



Extracted from *Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*
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Introduction

This Atlas is based on country-specific information contained in the Global Database of Quotas for Women (<http://www.quotaproject.org>), a joint initiative of Stockholm University, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). With the spread of gender quotas as a policy tool for increasing women's political participation and representation, this information—which has been made available to our users since the development of the Database in 2003—has served a valuable purpose: to provide a one-window source of information on quota practices around the world by (1) succinctly explaining the often complex manner in which electoral systems and gender quota regulations interact and affect women's representation in politics and (2) making this knowledge accessible to gender-equality advocates, policy makers and researchers. This publication makes this information available to diverse audiences, especially where access to the online Database may not always be possible due to limited Internet connectivity.

As is the case with the Quota Database, the Atlas uses direct quotations from relevant legal sources where possible, and features summaries of constitutional and other legal texts for each country in order to describe the quota systems in clear and tractable ways. This approach echoes the concerns of many of the grass-roots women's rights and gender-equality activists, who often describe the challenge of understanding complex rules that govern the composition of legislatures and related electoral gender quotas at various levels. The Atlas strives to make this information more widely available to gender-equality activists to help explain how legal and policy frameworks related to electoral systems and gender quotas interact and influence women's political participation and representation. This publication shares practical knowledge of the use of various gender quota mechanisms and the challenges associated with their introduction and implementation, which will hopefully inspire further interest among legislators, advocates and practitioners in assessing the features, successes and failures of these practices and help them apply these lessons.

The three partner organizations are well aware of the fact that—as with any print publication that provides extensive references to the number of women in parliaments based on the latest election results and to legal acts and decrees that are susceptible to reform and change—certain elements of the text may be overtaken by events shortly after the report's release. Therefore the Quota Database will continue to be updated regularly, but it is hoped that this publication—especially the overview of quota types and the analysis of their interaction with electoral systems, and arguments used for and against quotas—will be of lasting use for our users and readers.

How to use the Atlas

The Atlas contains profiles of the 85 countries and territories/special areas¹ from around the world that have enacted mandatory legislation at the national or sub-national level for implementing gender quotas. It therefore excludes countries in which political parties practise voluntary party quotas in their candidate selection and nomination processes,

but that lack national laws for implementing gender quotas; profiles of such countries are contained in the **Online Quota Database**, but have been excluded from this Atlas due to the lack of systematic information on the practice of voluntary party quotas around the world.

The Atlas presents information on diverse practices in the use of gender quotas for legislative bodies at the national (upper and lower houses) and sub-national levels, whether wholly elected, appointed or a combination of these two.

At the uppermost section of every country page, **basic information** is provided in the following sequence: **full name of the national-level legislature**, **type of legislature** (bicameral or unicameral), **total number of seats in the legislature** (filled at the election), **seats held by women** (electoral results, in absolute and percentage terms), **year of the last election held or year of the last renewal**, **the electoral system** and **the type of quota in use**.

A more detailed overview of legislated quotas is then presented for each level of legislature, where they exist. If quota legislation in a given country applies only to the lower house of parliament but not to the upper house or sub-national legislative assemblies, the relevant information is presented only for the lower house. For each level of legislature in which quota laws are applicable, detailed information is provided on applicable **sanctions for non-compliance**, and on **gender-based ranking and placement rules** for allocating candidates to certain positions on electoral lists or in a certain number of districts. For countries that use the system of reserved seats, in which the reservation is binding by design, the relevant cell indicates 'Not Applicable'.

The **Additional information** section for each country provides a brief overview of historical facts and developments in relation to past or current efforts to introduce or enhance quota laws and practices, significant successes or challenges in their implementation, and any other relevant information regarding the functioning of the electoral system and quota provisions in the country.

The **Glossary of terms** defines specific terms related to electoral systems, quota types and other related concepts. It largely relies on definitions provided in International IDEA's *Electoral System Design Handbook* and the Global Database of Quotas for Women.

Methods of data collection

The information presented for each country is primarily based on legal sources such as texts of constitutions and electoral or party laws that together regulate elections and the use of gender quotas. Basic facts and information regarding the statutory composition of legislatures, results of the most recent elections and the number of women are based on the IPU's official statistics, which it regularly gathers from national parliaments,² and that can be found on IPU's Database "Parline" <<http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp>>. Some synthesis of historical facts and analysis is based on a variety of sources such as election observation reports of various reputed international organizations, research articles, press reports and contacts.