



Extracted from *Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*
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Lessons learned and experiences from the field

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

To consolidate democracy and ensure that it is representative, the IPU works to increase the number of women in politics and parliament. Among the various policies and measures it advocates to that end, the organization places special emphasis on the adoption of quotas as an effective way to correct imbalances in the participation of men and women in parliament.

Since 1994, the IPU has supported the participation of women in parliament:

- it provides legislative support in the drafting or amendment of constitutions and/or electoral laws that carry measures to promote women's participation (Bangladesh, Tunisia, Turkey, Rwanda, etc.);
- it informs parliaments' oversight of government action on policies, programmes and measures implemented to enhance women's participation in politics and parliament (Burkina Faso, Jordan, Uganda, etc.);
- it assists parliaments in their efforts to sensitize the public, opinion leaders and political decision makers on the importance of women's participation in politics (Burundi, Rwanda, etc.); and
- it supports the pooling of efforts and partnerships between men and women so as to foster women's participation in politics and supports partnerships between parliamentarians and women's civil society organizations and other movements or associations.

Support is provided in the form of capacity-building activities, delivery of expertise and legislative drafting skills, provision of comparative data and examples of good practice, inter-parliamentary exchanges and forums for concerted action between parliament and other stakeholders involved in gender equality in politics.

Based on its long-standing action in support of more women in Parliament, the IPU has drawn the following lessons:

- ***Parliaments can be effective vehicles for promoting quotas.*** Parliaments develop or review electoral systems, electoral laws or even constitutions, so quotas cannot be developed without their joint involvement with the executive. The more parliamentarians are convinced of the good reasons to take measures to enhance women's participation, the more likely they are to vote in favour of such a law.
- ***Quotas need to be understood and accepted in order to be effective.*** Parliamentarians also have a key role to play in ensuring that quotas are understood and accepted by the public. As representatives of the people, they are the relay between the executive and the citizens. They are a vehicle for both consulting and sensitizing the public. Involving MPs in public consultation and sensitization efforts will give legitimacy to quotas and

lend support to their proper application subsequently. Similarly, parliamentarians will be strategic partners in sensitizing their political parties and helping them understand, accept and adopt quotas.

- ***Men are crucial partners. Men make up the majority of politicians.*** They account for 79 per cent of the world's parliamentarians, 83 per cent of ministers, 93 per cent of heads of government and 95 per cent of heads of state. They also make up the majority of members of political parties and their executives. Therefore, they have a considerable influence on decision making. It would be impossible to envisage or discuss, let alone adopt, quotas to enhance women's participation in politics without them. All sensitization, consultation, debating and decision-making efforts must be inclusive, and must consider (and try to reconcile) the interests of both men and women.
- ***Decision makers, committees and caucuses in parliament are key allies.*** Speakers, deputy speakers, chairpersons of parliamentary committees and leaders of political groups are decision makers that are key allies in the adoption of quotas. Their voices count in debates and decisions taken in parliament. Parliamentary committees and women's caucuses are often strategic allies in the debate on and adoption of quotas by parliaments. These bodies are composed of parliamentarians of different political persuasions, which can facilitate discussions that go beyond partisan interests. They are also an excellent forum for elaborating strategies aimed at overcoming reticence within Parliament, and provide a space for parliamentarians to consult and work in partnership with experts, government officials, representatives of civil society organizations and women's movements to promote quotas.
- ***Quotas must also be adopted at the international level.*** International organizations must not be content with preaching about enhancing women's participation; they must lead by example. The IPU is one of the few international organizations that have adopted quotas to enhance women's participation within their bodies. Since 2003, a series of measures have been adopted, for example targets that carry sanctions and minimum quotas of between 20 and 30 per cent women that are applied in the organization's main governing bodies. Today these quotas are respected by IPU members. Strengthening these quotas is currently on the organization's agenda. Moreover, the IPU never fails to encourage other international organizations to follow suit.

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Through collaborative partnerships at the global and national levels, International IDEA has used comparative knowledge and resources to leverage and influence the adoption and application of gender quotas. The Institute engages stakeholders such as national gender machineries, political parties, electoral management bodies, women's interparty parliamentary caucuses, women's multiparty groups/networks outside of parliaments, the media and civil society and other intergovernmental bodies.

International IDEA consolidated the evidence-based knowledge and experiences of researchers and practitioners on the impact of gender quotas in its regional report series on the implementation of quotas in Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and the Arab states.

In a seminal publication entitled *Women in Parliaments: Beyond Numbers*, International IDEA drew on various authors to present global trends in the impact of quotas, candidate recruitment practices and the effect of electoral systems on women's representation, and issues and lessons learned in women's legislative work and outputs.

Complementing its work on producing global comparative knowledge material and tools in this field, International IDEA has supported electoral reforms and advocacy on the introduction and implementation of quotas to address women's under-representation in positions of power and decision making in Colombia, Ecuador, Ghana, Haiti, Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Sierra Leone and Senegal.

Colombia

International IDEA supported the advocacy campaigns leading to the enactment of the 2011 law, which sets a 30 per cent quota for women in both the general and internal party elections. Since the enactment of the law, International IDEA has continued to help political parties with its implementation.

Ecuador

The joint International IDEA-NIMD programme on Democrática to Democrática in Ecuador aims to strengthen approaches on increasing women's political participation and representation in support of the Women's Multiparty Group and other actors. This programme has spearheaded dialogues on Ecuador's political system and reforms of the Democracy Code with regard to a new method of allocating seats to increase women's political participation in the 2012 elections.

Haiti

International IDEA supports the Quota Implementation Committee, which has the responsibility of ensuring implementation of the 30 per cent quota, which was incorporated into the constitutional amendment of Article 17.1. The Institute also supports the national campaign on the effective implementation of the constitutional 30 per cent quota through efforts to improve political reporting on gender quotas (and on politics in general) by undertaking joint awareness-raising initiatives for the media, political parties and civil society organizations.

Liberia

International IDEA continues to support the efforts of the Women's Legislative Caucus and the Coalition of Political Parties' Women of Liberia, which have led to the development of draft legislation—the Gender Equity Bill. The Institute has supported the process by facilitating opportunities for dialogue between political parties, legislators and the Ministry of Gender and Development to establish consensus on the need for legislated electoral quotas and to mobilize the necessary political support for their adoption. These efforts are also reinforced by the partnership with the National Election Commission of Liberia on the management of electoral processes and the enforcement of quotas.

Sierra Leone

In support of its national partners such as the Women's Solidarity Support Group and the Women's Parliamentary Caucus in Sierra Leone, International IDEA has contributed to the national campaign by providing comparative knowledge from other countries, such as facilitating a knowledge exchange and sharing the experiences of Tanzania, which has already achieved at least 30 per cent female representation in parliament.

Senegal

Following the enactment of the Gender Parity Law in Senegal, International IDEA's efforts targeted political parties, women in politics and potential election candidates to help stakeholders identify the challenges of effectively implementing the gender parity legislation in the run-up to the parliamentary elections in 2011. Support included convening round tables with political parties, the electoral management body and civil society organizations to discuss the quota legislation and its implications for the identification, nomination and selection of candidates and placing both women and men in electable positions. As a result of the 2011 parliamentary elections, the number of women in Senegal's Parliament reached 43 per cent, an increase of 25 percentage points over previous elections.

Ghana

Progressive policies and measures (such as the 1998 Affirmative Action Policy Guidelines) have not been adequately implemented in the past in Ghana. International IDEA engaged in advocacy efforts in partnership with Ghana's Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs and supported the development of an Affirmative Action Law, which bolstered the focus on the role of political parties and their policy documents on women's participation and representation in decision-making roles. The involvement of party leaderships, MPs, traditional leaders in the National House of Chiefs and civil society in the process of developing an Affirmative Action Law was a core strategy.

Kenya

International IDEA support to gender-equality advocates and political parties focused on promoting the implementation and enforcement of Kenya's 2010 constitutional provisions on gender equality in the March 2013 elections. Since the adoption of the constitution in 2010, the Kenyan political landscape and discussions have been dominated by the challenge of finding an acceptable formula for the electoral legislation in order to implement the constitutional provisions aimed at reducing the representation gap between women and men. The challenge of transforming constitutional commitments into implemented actions was a major highlight of the Dialogues on Gender Equality and Constitution Implementation.

Namibia

Namibia has been undergoing an extensive electoral reform process since 2011, which presented an opportunity for the country to extend its successful local-level legislated quota system (which has achieved 42 per cent local female representation) to the parliamentary level. With the support of the International IDEA, the proposal for a legislated quota at

the national level was defined as part of electoral legislative reform proposals formulated by the Electoral Commission of Namibia and submitted to the Law Reform Commission of Namibia.

Stockholm University

At the start of the 1990s, the new phenomenon of electoral gender quotas began to spread all over the world. Quotas had been applied for minorities—and, in a few countries, for women—in previous decades, but the current diffusion and discussion of quota legislation and proposals is on a much larger scale. Comparative research on this new development is much needed. In many countries, the debate about adopting gender quotas in politics has been limited to the experience of a few neighbouring countries. There is an urgent need for comparative analyses of this new policy field: the discourses on quotas world wide, the variety of adopted quota rules and their implementation—particularly, when do quotas work and when do they fail to result in meaningful change? A critical aim of this research is to help countries that are starting to deliberate and discuss possible quota regulations by exchanging best practices and lessons learned.

Within the framework of the research project ‘Electoral Gender Quotas – a Key to Equality?’ financed by the Swedish Research Council – a new comparative research field was created in 2001 with the establishment of the Women in Politics Research Centre (WIP) at Stockholm University. The first step was to gather researchers from all major regions to investigate this new trend in electoral politics. The result was the first global overview of the adoption and implementation of gender quotas: *Women, Quotas and Politics* (Dahlerup 2006). The collaboration with International IDEA led to seminars around the world and the establishment of the global quota website, <<http://www.quotaproject.org>>, which this Atlas is based on. Today, quota research is a flourishing and well-acknowledged research field. A number of master and PhD theses as well as books and many scientific articles on gender quotas have been published. The research team at Stockholm University collaborate with various international organizations and actors around the world to provide comparative expertise and advice on how to empower women in politics by implementing gender quotas.