

## UN Women views on options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance in the UNFCCC

### Introduction

In December 2012, Parties to the UNFCCC adopted a landmark decision on *'Promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations and in the representation of Parties in bodies established pursuant to the Convention or the Kyoto Protocol'* (Decision 23/CP.18). UN Women welcomes this important decision, which it considers a significant step towards promoting women's agency and leadership in ensuring a more effective and gender-sensitive climate change policy.

Women and men experience and are affected by climate change differently. For the majority of women in developing countries who are at the nexus between food and agriculture, water, and energy, the impacts of climate change are felt on their livelihoods and daily lives. As managers of household and community resources, they may struggle to secure water, fuel and food when floods strike or droughts persist. As small-scale farmers, they must cope with crop failures with far fewer resources than men or struggle to pursue methods of farming more adapted to climate shifts. As migrants and refugees pushed from areas of climatic stress, women are confronted with greater risks of disease and violence. The expectation that women are primary caregivers in societies across continents may also contribute to their concern for climate impacts on future generations. Women's equal participation and leadership in all aspects of decision-making and governance on climate change is thus a prerequisite to addressing the differing needs of women and men and finding effective solutions to such challenges.

Achieving gender balance in UNFCCC bodies has the potential of facilitating the adoption, at all levels, of climate change policies that are gender-sensitive and gender-responsive, and address a society's needs and priorities more comprehensively. Sustained gender balance and meaningful participation of women in any process, however, will depend on correcting the structural foundations of gender-based inequality. There is a need to address deeply entrenched stereotypes about women's and men's respective roles and other attitudes which perpetuate discrimination against women in all aspects of life, including in leadership and participation in decision-making. Women's increased numerical representation must also be complemented with efforts and measures, including through capacity-building, to translate their presence into substantive participation so that they can effectively have a voice and influence political decision-making processes. Importantly, it must be recognised that the achievement of gender equality is not solely a concern for women, but the responsibility of society as a whole. Both Women and men must therefore engage in these discussions and in the promotion of gender balance and gender equality more broadly.

## Options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance in the UNFCCC<sup>1</sup>

***To help ensure gender balance in the composition of bodies of the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol enforcement mechanisms, the following could be considered:***

- Set a numerical target in the membership of both existing and new subsidiary bodies of not less than 40% and not more than 60% of representatives of each sex.
- Set a timeline for achieving the above-mentioned target. A gradual but sustained increase must be demonstrated from 2013 until the mandated review of Decision 23/CP.18 in 2016.
- At the review of Decision 23/CP.18 in 2016, Parties should agree on a specific incremental numerical target (e.g., within a ten-year period) for achieving gender balance in the bodies of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol. A mechanism of accountability (or “sanctions”) should be established to ensure that regional groups and constituencies respect the goal of gender balance in their nominations to these bodies.
- Regional groups that are allocated two seats in Convention and Kyoto Protocol bodies should endeavour to nominate one woman and one man. Where one member and one alternate are sought, regional groups are also encouraged to nominate one woman and one man in these posts. A similar practice should also be adopted by Parties in all other circumstances (e.g., where 10 members from Annex 1 countries are sought, 5 women and 5 men should be nominated, etc.).
- Consider taking measures to ensure that in bodies with a chair and vice-chair, a woman is appointed to one of the posts.
- The UNFCCC Secretariat should maintain active engagement with Chairs of the subsidiary bodies and remind them of the goal of gender balance in appointing facilitators for informal negotiating groups and other consultation mechanisms.

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***On ensuring gender balance in the composition of national delegations, the following actions are proposed:***

- Consider the creation of a fund for developing countries to support women delegates’ participation in the UNFCCC negotiations. This fund could be used to sponsor the participation, capacity building and training of women delegates, with a priority for women delegates from vulnerable and least developed countries.
- Set a timeline for achieving the target of gender balance in national delegations, including through a steady progression of women representation in the delegations, including as heads of delegation.
- At the review of Decision 23/CP.18, a specific numerical target for achieving gender balance and a mechanism to enforce compliance by national delegations to the goal of gender balance in the composition of their delegation should be established.

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<sup>1</sup> In June 2013, UN Women and the Mary Robinson Foundation for Climate Justice launched a research report entitled *The Full View: Advancing the goal of gender balance in multilateral and intergovernmental processes*. The report serves as a resource for Parties and observers to the UNFCCC preparing their submissions to the UNFCCC secretariat on options and ways to advance the goal of gender balance. It is accessible at : The report is accessible at: <http://www.mrfcj.org/pdf/2013-06-13-The-Full-View.pdf>.

***The following roles for the UNFCCC secretariat are key:***

- Continue its good practice of inviting Parties “to recall decisions 36/CP.7 and 23/CP.18 and make additional efforts to improve the participation of women in Convention and Kyoto Protocol bodies by achieving a goal of gender balance in these bodies” in all information sent to Parties regarding nominations for elections to vacancies in existing bodies.
- Ensure robust monitoring and reporting to track and accelerate progress on meeting the goals set out in Decision 23/CP.18.
- Maintain a publicly available and regularly updated online database of women’s and men’s participation in UNFCCC processes including chairing /facilitation of informal bodies and groups, disaggregated by regional grouping or constituency and presenting the data in ranking tables to allow for comparison.
- Engage actively with Parties to ensure that officers responsible for establishing informal bodies and groups are aware of the need for gender balance at the time of the establishment and convening of these bodies.
- When Chairs of relevant bodies convene in-session workshops and roundtables, provide explicit guidance to them to consider including women as panellists as well as integrating gender issues in panels.
- Deliver on the UN System-wide mandate to mainstream a gender perspective in the Secretariat. As part of the expectations of the UN-System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on gender equality and women’s empowerment, the gender focal point in the UNFCCC Secretariat should help ensure that all staff of the Secretariat supporting the work of various contact groups/informal negotiating groups are aware of the Decision on advancing gender balance, and the mandate to mainstream a gender perspective in any decision to be adopted or discussions being conducted.
- Embark on a collaborative research and/or compile best practices pursued by sub-regional, regional and global intergovernmental bodies and processes with respect to the election and appointment of officers and members of the different bodies created by or supporting these processes to identify practices that could be applied in the UNFCCC context and better understand the obstacles and entry points for change.

***Complementary initiatives/actions:***

- Capacity building efforts such as targeted training and general awareness-raising for women and men on gender equality issues are needed to complement other measures aimed at increasing women’s participation and representation.
- Provide a conducive atmosphere and space for civil society groups, most notably, the women and gender constituency of the UNFCCC, to continue their activism in and advocacy for a gender-sensitive climate policy.
- Mobilize financial resources for vulnerable economies (such as LDCs and SIDS) that will help support the implementation of the Decision and carry out the actions required from the UNFCCC Secretariat. Through the leadership of the Secretariat, a partnership event may be held during the “Gender Day” held at COPs to engage stakeholders – Parties, UN system entities, private sector, civil society, among others, to commit to partnerships that will help contribute to the implementation of the decision, and, if possible, garner financial pledges from Parties and the private sector.

## Basis for recommendations

### Normative framework for women's equal political participation and representation

#### *At the Global Level*

The **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**, adopted in 1979 and currently ratified by 187 countries, is often referred to as the 'women's international bill of rights'. The Convention provides a list of measures to end discrimination against women in all its forms. Article 7 mandates that States Parties take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right "... (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government...." Subsequently, in Article 8, States Parties are urged to take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organisations. Article 4.1 states that the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination (as defined in CEDAW), and that these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)** is the outcome of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995. 12 areas of concern for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment are identified in the BPfA where action is required not only from Governments, but also the international community and civil society. The BPfA calls on Governments to "commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees ... including, *inter alia*, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action...,"<sup>2</sup> as well as "to take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men."<sup>3</sup> It also set out that these efforts should be complemented with the objective to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership, through the provision of leadership and decision-making training and mentoring support, among other actions.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, it notes that women have remained largely absent at all levels of policy formulation and decision-making in natural resource and environmental management, conservation, protection and rehabilitation, yet

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<sup>2</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (Beijing Platform for Action, Section G.1, paragraph 190, a)

<sup>3</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (Beijing Platform for Action, Section G.1, paragraph 190, b)

<sup>4</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (Beijing Platform for Action, Section G.2)

their participation and leadership are essential to every aspect of a holistic, multidisciplinary and intersectoral approach to sound environmental management.<sup>5</sup>

The **United Nations Economic and Social Council Resolution E/RES/1990/15**<sup>6</sup> () urged that “Governments, political parties, trade unions and professional and other representative groups should each aim at targets to increase the proportion of women in leadership positions to at least 30 per cent by 1995, with a view to achieving equal representation between women and men by the year 2000, and should institute recruitment and training programmes to prepare women for those positions.” The Council further adopted **agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations**, which state that gender balance is a “central goal” for gender mainstreaming and recommends that “the General Assembly and the Commission on the Status of Women be regularly provided with statistics on the number and percentage of women at all levels throughout the whole United Nations.”<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Governments and/or relevant entities of the UN system are urged “...to adopt positive actions and temporary measures, as appropriate, to enhance women’s equal participation in decision-making processes at all levels”<sup>8</sup> by the **Commission on the Status of Women**, in the agreed conclusions of its 50<sup>th</sup> session. The **United Nations General Assembly** also adopted resolutions 58/142 (2003) and 66/130 (2012) on ‘Women and political participation.’ In the latter, States are again encouraged “to commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees ..., including, inter alia and as appropriate, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action...”<sup>9</sup>

More specifically in relation to environment and development, **Agenda 21—the outcome of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development**, Rio de Janeiro—affirms that the effective implementation of programmes [on sustainable and equitable development] will depend on the active involvement of women in economic and political decision-making.<sup>10</sup> Governments are thus asked to take measures to review policies and establish plans to increase the proportion of women involved as decision-makers, planners, managers, among other roles, in the design, development and implementation of policies and programmes.<sup>11</sup> The **outcome document of the 2012 Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development, *The Future We Want***, further recognises the potential of women to benefit and contribute to sustainable development as leaders, participants and agents of change. Governments expressed support for “prioritising measures to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women in all spheres of our societies, including the removal of barriers to their

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<sup>5</sup> *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4–15 September 1995* (Beijing Platform for Action, Section K, 249-251)

<sup>6</sup> [Paragraph 7, Recommendation VI \(2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph\), Annex of E/RES/1990/15](#), 24 May, 1990.

<sup>7</sup> *Report of the Economic and Social Council for 1997*, 18 September 1997, A/52/3, Section D: Capacity-building for gender mainstreaming

<sup>8</sup> Commission on the Status of Women, *Report on the fiftieth session, Agreed Conclusions (paragraph 17, b)*

<sup>9</sup> United Nations General Assembly Resolution 66/130, OP 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 2-14 June 1992* (Section III, paragraph 24.1)

<sup>11</sup> *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 2-14 June 1992* (Section III, paragraph 24.3, a)

full and equal participate in decision-making and management at all levels.<sup>12</sup> They emphasised the impact of setting specific targets and implementing temporary measures, as appropriate, for substantially increasing the number of women in leadership positions, with the aim of achieving gender parity.<sup>13</sup>

Finally, in the context of climate change and outside UNFCCC discussions, the **Commission on the Status of Women in 2011 adopted resolution 55/1 on ‘Mainstreaming gender equality and promoting empowerment of women in climate change policies and strategies.’** This resolution recognises that gender equality, the integration of gender perspectives and the effective participation of women at the global, regional, national and local levels are important for effective action on all aspects of climate change.<sup>14</sup> It thus calls on Governments, including State Parties to the UNFCCC, “to continue to incorporate a gender perspective and make efforts to ensure the effective participation of women in on-going climate change talks.”<sup>15</sup>

#### *At the Regional Level*

The **African Union (AU)**, whose constitutive act includes the promotion of gender equality as one of its principles, adopted the AU 50/50 Parity Principle at the 2002 Inaugural Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union, in Durban, South Africa. The enforcement of the AU 50/50 Gender Parity principle and the meeting of parity targets are called for in all structures, operational policies and practices.<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, five women and five men are currently appointed to the AU Commission.<sup>17</sup> Prior to this decision, the **Southern African Development Community (SADC)** had also signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (1997) and committed to ensure “the equal representation of women and men in the decision making position of Member States and SADC structures at all levels, and the achievement of at least thirty per cent target of women in political and decision-making structures by the year 2005.”<sup>18</sup> This target was raised to 50% at the 2005 SADC Summit, consistent with the AU 50/50 Gender Parity Principle.<sup>19</sup> In 2008, Parties to the SADC additionally signed the Protocol on Gender and Development, wherein they agreed to put in place affirmative action measures with particular reference to women in order to eliminate all barriers that prevent them from participating meaningfully in all spheres of life and create a conducive environment for such participation.<sup>20</sup> Article 12 of the Protocol also states that Parties to the Protocol “shall endeavour that, by 2015, at least fifty per cent of decision-making positions in the public and private sectors are held by women”. Article 13 asks members to “adopt specific legislative measures and other strategies to enable women to have equal opportunities with men to participate

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<sup>12</sup> *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, The Future we Want, Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012* (Paragraph 237)

<sup>13</sup> *United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, The Future we Want, Rio de Janeiro, 20-22 June 2012* (Paragraph 237)

<sup>14</sup> *Commission on the Status of Women, Report on the fifty-fifth session, 12 March 2010, 22 February – 4 March and 14 March 2011, (Resolution 55/1, paragraph 1)*

<sup>15</sup> *Commission on the Status of Women, Report on the fifty-fifth session, 12 March 2010, 22 February – 4 March and 14 March 2011, (Resolution 55/1, paragraph 12)*

<sup>16</sup> African Union Gender Policy, pp. 13-14

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.au.int/en/commission>

<sup>18</sup> *Gender and Development, A Declaration by Heads of State or Government of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), 8 September 1997, (Paragraph H(ii))*

<sup>19</sup> SADC (2008) *SADC Framework for Achieving Gender Parity in Political and Decision Making Positions by 2015*

<sup>20</sup> *SADC Protocol on Gender and Development, 17 August 2008, (Article 5)*

in all electoral processes...” (13.1) and “ensure the equal participation of women and men in decision-making by putting in place policies, strategies and programmes...” (13.2).

The Quito Consensus, adopted in 2007 by the 24 Governments which participated in the **Tenth Session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean**, recognises that parity is one of the key driving forces of democracy<sup>21</sup> and agrees to adopt all necessary affirmative action measures and mechanisms to ensure the full participation of women in public office and in political representative positions with a view to achieving parity in the institutional structure of the state and at the national and local levels.<sup>22</sup>

The **European Commission’s Women’s Charter** (2010) and EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015) underline that gender balance in decision-making in political and economic life, as well as in public and private sectors, will help Europe shape more effective policies, develop a gender-aware knowledge-based society, and create a stronger and more prosperous democracy; it further affirms to use powers and targeted initiatives, including Union incentive measures, to promote a greater share of women in positions of responsibility.<sup>23</sup> The Women’s Charter also commits to making all efforts to improve gender balance at the Commission-level. The Commission regularly monitors and reports on progress made and presents this data in its online *Database on Women and Men in Decision Making*<sup>24</sup> and *Report on Progress on Equality between Women and Men*. In June 2012, the EU Council also adopted Conclusions (political commitments) on ‘Gender equality and the environment: Enhanced decision-making, qualifications and competitiveness in the field of climate change mitigation policy in the EU.’ Member States and the Commission are called upon to take active and specific measures aimed at achieving a balanced representation of women and men in decision-making in the field of climate change mitigation at all levels, including the EU level, and on monitoring progress in this area.<sup>25</sup>

### Commitments taken to implement gender balance in other intergovernmental processes

#### *Examples at the Global Level*

Parties to the **UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)** are encouraged to achieve better gender balance and representation of all relevant disciplines, and of all individuals with expertise in the field of desertification, land degradation and drought, through their decisions 21/COP.9 (2009), 11/COP.8 (2007), 15/COP.5 (2001), 15/COP.4 (2000) and 15/COP.3 (1999). Similarly, Parties to the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** are asked to bear gender balance in mind in the composition of ad hoc technical expert groups (Decision VIII/10, Section H, b) and an ad hoc expert

<sup>21</sup> *Quito Consensus, 2007* (preamble paragraph 17)

<sup>22</sup> *Quito Consensus, 2007* (1)

<sup>23</sup> European Commission, (2010) *A Women’s Charter*, Section 3; *EU Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010-2015)*, p.7.

<sup>24</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm)

<sup>25</sup> Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on: Gender equality and the environment: Enhanced decision-making qualifications and competitiveness in the field of climate change mitigation policy in the EU*, Luxembourg, 21 June 2012 (13, 21, 22)

group meeting of local-community representatives (Decision X/43, b, 21), of COP-8 (2006) and COP-10 (2010) respectively.<sup>26</sup>

The **Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)** has taken a number of steps to promote an enabling environment for women's participation within its organisational structures to generate best practices for national parliaments, including applying quotas, targets and sanctions to its three main bodies. As per Article 23.2 of the Statutes, at least three of the Executive Committee's fifteen members (or 20%) must be women. Rule 1.2 of the Governing Council orders that each Member of the Union must be represented by three parliamentarians represented by both men and women, and limited to two members if the delegation is composed of a single sex. Lastly, for the General Assembly, Articles 10.1 and 15.2(c) of the Statutes reduce by one member any delegation that is composed exclusively of parliamentarians of the same sex for three consecutive sessions, along with the number of voting rights from ten to eight.

#### *Recent examples at the National Level*

Governments across continents have made efforts to implement international and regional agreements and take measures to advance gender balance in decision-making, most notably at the level of parliament. The world average percentage of women in Parliament is currently only at 20.9%, yet Rwanda still leads with 56.3% women in the lower house, followed by Andorra, Cuba, Sweden, Seychelles, Senegal, Finland, South Africa, Nicaragua and Iceland, with a proportion just shy of 40% for the lower or single house. 35 countries are reported to have reached or exceeded the 30% critical mass mark, among which at least 29 have legislated or voluntary quota systems in place.<sup>27</sup> In fact, regardless of geographical location or level of development, those countries that have adopted special measures, such as legislated quotas to increase the participation and representation of women in decision-making processes, have produced the most significant and transformative results, whereas in the absence of temporary special measures, women's participation and representation have remained at very low levels. Recent examples of commitments to increase women's leadership and participation at the national level through quota, targets and sanctions are provided below.

The 2003 Constitution of **Rwanda** commits, in Article 9.4, to building "a State governed by the rule of law, a pluralistic democratic government, equality of all Rwandans and between women and men reflected by ensuring that women are granted at least 30 per cent of posts in decision-making organs."<sup>28</sup>

A historically high number of women were elected in 2012 in **Mexico – 36.8%**, following the passing of a law in 2008 and its enforcement in 2011 by the electoral tribunal, which requires that at least 40% of candidate lists for each political party be filled by women. Parties that failed to comply were given 24 hours to revise their list or be refused registration.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Convention on Biological Diversity (2012) *Gender Equality and the Convention on Biological Diversity: A compilation of decision text*, Montreal: CBD.

<sup>27</sup> IPU (2013) *Women in national parliaments* (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>);

<sup>28</sup> IPU (2013) *Women in Parliament in 2012: The Year in Perspective*

<sup>29</sup> IPU (2013) *Women in Parliament in 2012: The Year in Perspective*



**Poland** passed a quota law for gender balance in politics in January 2011 that requires at least 30% of candidates of all electoral lists to be women, where failure to comply would lead to rejection of the list. The country saw an increase in four percentage points (to 24% in 2011) in women's representation in parliament since the previous year.

The official election act of the **Republic of Korea** not only requires political parties to nominate women parliamentarians in 50% of the proportional representation seats and 30% in other seats, but also provides a subsidy to those that nominate women candidates.

In 2011, **Timor Leste** amended the country's electoral law, which now stipulates that there must be one woman in every three candidates on party lists. 25 women (28.5%) were subsequently elected in 2012.<sup>30</sup>

Below are some examples of the impact of more women representation in parliaments. In **Rwanda**, women parliamentarians proposed bills on land rights, inheritance and marriage to advance gender equality in the country. While the Law on Matrimonial Regimes, Liberalities and Successions (1999) established women's right to inherit land and own property for the firm time, the National Land Policy (2004) and Organic Land Law (2005) further provided equality in access by introducing land titling. Working with local NGOs, the Government of Rwanda also worked to ensure that women are included in the land registration process through training of local land committees across the country and the dissemination of illustrated information booklets explaining these laws in simple terms.<sup>31</sup>

Since the reform to the Electoral Code in 1996 in **Costa Rica**, which placed a minimum 40% quota for women's participation (women currently hold 38.6% of seats in parliament), the country has adopted a wide range of laws that promote the shared upbringing of children (Responsible Paternity Act (2001)), support women with free health and education services (Law on Protection of Adolescent Mothers (2002)), introduce an integrated national monitoring system and services for female survivors of violence (Law to Prevent Violence against Women (2008)), and reform the Labour Code (2008) specifying terms of employment for domestic workers.<sup>32</sup>

Under the 2007 Interim Constitution of **Nepal**, at least 33% of candidates for the Constituent Assembly must be women, and the country's Local Self Government Act (1999) requires that 40% of candidates for municipal councils must be women. Gains for gender equality in Nepal, where 33.2% of parliamentarians are at present women, have since come to include an expansion of women's inheritance and property rights under the Gender Equality Act (2006), the adoption of gender-responsive budgeting for all Government expenditure by the Finance Ministry (2007), the passing of the Domestic Violence Crime and Punishment Act (2009) and the creation of a fund to ensure that rural and poor women can access abortion services (2009).<sup>33</sup>

In **Sweden**, women's interests became much more prominent in the political agenda following the significant increase in female parliamentarians, from 14% in 1971 to 44.7% today. A study concludes

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<sup>30</sup> IPU (2013) *Women in Parliament in 2012: The Year in Perspective*

<sup>31</sup> UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In pursuit of justice*

<sup>32</sup> IPU (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>); UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In pursuit of justice*

<sup>33</sup> UN Women, *Progress of the World's Women 2011-2012: In pursuit of justice*

that not only were women largely responsible for having initiated discussions on gender equality, but there has also been a noticeable shift in emphasis on such policy areas as social policy, family policy and care of the elderly with the increase of elected women; indeed one of the most well known gains for women is the system of parental leave which encourages both women and men to take on an equally active role and share responsibilities in caring for children.<sup>34</sup>

#### *Examples from the Private Sector*

There have been a number of initiatives around the world to increase the number of women serving on corporate boards.<sup>35</sup> **Norway** was among the first to introduce a quota with the amendment of the Norwegian Public Limited Liability Companies Act (2005), where: both sexes must be represented if the board comprises two or three members; at least two directors must be women if the board has four or five members; at least three if the board has six to eight members; at least four if it has nine members; and at least 40% of directors must be women if the board comprises of more than nine members. Failure to comply with these requirements is to result in the dissolution of the company. The country is reported to have the greatest number of female directors serving on boards, making up 35.6% of people serving on boards.

The **EU** average today is 16% women members in the highest decision making bodies of the largest publicly listed companies,<sup>36</sup> although legislation was recently proposed by the European Commission Vice-President Viviane Reding, the EU's Justice Commissioner, to attain a 40% objective of the under-represented sex in non-executive board-member positions in publicly listed companies.<sup>37</sup> In July 2013, the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee (EMPL) voted to support this proposal by an overwhelming majority (37 in favour, 5 against, 4 abstentions).<sup>38</sup> The European Parliament Legal Affairs committee had voted on 26 June confirming that the Commission's proposal is based on the correct legal basis dealing with gender equality.<sup>39</sup>

#### LESSONS LEARNED from various experiences, including from the examples in the previous section

Measures such as quotas to increase women's representation and participation can be implemented gradually, as the experience of SADC has shown, starting with a lower target and increasing it incrementally over time until the goal of 50% is reached.

Complementary capacity building initiatives targeted to both women and men are crucial to ensure that women who take their place at the decision-making table as a result of special measures are able to contribute fully and are not seen as "token" candidates. The SADC experience highlighted how measures such as the Framework for Achieving Gender Parity in Political and Decision Making Positions by 2015 (October 2009)<sup>40</sup> can only be truly effective if complemented by targeted training

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<sup>34</sup> <http://www.idea.int/publications/wip2/loader.cfm?csmodule=security/getfile&pageid=14128> p. 243

<sup>35</sup> Deloitte Global Center for Corporate Governance (2011) *Women in the Boardroom: A global perspective*

<sup>36</sup> European Commission, *Gender balance in decision-making positions* (database)

<sup>37</sup> European Commission, *Women on Boards: Commission proposes 40% objective*, 14 November 2012

<sup>38</sup> European Commission Vice-President Reding welcomes latest progress in European Parliament for women on boards, 9 July 2013.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>40</sup> SADC (2009) *Framework of Achieving Gender Parity in Political and Decision Making Positions by 2015*

and general awareness-raising for both men and women on the mutual gains to be achieved in advancing women's participation and representation in decision-making. Issues of 'feminisation of deputy positions', where women leaders are relegated to deputy positions due to some institutional and cultural practices that perpetuate the view that women are not meant to occupy top decision-making positions should also be addressed (through institution of appropriate laws and sensitization)

Regional-level experiences also show the importance of robust monitoring and reporting to track and accelerate progress made in implementing commitments to increase women's participation and representation. Publicly available and regularly updated online databases are especially effective in promoting self-regulation and monitoring by third parties. The European Commission's online *Database on Women and Men in Decision Making*<sup>41</sup> for example contains current and historical ranking tables on gender balance covering positions of power and influence in politics, public administration, the judiciary, and various other key areas of the economy at European, national, and regional levels. Similarly, the IPU presents its robust data in ranking tables including in the form of an annual world classification of women in national parliaments<sup>42</sup>.

While there has been progress in increasing the number of women in leadership and decision making positions at the national level even in the absence of special measures, those countries that have adopted special measures such as legislated quotas have produced more noteworthy results. Sanctions resulting from failure to implement such measures have further ensured the promotion of women's greater participation and representation.

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<sup>41</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/gender-decision-making/database/index_en.htm)

<sup>42</sup> <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>