - among them Chairperson for the AU Commission Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, Executive Director for UN Women Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, The Chairperson of the Pan African Parliament Gertrude Mongella, Vice President of Zimbabwe Joyce Mujuru, and I am testimony of this achievement having become first female president of my country. We are proud of this achievement.”

**Table I: Women in decision-making in SADC 2000-2013**

	2000				2005					2013						Both houses (parliament) Increase/decrease		Overall gain/loss over 10 years
	Globe rate	Lower house	Upper house	Both houses	Globe rate	Lower house	Upper house	Both houses	Cabinet	Globe rate	Lower house	Upper house	Both houses	Cabinet	LG	2000 - 2005	2005 - 2010	
	<b>Globe Ave.</b>		13.9%	17.7%	13.9%		16.4%	15%	16.2%			21.8%	19.1%	24%			2.3%	
<b>Reg Ave.</b>		17.7%	22.5%	18.0%		20.4%	23.2%	20.6%			24.7%	19.8%	24.1%	22.0%	23.2%	2.6%	3.5%	6.1%
<b>Angola</b>	42	15.5%	N/A	15.5%	70	15.0%	N/A	15.0%	5.9%	22	34.1%	N/A	34.1%	25.7%		-0.5%	23.6%	23.2%
<b>Botswana</b>	38	17.0%	N/A	17.0%	91	11.1%	N/A	11.1%	25.0%	123	7.9%	N/A	7.9%	14%	19.3%	-5.9%	-3.2%	-9.1%
<b>DRC</b>		No available figures			86	12.0%	N/A	12.0%	16.7%	116	8.9%	5.6%	10%	17.0%			-4.3%	-4.3%
<b>Lesotho</b>	101	3.8%	27.3%	10.7%	87	11.7%	36.4%	17.0%	27.8%	39	26.7%	27.3%	26%	22%	49.1%	6.3%	5.9%	12.2%
<b>Madagascar</b>	76	8.0%	N/A	8.0%	116	6.9%	11.1%	8.4%		80	17.5%	12.2%	15.8%	27%	6.0%	0.4%	1.9%	2.3%
<b>Malawi</b>	73	8.3%	N/A	8.3%	75	13.6%	N/A	13.6%	12.5%	59	22.3%	N/A	22.2%	22.7%	N/A	5.3%	7.6%	13.0%
<b>Mauritius</b>	74	8.2%	N/A	8.2%	62	17.1%	N/A	17.1%	10.0%	74	18.8%	N/A	18.8%	8%	26%	8.9%	0.0%	10.6%
<b>Mozambique</b>	9	30.0%	N/A	30.0%	10	34.8%	N/A	34.8%	25.0%	12	39.2%	N/A	39.2%	32.1%	35.6%	4.8%	4.4%	9.2%
<b>Namibia</b>	18	25.0%	7.7%	20.4%	24	34.6%	19.2%	30.8%	24.0%	49	24.4%	26.9%	25%	20%	41.8%	10.4%	-6.0%	4.3%
<b>Seychelles</b>	19	23.5%	N/A	23.5%	20	29.4%	N/A	29.4%		5	43.8%	N/A	43.8%	27%		5.9%	-5.9%	0.0%
<b>South Africa</b>	10	29.8%	32.1%	30.1%	14	32.8%	33.3%	32.8%	43.0%	8	42.3%	32.1%	41%	41.2%	39.7%	2.7%	9.9%	20.3%
<b>Swaziland</b>	105	3.1%	13.3%	6.3%	93	10.8%	30.0%	16.8%	18.8%	129	6.2%	33.0%	14.7.9%	25%	17.9%	10.5%	5.0%	15.6%
<b>Tanzania</b>	40	16.4%	N/A	16.4%	19	30.4%	N/A	30.4%	14.8%	20	36%	N/A	36%	20.0%	34.2%	14.0%	0.2%	14.3%
<b>Zambia</b>	63	10.1%	N/A	10.1%	81	12.7%	N/A	12.7%	22.7%	107	11.5%	N/A	11.5%	11.0%	6.1%	2.5%	2.5%	5.1%
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	47	14.0%	N/A	14.0%	67	16.0%	N/A	16.0%	13.9%	27	31.5%	47.5%	35.1%	12%	16%	2.0%	1.9%	3.9%

Source: i) Gender Links ii) IPU website: [www.ipu.com](http://www.ipu.com) last accessed on 24 November 2013.

## Parliament

The region is a combination of the best and worst performers. Only two countries, Seychelles and South Africa, fall into the top ten countries globally in terms of women's representation in parliament. At the other end of the spectrum Botswana and Swaziland occupy positions 123 and 129 respectively on the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) global ranking. Only six countries (Angola, Mozambique, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania and Zimbabwe) have reached or surpassed the original 30% target. Three countries (Lesotho, Malawi and Namibia) are between 20% and 30% and the rest are below 20% with Botswana and DRC below the ten percent mark.

Table I shows the trends in women's decision-making in SADC from 2000-2013. There have been some marked improvements in certain countries over the past ten years. Table one shows that the biggest improver is Seychelles where women's representation increased from 29.4% to 44% and from a global rating of 43 in 2005 to five in 2013.

In the past decade Malawi and Lesotho have also shown laudable progress, moving from single digit representation to over 20%. South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania have shown consistent improvement over the decade ensuring their places globally in the top 20.

The adoption of a new Constitution in Zimbabwe which provides for a 30% quota for women in parliament, led to the dramatic increase in women's representation in parliament from 19% in 2008 to 35% in the July elections. The elections in Swaziland in September witnessed a backward slide of women's representation from 22% to 14.7%. In Botswana's last elections in 2009, the proportion of women fell from an already low 11.1 % to 7.9%.



Similarly in the 2009 elections the proportion of women in the Namibian parliament declined from just over 30% to around 26%. In Zambia women's representation declined from 17.9% to low 11.5% in 2010.

### **At local level**

Table I shows that at the local level Lesotho (49.1%) leads the way followed by Namibia at 44% and South Africa at 38%. As the 50/50 by 2015 deadline looms local government has become a testing ground for political will to make the 50/50 campaign a reality.

**Special measures play a key role in increasing women's representation:** In Lesotho while women's representation slipped from 58% to 49.1% in the October 2011 elections, the result is not as contested as in the 2006 elections on which the law reserved 30% seats for women. Following a political outcry Lesotho amended the electoral law to reserve a third of the seats for women on a Proportional Representation (PR) system in addition to women being able to contest the First Past the Post (FPTP) seats with men.

### **Voluntary quotas not enough - why legislated quotas matter**

South Africa's local government elections in May 2011 witnessed a two percent drop in women's representation from 40% to 38% as a result of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) - the only one in South Africa and the region to have a voluntary 50% quota - losing ground in the elections. This has led to a campaign for quotas to be legislated in South Africa.

### **An innovative gender neutral Mauritius Local Government Elections Act**



Hon. Herve Aimee, Minister of Local Government, opening the Award Night ceremony of the Mauritius Mini Summit. Photo: Gender Links Gallery

In Mauritius, the proportion of women in local government increased from 6% to 26% in the December 2012 elections following a multi-dimensional campaign led by Gender Links (GL) that resulted in an amendment to the Constitution and the introduction of a quota to the local government election act. The new women councillors, who received campaign training prior to the elections and now through the local government Centres of Excellence (COE) project, demonstrate how gender balance enhances equity and efficacy in service delivery.

*"The New Local Government Act is indeed a milestone towards gender equality. I would like to thank (GL Francophone Director) Loga Virahsawmy and Gender Links for all their help over the last two years ensuring that the radical changes I proposed became reality. The new Local Government Act is another step in line with the Government's philosophy of the role of women in modern Mauritius. I want to empower women through local government. Their presence is one of proximity, as all councillors must reside in their local council area. Many are becoming leaders of their communities. It is my intention that local government should become a stepping stone for women to emerge for participation at the national level, where less than 20% of the members of the National Assembly are female." - Hon. Herve Aimee, Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands.*

### **Electoral systems and quotas**

The question is, why are some countries making good progress while others are regressing? The answer to this is multifaceted and relates mainly to electoral systems, approaches to quotas, political will and concerted 50/50 campaigns.

**TABLE II: SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICA 50/50 STRATEGY 2014-2016**

	% Women Cabinet	% Women Parliament	Next National elections	% Women in local government	Next Local elections	Electoral system	Quota	Strategy
Angola	20	33	2017	N/A	None	PR	Voluntary party quota	Advocate for local elections; legislated quota at local and national level.
Botswana	14	8	2014	19	2014	FPTP	Voluntary party quota	Advocate for legislated quota at local and national level.
DRC	17	8	2016	2	2016	FPTP	NONE	Advocate for legislated quotas at local and national level.
Lesotho	22	26	2017	49	2016	Mixed	30% at local level	Advocate for the quota at local level to be extended to national level.
Madagascar	27	16	2013	6	2013	FPTP	NONE	Use the Mauritius example to advocate for quotas at local and national level.
Malawi	30	22	2014	NONE	2014	FPTP	NONE	Advocate for legislated quotas at national, local level using the Zimbabwe and Mauritius examples.
Mauritius	8	19	2015	26	2017	Mixed	Legislated quota local	Advocate for the quota at local level to be extended to national level.
Mozambique	32	39	2014	36	2013	PR	Voluntary party	Advocate for all parties to adopt quotas and or legislated quota.
Namibia	20	25	2014	42	2015	PR	Voluntary party	Advocate for legislated quota at local level to be extended to national level; and for all parties to follow the SWAPO 50/50 lead.
Seychelles	27	44	2016	N/A	N/A	Mixed	None	Document how Seychelles has succeeded without a quota.
South Africa	41	43	2014	38	2016	PR - N Mixed -L	Voluntary party	Advocate for a legislated quota at local and national levels and for all parties to follow SA's 50/50 lead.
Swaziland	25	15	2013	18	2013	FPTP	Const -30%	Analysis of 2013 outcomes - re-strategising
Tanzania	20	31	2015	34	2015	FPTP	Const-30%	Advocate for the Constitutional quota to be raised to 50%.
Zambia	11	12	2016	6	2016	FPTP		Advocate for legislated quotas at national and local level using the Zimbabwe and Mauritius examples.
Zimbabwe	11.5	35	2018	TBC	2018	FPTP	Legislated 30% national	Take stock of losses and gains in 2013, lobby for quota to be extended to local government.

Table II shows that the four countries (Seychelles, South Africa, Mozambique, Angola and Zimbabwe) have surpassed 30% of women's representation in political decision-making national level, and Namibia and South Africa (which have the second and third highest representation of women at the local level), have all achieved this as a result of the PR system combined with voluntary party quotas. Namibia's ruling party Southwest Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) in July 2013 adopted a voluntary party 50/50 quota.

Well-documented evidence shows that women candidates have a better chance of getting elected under the PR system, especially the closed list system. The reason for this is that voters then focus on the political party and its policies and programmes rather than on the individual candidate. This is advantageous for women as there are still deeply entrenched patriarchal attitudes and views that women should not participate in politics, and if given a choice between a female or male candidate, voters are more likely to vote for the man.

Table II shows that countries with the constituency-based system and no quotas have the lowest levels of women's representation. Voluntary party quotas in a constituency system seldom work in that men, who are better known, get put in the "safe" constituencies, while women candidates are fielded in constituencies that parties know they are not likely to win. The 2006 Lesotho local government attempt to reserve 30% seats for women backfired as men viewed this as unfair.

A possible alternative for the region is the mixed constituency and PR approach provided in the Tanzanian Constitution. Women are free to contest in the open elections. In addition 30% of the seats in parliament are reserved for women and apportioned to parties on a PR system in accordance with the vote they garner in the elections. This system does not directly infringe anyone's constitutional rights and is therefore less open to contestation. Lesotho adopted the Tanzania approach in the 2011 local elections, leading to a more acceptable

quota. The new Zimbabwe Constitution also adopted this formula. This resulted in an increase in the proportion of women in parliament from 18% in 2008 to 35% in 2013.

The December 2012 local government elections in Mauritius represent a critical breakthrough in that the island adopted a “gender neutral” quota for women in a FPTP system with no reserved seats. Thus parties had to field women in seats where they would win for the quota to be translated into actual gains. Government and civil society mobilisation ensured a critical number of women candidates and winners. *This goes to show that quotas can be successful in a FPTP system with the necessary will and mobilisation.*

There are at least 12 elections of some kind taking place in the SADC region between now and the end of 2015 (see Table II). The table summarises strategies necessary in each country to achieve the gender parity target set by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development.

### The role of the media in elections and gender discourse

The self-monitoring exercise conducted in 76 Centres of Excellence (COEs) for Gender in the Media shows that the proportion of women sources in the media has gone up by three percentage points from 19% in the 2010 Gender and Media Progress Study (GMPS) to 22%. Women sources in the political category in 2010 had increased from 8% to 13%. This is still too low, but at least there is forward movement.

Media monitoring during elections also shows that generally women's voices are still grossly under represented and that gender does not really feature as a topic in the media, but that there are large variations across countries. In Malawi for instance, during the election period women only comprised 12% of sources, with 28% of stories being about the elections and a mere 3% being about gender specific issues. On the other hand monitoring done by Media Monitoring Africa (MMA) in South Africa showed that women comprised 24% of media sources in election coverage but that gender as a topic only received 2.4% of media attention. But qualitative monitoring of media continues to yield several examples of blatant gender stereotypes such as the prominent coverage given to South Africa's, DA's Helen Zille admitting that she used Botox.

### Way forward

Evidence from the region shows that while the media and political parties have a key role to play, electoral systems and quotas are the key to achieving rapid increases in women's political representation. *Yes we can, and yes we must!*

### SADC Protocol Governance Provisions

ARTICLE	TARGET AREA	PROVISION - 2015
5	Full and meaningful participation in all spheres of life.	<b>Affirmative action measures</b> with particular reference to women with the aim of eliminating all barriers which prevent them from participating.
12	Women in decision making positions.	<b>At least fifty per cent</b> of decision making positions in public and private sectors are held by women; affirmative action measures in effect.
	Equal representation and democracy.	<b>Laws and policies</b> are accompanied by public awareness campaigns to demonstrate link between equal representation participation of men and women to democracy, good governance and citizen participation.
13	Participation in electoral processes.	<b>Laws and policies</b> put in place to enable women to have equal opportunities with men to participate in electoral processes.
	Ensuring and enabling participation.	<b>Policies, strategies and programmes</b> for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building women's capacity to effectively participate - leadership, gender sensitivity and mentoring.</li> <li>• Support structures for women in decision making.</li> <li>• Establish and strengthen structures to enhance gender mainstreaming.</li> <li>• Addressing discriminatory attitudes and norms in decision-making structures.</li> </ul>
	Men's inclusion	<b>Gender training</b> and community mobilisation to include men at all levels.

Source: Gender Links compiled from the SADC Gender and Development Protocol.

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