

# Political Parties and Women's Political Participation in Commonwealth Africa



The Commonwealth



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RESEARCH REPORT

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# Acronyms

<b>AMWIK</b>	Association of Media Women in Kenya
<b>CCM</b>	Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of The Revolution, Tanzania)
<b>CMD-K</b>	Centre for Multiparty Democracy-Kenya
<b>CPP</b>	Convention People's Party (Ghana)
<b>CSO</b>	civil society organisation
<b>DTA</b>	Popular Democratic Movement (Namibia)
<b>EMB</b>	electoral management body
<b>FPTP</b>	first-past-the-post/majoritarian (electoral system)
<b>IPU</b>	Inter-Parliamentary Union
<b>LDS</b>	Linyon Demokratik Seselwa (Seychelles)
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament
<b>NDC</b>	National Democratic Congress (Ghana)
<b>NEC</b>	National Executive Committee/ National Electoral Commission
<b>NGO</b>	non-governmental organisation
<b>NPP</b>	New Patriotic Party (Ghana)
<b>ODM</b>	Orange Democratic Movement (Kenya)
<b>ORPP</b>	Office of the Registrar of Political Parties
<b>PR</b>	proportional representation (electoral system)
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SLPP</b>	Sierra Leone People's Party
<b>SSA</b>	Sub-Saharan Africa
<b>SWAPO</b>	South West African People's Organisation (Namibia)
<b>VAWE</b>	violence against women in elections
<b>VAWP</b>	violence against women in politics





# 1. Overview and Context

Commitments to gender parity in politics are not new and countries across the world are signatories to various plans and commitments designed to increase the number of female political representatives at various levels of government. Countries within the Commonwealth are no exception, and in 2005, under the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA), countries were encouraged to recommit themselves to the 30 per cent threshold established in 1996 at the Fifth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, where member countries were 'encouraged to achieve a target of no less than 30 per cent of women in decision-making in the political, public and private sectors by 2005' (Commonwealth Secretariat 2016).

More than 20 years after this commitment, and despite the plethora of international, regional and national agreements to which many countries have subscribed, women's participation in parliaments continues to lag behind that of men, although there have been some successes.

Within the Commonwealth, women constitute 23.4 per cent of parliamentarians, close to the worldwide average of 23.3 which combines both upper and lower houses (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU] 2017). Sub-Saharan African countries are slightly above this average, at 23.8 per cent. Although the continent is close to the worldwide average, it is also home to countries that lead when it comes to women's political participation. Six of 18 Commonwealth African countries have met the 30 per cent objective, including Rwanda which led the world at the time of writing, with 61.3 per cent women elected in the lower house. Other countries in sub-Saharan Africa that have met the 30 per cent target are South Africa, Namibia, Mozambique, Tanzania and Uganda. Some of this success can be attributed to the drive for new constitutions, particularly in countries emerging from civil war, like Mozambique and Uganda, where peacetime offered a window of opportunity to recraft institutional frameworks in ways that would facilitate the consolidation of peace, or South Africa, which drafted a new constitution to reflect a post-apartheid reality.

For the most part, however, women continue to be under-represented politically in a majority of Commonwealth countries in Africa. While a considerable body of literature exists that examines reasons for this marginalisation, the focus has often been on culturally rooted societal biases that limit demand for women parliamentarians, as well as supply-side constraints, including women's poorer access to education and economic opportunities, as well as fear of violence during elections (among other factors). Less examined has been the role of political parties, although clearly, parties are 'gatekeepers' that help to either constrain or facilitate women's political participation (Gender Links 2010; Ballington 2002; Caul 1999). For example, across all African countries, apart from Swaziland (which is an absolute monarchy), parties are the primary mechanism through which political candidates are identified and supported to contest for elections.

To address this gap, the Commonwealth Secretariat designed this research to gain an understanding of the role parties play in facilitating or constraining women's access to political positions. Understanding the governance mechanisms of parties, including party constitutions and manifestoes, as well as the methods through which women are able to access positions of leadership within these institutions, will help guide policy suggestions to encourage parties to be more accessible to women.

This report focuses on African countries within the Commonwealth, and provides an in-depth review of political party practices in six case countries (Ghana, Kenya, Namibia, Seychelles, Sierra Leone and Tanzania) that represent various levels of women's political participation.

The report recommends that the Commonwealth and other donors prioritise political parties as instruments for reform, encouraging them to make these institutions more receptive to women's political participation by adopting robust gender policies that commit them to minimum thresholds for women. At the same time, party reform should be encouraged alongside legal reform, as well as strengthening of the ability of election management bodies (EMBs) to enforce party and constitutional commitments to boost compliance.

## 2. Introduction

Women's political participation has historically lagged behind that of men, both in terms of their being part of the voting electorate and as political candidates running for office. This distortion has been critiqued on two levels. First, fair representation is held as a fundamental tenant of democracy, where 'fairness' refers to the idea that representatives should mirror the communities they serve. In short, this position holds that given that women make up half, if not more, of the electorate, they should be represented in similar numbers in political positions. As the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) notes, 'The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political policies and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population' (IPU 1994, cited in Gender Links 2010, p.11).

A second argument in favour of women's increased representation is substantive; scholars and activists alike have argued that women have different priorities, interests and issues compared to men: thus, women are best placed to advance policies and perspectives that would benefit them and society at large. This perspective assumes that a feminist agenda will only happen when more women acquire political power (Hughes and Paxton 2007). It is well captured by Htun, who writes, 'Women leaders better represent the interests of women citizens, will introduce women's perspectives into policy-making and implementation, and help expand women's opportunities in society at large (Htun 1998, p.15, cited in Tinker 2004, p.534).

Moreover, scholars have argued that simply having women in parliament is not enough. There needs to be a critical mass of women before their presence can yield substantive benefits, that is, before they have a positive impact on women's empowerment and development (Barnes and Buchard 2012). Scholars such as Burnet (2008) and Powley and Pearson (2007) have argued that women have been instrumental in passing laws on issues of concern to women in Rwanda, looking at inheritance laws and gender-based violence (GBV) respectively; while in Uganda, they played a key role in passing three bills of importance to women in 2009, namely the Anti-

Female Genital Mutilation, Domestic Violence, and Marriage and Divorce Bills (Tripp 2010, cited in Bauer 2012, p.377).

Although some have expressed concerns that the political climate in some sub-Saharan African countries, where patrimonialism and clientelism are often features of politics, can provide obstacles to women's abilities to legislate on issues of concern to women (see, for example, Ahikire 2004; Beck 2003; Tripp 2000), there is nevertheless broad consensus around the need to increase women's political representation in legislatures around the world.

International, national and regional bodies have taken up such arguments, and a host of international declarations and conventions have tried to set a global agenda geared toward increasing women's political participation. These have in turn filtered down to regional commitments and, finally, in-country commitments to increase women's participation.

### 2.1 International norms

At the global level, the United Nations was an early advocate for women's equality, including around women's political participation, with several conventions and treaties enshrining the theory that women's rights are human rights. International resolutions that set global norms and standards for women's political participation include the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1979. This was one of the first instruments to affirm women's equality, calling as it did for states to actively work toward the removal of all forms of discrimination against women in public and political life. The principles of CEDAW were reaffirmed in 1995, at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, and enshrined in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

Other UN Documents advocating for women's political participation include UNGA Resolution 58/142 of December 2003, on women and political participation, and Resolution 66/130,<sup>1</sup> adopted December 2011, which expanded on Resolution 58/142. Among other measures, Resolution

66/130 urged states to take all necessary measures to ensure that women participated in politics, including reviewing electoral systems, addressing societal prejudices that mitigated against women, and encouraging political parties to address barriers against women's participation, including adopting policies to increase women's participation at the executive level.

## 2.2 Continental and sub-regional agreements

A range of continental and subregional commitments on increasing women's political participation also governs African countries, as they have signed up to several protocols and agreements designed to increase women's participation in all areas of decision-making, including political representation. As part of the body of Commonwealth countries, African member countries committed themselves to having 30 per cent women representation in not just political positions, but also public and private posts, during the Fifth Commonwealth Women's Affairs Ministers Meeting (5WAMM) in Trinidad and Tobago in 1996. This 30 per cent target was incorporated into the Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005–2015 (PoA), which had as its theme, 'Gender, Democracy, Peace and Conflict' (Commonwealth Secretariat 2016).

At the continental level, the African Union (AU) committed itself to gender parity in its key decision-making organs during the 2003 Heads of State and Government Summit in Maputo. Subregionally, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been among the most progressive of institutions. Its Declaration on Gender and Development set a target of 30 per cent women in decision-making positions by 2005 during its 1997 meeting. This target was expanded to 50 per cent during the body's 2005 Heads of State Summit. In 2008, the declaration was upgraded to a protocol, with corresponding legally binding targets that strengthened its mandate (Gender Links 2010), committing governments to increase women's participation in decision-making within both the public and private sectors, targeting the three areas of representation, affirmative action and participation (Gender Links 2010, p.12).<sup>2</sup>

## 2.3 Mechanisms to increase women's participation

There are several approaches that governments use to increase women's participation, including legislative measures and electoral system reform. At the level of the electoral system, many have noted that proportional representation (PR) electoral systems are more beneficial to increasing women's representation than first-past-the-post (FPTP)/plurality/majority electoral systems.

There are two types of electoral gender quotas: voluntary party quotas, and reserved or special seats. Quotas can be at the national or local levels, and may be introduced through laws, an executive order or as part of the policies of political parties (Tinker 2004, p.534). According to Laserud and Taphorn (2007), the type of electoral gender quota used can depend on the type of electoral system in place. They note that voluntary party quotas are most likely to be used in PR electoral systems, while majoritarian systems are more likely to use special seats (cited in Bauer 2012). Voluntary party quotas are those adopted by political parties.

Tinker (2004) notes that the most effective way of increasing the number of women parliamentarians is in systems that combine party lists with PR electoral systems, although party control of who is on the list and the order in which they appear can have adverse consequences for the types of women elected. In contrast, parties have been more reluctant to field women in the more competitive FPTP systems, where the 'winner takes all' nature of the system means that candidates with even a small number of votes more than the other candidate can win. In these systems, voters are voting for a person, rather than the party, thus stoking fears that fielding a woman candidate might lead to voter defection to the male candidate, irrespective of party.

Beyond simply increasing the number of women parliamentarians, Tinker (2004) has also looked at factors that contribute to the election of women who will actually be likely to enact laws that will positively impact women. For Tinker, the following factors influence the effectiveness of women representatives to implement substantive policies for women:

How the women candidates are chosen and by whom, how the electoral system operates, and the external support for feminist goals in the nation

are all essential factors in evaluating the utility and possibility of quotas for women. Other factors that affect the ability of women to alter the priorities of the legislature include the characteristics of the party system, the level of government requiring quotas, the local political culture, and the underlying social system that determines the prevailing relationships between women and men (Tinker 2004, p.532).

The first point, on how women candidates are chosen, and by whom, points to the importance of the political party, which is the subject of this research.

## 2.4 Political parties and women – what is the connection?

There are several ways that one can conceptualise political parties' greater responsiveness to women. Lovenduski (1993), for example, describes two levels: programmatic and organisational. At the programmatic level, is the expectation that party platforms will reflect concerns of importance to women, including policies on women's reproductive rights, as well as emphasising equal opportunity between women and men. At the organisational level, greater responsiveness entails passing policies that will increase the number of women within the parties, be it as candidates for political positions, general members and/or representatives in key positions within party executive posts (Lovenduski 1993, p.83).

While both aspects are examined here, this study is concerned more with the latter, how to make parties more accessible to women, and to ensure that women are present in leadership positions, as well as being provided with the opportunity to contest for political positions as parliamentarians, among other posts.

The extent to which women parliamentarians enact laws and policies that benefit women and girls is touched on, but a comprehensive examination of this would require more interviews and research. Rather, the study focuses more on assessing the various ways in which political parties have tried to increase women's presence within parties and, correspondingly, their representation within legislative arms of the surveyed countries. It notes both successes and limitations of these measures and proffers suggestions for best practice. Understanding the role that political parties can and

do play in expanding women's access to political positions is particularly important given the fact that political parties have been called the 'missing link' in the examination of reasons behind women's low political participation and essential in any study of women in politics (Baer 1993). Political parties are the 'gatekeepers' of women's access to political office (Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Norris 1996).

A central question in this research exercise, then, is how best can parties increase women's representation, both within executive structures of the party, as well as within parliament? These questions are not new. Miki Caul (1999), for example, has identified four party-level factors that she believes best explain how parties can affect the level of women's political representation: party institutionalisation/organisational structure, ideology, women party activists and gender-related candidate rules (Caul 1999, pp.80–83).

Caul finds that the most salient factors behind increasing women's presence within political parties are women party activists and gender-related rules. She finds that a high proportion of women activists, as well as what she calls 'new left values', in particular, further increase the likelihood that such rules will actually be implemented (Caul 1999). The case studies examined in this report will be evaluated in light of these criteria, as well as others that emerge based on the research. Although Caul's study focuses on Western countries, where parties are more institutionalised, her findings are nevertheless relevant for this study, which focuses on Commonwealth countries in Africa, where multipartyism is practiced under very different conditions compared to those in advanced Western democracies (Fakir and Lodge 2016).

According to Fakir and Lodge, these conditions include under-development, as well as the perception that democracy, as practised through structures such as parliament and the courts, often in languages that are not indigenous, is alien, all of which have implications for the function and effectiveness of political parties, as well as on the quality of democracy itself (Fakir and Lodge 2016, p.xiv). Where poverty is a driving characteristic, the state is seen as the best source for economic enrichment, thus capture of the state equates to capture of resources, a factor that can help explain the staying power of the post-independence ruling party in many African countries – as they have access to resources to mount successful

campaigns. It also helps explain why patronage is often a dominant feature in these parties as a way to get votes, rather than political ideology, with people voting on the basis of 'gifts' rather than policy (Lindberg 2003).

In particular, Lindberg, referencing Ghana, finds that Members of Parliament (MPs) actually use patronage as a means to re-election, a feature that he finds has increased rather than decreased under democracy. While this has implications on the ability of women to both increase their representation, and implement policy changes that benefit women, some would argue that this landscape is slowly changing, as evidenced by Afro Barometer data, which increasingly show greater preference for democracy across the continent, as well as higher levels of citizen engagement in various levels of governance. Nevertheless, it is important to note

that these are some of the constraints against which women struggle, both in terms of their representation, as well as their effectiveness once in office.

In the next section the objectives of the study are examined in more detail, prior to providing an overview of the countries selected as case studies.

The report is organised as follows: Section 3 details the objectives of the study and the methodology used; Section 4 introduces the six cases studies, providing a brief contextual background of the countries; Section 5 reviews the various parties' policies and procedures encouraging (and constraining) women's political participation; and Section 6 concludes, providing recommendations on best practices through which political parties can be encouraged to increase women's political participation.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The study has three specific objectives:

1. to research and identify the current terms of political party governance structures and processes in Commonwealth Africa, which affect the recruitment and retention of women for political leadership;
2. to raise gender awareness in political parties in Commonwealth Africa and provide options for reforms to enable increased numbers of women in political leadership; and
3. to directly engage with political parties in Commonwealth African countries, to design and implement procedures and projects that increase the number of women in political leadership.

Addressing these questions necessitated informed, detailed research to elucidate the current structures in place in political parties across the Commonwealth, the main barriers and issues posed by these structures and, based on this research as well as interviews with key stakeholders, understand how to address and overcome these issues. The purpose was to garner information on the following:

- an understanding of the governance structures of political parties across Africa;
- documentation of successful examples of efforts geared toward promoting gender reform, including policies at all levels within surveyed political parties;
- documentation of barriers to women's participation, including violence against women in elections (VAWE) and in politics (VAWP), both priority issues for the Commonwealth Secretariat; and
- based on data analysis of research findings, proffer policy solutions to address the constraints women face within political parties, and to increase the number of women in political positions at all levels.

As pertains the last point, in addition to research to identify what currently obtains within political party governance structures as they relate to encouraging and facilitating women's political participation, this research also aimed to provide

policy recommendations that would help to increase the number of women elected into political positions.

### 3.1 Methodology

Two distinct methods were employed to answer the research questions: namely, desk review and key informant interviews conducted both in person as well as remotely, via electronic questionnaires.

#### 3.1.1 Desk review

Key texts pertaining to women's political participation were consulted to provide both the contextual framework for the study, as well as an overview of women's political participation and political parties in African countries in particular. Existing literature as it pertained to political parties and women's political participation was reviewed to examine general frameworks and guidelines under which political parties operate. Third, the desk review helped inform which countries were to be selected for in-depth case studies, along with consultations with the Secretariat, to assist understanding of the role political parties play in providing access for women in politics as well as how this access can be strengthened. Six countries were selected that represented three categories of performance in terms of women's participation: two countries with high rates of women's participation, two with medium rates of performance and two with low levels of women in governance.

#### 3.1.2 Key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were also conducted, in person and remotely via e-mail, with a focus on the six countries that had been identified based on their varying levels of women's political representation. Introductory e-mails and letters were sent to the main political parties, select election management bodies (EMBs) and senior officers of civil society organisations (CSOs) in these countries to identify key informants and set up interview dates. Interviews were generally held with people in leadership positions in the party (party executive members, women's leaders, female parliamentarians) of at least two political parties; in

most cases these represented the party in power and the main opposition, although smaller parties were interviewed in a few of the countries.

Targeted civil society organisations were those that worked on women's political participation and/or women's issues in general, as they pertained to politics, while EMB representatives included the National Electoral Commission and/or the Political Party Registration Commission (PPRC) or regional equivalent. For both CSOs and EMBs, interviews were conducted with the heads of the organisations or their designated representatives.

Largely in-person interviews were conducted in four of the six countries: Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya and Sierra Leone, while electronic questionnaires were used in Namibia and Seychelles for logistical reasons.

### Interview questions

Semi-structured questions were used that were tailored to the interviewee, with small differences in the tools depending on the category of respondent (political party, CSO or EMB respondent). The full text of the questions can be found in Annex I. For political parties, the questions aimed at understanding the structures of the political parties, the presence of women in executive positions within the parties, mechanisms through which women could access leadership positions, barriers faced and accomplishments. Thus, respondents were asked about party leadership structures, processes for determining candidates that would represent the party in elections, laws and statutes (if any) governing women's political participation, leadership training opportunities, scope for promotion or placement of women in leadership positions within the party, party policies/strategies to promote women's representation, and attract and retain women in political positions, hindrances or resistance to reform efforts, success or failure of these attempts, as well as the extent in which parties ensured national policies were incorporated in gender-sensitive and responsive manifestos. EMBs and CSOs were also asked similar questions as were relevant to their function and mandates, including trainings for women candidates and parliamentarians, as well as policies in holding parties accountable to legislative and voluntary quotas.

## 3.2 Validation phase

Findings from the research were validated through a one-day workshop with key stakeholders, including high-level representatives of political parties across Africa, held in the UK in July 2017. The feedback from this workshop fed into the final report.

## 3.3 Risks and limitations

The study had several limitations. One central limitation was the level of response from some political parties. Several were reticent in providing answers to particular questions, as well as in providing information on some aspects of the study. In particular, some parties were reluctant to provide a sex-disaggregated list of party membership over the years. A few were concerned about disclosing their party membership lists for privacy reasons, while others did not have easily accessible data. Information around the numbers of women in executive positions was also difficult to obtain from several parties.

Obtaining data remotely was another challenge. In Namibia and Seychelles, it was challenging to get some respondents to complete and return the questionnaires, despite multiple reminders and phone calls. Information was obtained only from the opposition parties in both Namibia and Seychelles. The same was true in Sierra Leone, where again, the ruling party was the only one that did not provide information for the report. Reasons included the party being busy at a time when it was getting ready for elections. To address this limitation, supplementary information for these countries was gleaned through desk research and prior interviews conducted by the researcher on the topics of interest for this report.

A third limitation was that the bulk of the research focused more on the question of how to get more women into political positions, than it did on the impact of these women once in office. Although this question was asked of politicians, EMBs and party leaders, a comprehensive assessment of the impact that women parliamentarians have once in parliament would require more extensive research, as it would also necessitate an examination of the laws that have been passed in the surveyed countries over time, along with an extensive audit of the processes through which these laws originated, and were developed and enacted; this was beyond the scope of the study. Discussions on the impact of women in politics in this report, therefore,

must be understood as reflecting the opinions of interview respondents, rather than an independent assessment of their work.

However, such an independent assessment would be worthwhile, especially as a fundamental premise underpinning this study is that it is important to have more women in political parties, since greater representation will have positive implications on women's socioeconomic and political empowerment. However, some have noted that this positive relationship is conditional. As Cornwall and Goetz (2006) argue, simply adding more women ('engendering democracy') does not automatically lead to better representation that addresses women's historically and culturally rooted exclusion and disadvantage. For these authors,

*An important, but neglected, determinant of political effectiveness is women's political apprenticeship – their experiences in political parties, civil society associations and the informal arenas in which political skills are learned and constituencies built. Enhancing the democratizing potential of women's political participation calls, we argue, for democratizing democracy itself: building new pathways into politics, fostering political learning and creating new forms of articulation across and beyond existing democratic spaces (Cornwall and Goetz 2006, abstract).*

It is therefore necessary to keep in mind that access to positions is only one among other criteria that contribute to women's effectiveness once in office, and that for women to truly change the political landscape in ways that advantage their sex calls for more than presence alone. In the next section, the selection process behind the case studies is described and a brief overview of the country contexts provided.



## 4. The Case Studies

### 4.1 Case study selection criteria

Criteria used for case study selection included: the numerical presence of women in parliament, the existence of favourable clauses within political parties to encourage women's political participation, the type of legal framework in place within the country to promote women's representation, including the electoral system in place (FPTP or PR systems) and the existence of quotas (be they constitutional, legislative or voluntary, at the party level). Countries were organised into the following categories: two countries from high-performing regions, two countries from average-performing regions and two countries with low performance regarding women's political participation. Final country selection was made taking into account prior research conducted in that country, as well as past favourable experience with Commonwealth research.

High-performing countries were identified as those with at least 30 per cent of women represented in parliament in at least one house. Of the qualifying countries – Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Lesotho, Namibia, Mozambique and Uganda – the two countries selected were Namibia and Tanzania. Namibia was ranked number 11 in terms of number of women in parliament on the IPU list,<sup>3</sup> with 41.3 per cent women representatives in its lower house, and 23.8 per cent in its upper house. Tanzania was number 24 on the list, with 36.4 per cent of women in its house of representatives.

Middle-performing countries were identified as those having numbers close to the world average of 23.3 per cent. Seychelles and Kenya were identified in this category. Prior to the most recent national assembly elections in 2016, Seychelles would have been considered among the top-performing countries in terms of women's representation, with an estimated 44 per cent women in parliament. However, women lost seats in this election and the number of women representatives had fallen to 21.2 per cent at the time of the research. At the time of writing, the country was ranked 87 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. While 21.2 per cent representation is less than half of what the country had prior to 2016, it was nevertheless good enough to put it in the middle category. Kenya,

on the other hand, with 19.4 per cent of women representatives in the lower house, and 26.5 per cent in the senate, was enjoying its highest number of women representatives after the first elections under a gender-sensitive constitution, which came into force in 2010. The second elections under this constitution were slated at the time of writing for August 2017.

Low-performing countries were those where women's representation in parliament was below 15 per cent. Ghana and Sierra Leone were selected as being representative of this category. Ghana was 141 on the IPU list, with 12.7 per cent women representatives after its December 2016 elections. In a region where many countries have suffered from civil war, Ghana's is often held up as a model of democracy; however, it lags behind when it comes to women's political inclusion. Despite the numerous protocols and agreements emphasising women's political and economic equality to which the country is signatory, Ghana has one of the lowest numbers of women in politics. As a response to this, a women's manifesto coalition was formed in 2004, to document women's contributions and highlight concerns about the situation of women in Ghana. The document chronicled the most important issues and problems women faced, and put forward women's demands and timelines to address the situation on the eve of the 2004 elections. Furthermore, an affirmative action bill has been developed, but at the time of writing had yet to be passed by parliament. Women were still severely under-represented in parliament, although there had been some progress – from 20 in 2008 to 28 in 2012, and 35 at the time of writing following the December 2016 elections (Coalition on the Women's Manifesto for Ghana 2016).

Sierra Leone was close behind Ghana at 145 on the IPU list. Contrary to Ghana, however, the number of women in parliament had been steadily decreasing since the 2002 elections. At the time of the study, women made up 12.4 per cent in parliament following the 2012 elections, a nearly five-point reduction from the 2007 elections. The next elections are scheduled for March 2018. Like several African countries in the 1990s, Sierra Leone experienced civil war; however, while many of these countries have successfully developed

**Table 4.1 Summary of political systems and quotas by country<sup>5</sup>**

Country	Commonwealth rank	IPU rank	Study ranking (performing)	% Women in parliament (lower or single house)	Electoral system	Quota – upper house	Quota – lower house
<b>Namibia</b>	3	11	High	41.3%	PR	N/A	Voluntary: SWAPO: 50/50
<b>Tanzania</b>	5	25	High	36.4%	Mixed	N/A	Legislated
<b>Seychelles</b>	18	84	Medium	21.2% (43.8)%	Mixed		
<b>Kenya</b>	21	100	Medium	19.4%	FPTP	Legislated	Legislated
<b>Ghana</b>	32	140	Low	12.7%	FPTP		
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	33	142	Low	12.4%	FPTP		

Source: *A Handbook for Gender-inclusive Elections in Commonwealth Africa: Achieving 50:50 by 2030*. Commonwealth Secretariat (2018).

new constitutions with stipulations to increase women's political representation in the aftermath of war, including Rwanda, Mozambique and Uganda, Sierra Leone has struggled to do so. A gender bill has been in development for several years, but has faced resistance in being reviewed, let alone passed, in parliament.

The final list of countries resulted in all geographic regions being covered, including one island nation. The sample contained two West African countries, two East African countries, one Southern African country and an island. It also ensured a mix of countries that had experienced conflict, as well as those that had experienced none.

# 5. Research Findings

The research findings are reviewed in this section. They are organised by topic, with a description of how each country performs on topics that include: constitutional commitments, quotas and special measures; political parties (women in executive structures, the role of women's wings, funding for election campaigns, manifesto development, leadership training); CSOs and women; the media and women; and barriers that women politicians face. The last section provides recommendations and conclusions.

## 5.1 Gender and political parties

A discussion of the tenets of political parties in the surveyed countries first requires contextualisation, through a review of the overarching framework that governs the contexts in which parties operate. In most countries, the constitution provides the framework under which political parties – as well as other bodies – operate in any one country, while the electoral system governs the processes through which candidates are selected and elected. In this section, the various ways in which parties can increase women's representation are reviewed, with a focus on electoral systems, quotas and the constitution.

## 5.2 Constitutional commitments to increasing women's political representation

Two mechanisms that have been described as important in increasing women's representation in parliament are the electoral system and the use of quotas.

### 5.2.1 Electoral system

Experience has shown that the proportional representation (PR) system is more advantageous to women than FPTP (Tinker 2004). According to a 2004 IDEA study (Matland 2005), PR systems recorded 27.49 women in parliament compared to 18.24 per cent under FPTP. Two Commonwealth countries moved from FPTP to PR systems in the 1990s (New Zealand and South Africa), one of which is in Africa – showing that countries can

make the switch. Both countries cited the desire for greater inclusion and representation, including of women (Tinker 2004), as reasons for the switch.

Under the PR system, ballots are cast for a party rather than for a particular candidate, as parties draw up lists of candidates to represent electoral districts. The number of seats assigned to each party is based on their vote count. In contrast, under FPTP, specific candidates stand in particular constituencies and are elected to represent that constituency. Candidates who obtain more votes than the other candidates standing in the same constituency win, even when they do not obtain a majority of the votes. This system has been more resistant to fielding female candidates, out of fear that prejudice against women would increase the likelihood of voters selecting male candidates over female ones, to the detriment of the party.

### 5.2.2 Quotas

To maximise the number of women elected to parliament, however, studies note the importance of combining electoral systems with quotas. Quotas are seen as being a 'fast track' (Dahlerup and Freidenvall 2005) method to increasing women's representation, compared to the incremental model, where women's participation 'organically' increases as societies become more receptive to their inclusion – due to factors like increased education and more women in the workforce. Quotas can exist at the national, regional and/or local levels.

### Types of quotas

The first type of quota is mandatory, with constitutional and legislated quotas falling under this category. Constitutional quotas establish thresholds for women's representation within the constitution, through setting aside a percentage of seats or posts for women only, while legislated quotas do the same, but through electoral laws rather than the constitution. As these quotas are mandatory, they apply to all political parties. They can be enforced through sanctions or penalties for parties that do not comply, including disqualification from elections or the rejection of party lists that do not comply with the thresholds. The efficacy

of quotas can be seen in the fact that eight of the top-ten countries within the Commonwealth with regards to women's representation combine quotas with PR electoral systems (Commonwealth Secretariat 2016).

A second type of quota is voluntary. Political parties can choose to adopt these quotas as part of their party's policies, committing them to include women either within party lists and/or other party structures.<sup>4</sup> The African National Congress (ANC), for example, has adopted and implements a 50 per cent gender quota in local elections, as does the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO) in Namibia, with its 50 per cent quota implemented through a 'zebra' system. The limitation of these quotas, however, is that they are largely voluntary and solely up to the discretion of the political party. If parties are not truly committed to gender equality, the likelihood that such quotas are enforced is slim. For example, in Zimbabwe, a non-Commonwealth

member, while both the Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) and the Movement for Democratic Change-Tsvangirai (MDC-T) both have quotas, they have either not been systematically applied (ZANU-PF) or not yet achieved (MDC). Furthermore, the absence of intra-party mechanisms to ensure compliance and implementation is a further deterrent to compliance. Even if parties are committed to these quotas, a change of power within the party can lead to a decrease in women's representation. Table 5.1 (reproduced from a 2016 Commonwealth report) outlines the advantages and disadvantages of different types of quotas and electoral systems.

**Table 5.1 Possible combinations of quotas and electoral systems**

Type of quota	PR system		FPTP	
	Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages
Constitutional or legislated quota	Guarantees high levels of women's representation, especially when accompanied by a zebra or 'zipper' system that alternates women and men on lists.	May be resisted by political parties that do not agree with quotas.	Is mandatory.	May not result in women's increased representation, unless women are fielded in safe constituencies or seats are reserved. Reservations of seats in the FPTP system can result in legal and constitutional challenges. An innovative solution is the distribution of seats reserved for women on a PR basis (as, for example, in Tanzania).
Voluntary party quota	Enjoys party support; party takes responsibility for putting women on the lists.	May not provide the desired result if not all parties apply the quota.	Enjoys party support.	Is the least reliable of the voluntary quotas, because principle is often sacrificed in the heat of elections and the desire to field 'known' candidates with the best chance of winning. (However, fielding women candidates in party strongholds can help mitigate this.)

Source: Lowe-Morna (2003), reproduced from Commonwealth Secretariat 2016, p.10

### 5.3 Electoral frameworks in surveyed countries (constitutions, quotas and electoral systems)

The constitutions of the surveyed countries included clauses that enshrined non-discrimination; however, only a few had clauses on affirmative action, designed to increase women's representation in political structures. Overall, countries with affirmative action clauses in the constitution were more likely to have more women in parliament than countries that did not.

The country with the highest number of women representatives in the study, Namibia, combined a PR system with a voluntary party quota. However, only the ruling party, SWAPO, implemented this party quota. The party used the zebra principle for its party list in 2014, alternating between men and women, so that every second candidate on the list was a woman (African Union and Commonwealth Secretariat 2015). This led to 41.6 per cent of people in parliament being women. This has worked as SWAPO has consistently dominated elections in Namibia since independence and at the time of the study had a commanding majority in parliament, winning 77 out of 96 seats in the 2014 elections.

The main opposition party, DTA (the Popular Democratic Movement) Namibia, has not adopted a voluntary quota. Instead, the party's newly revised (2016) constitution makes provision for a secretary for gender equality and female empowerment as part of the National Executive Committee, who is charged with developing the party's gender policy using the 2008 SADC Protocol on Gender and Development as a guide (DTA 2016, Article L – 4.3.9). According to the party's Secretary-General, 'The introduction of a Gender Secretary to further push and advocate for "equal male and female representation on all Constitutional Structures" will further ensure that the representation of women within the DTA's Constitutional Structures continues to increase organically and not mechanically via rigid zebra-style rules, which can also be detrimental towards women's credibility in politics'.

While the idea of an organically based increase of women is commendable, the success of this position will depend largely on the individual appointed. If the person in this position is not

effective, or there are changes in leadership, this could undermine any potential gains, particularly as they are not enshrined in the constitution. Change will also be incremental, as this approach relies on changing attitudes and perspectives regarding the importance of having women's political representation, which takes time. On the other hand, one can also argue that societal change will lead to a more deep-rooted and genuine acceptance of women, setting the stage for a greater expansion of women's representation that is less susceptible to reversals.

Seychelles points to some of the potential limitations when women's political representation is not safeguarded by law. Seychelles is unique among African countries, as it has been able to achieve high levels of women's participation without constitutional provisions or a quota. It recorded an estimated 44 per cent of female representatives in the 2011 elections. It appears that willingness to elect women makes Seychelles more like Scandinavian countries, which have increased their representation over time due to changes within the electorate that have made them more likely to elect women. However, all 14 female members were from Parti Lepep, the majority party that had been in power since independence. In 2016, the party lost its majority in parliament, winning 10 seats compared to 25 in the previous election, of which only four were women (26.6 per cent), while the newly formed Seychelles Democratic Alliance (Linyon Demokratik Seselwa, LDS) won 15 seats (both parties picked up an extra four seats each under the proportional representation vote). With the three female members in the opposition, women made up a total of seven out of 33 seats in the parliament at the time of writing. This brought the number of women representatives in the national assembly to 26.3 per cent, well below the 44 per cent of earlier elections.

Some have attributed Seychelles uniqueness to a seemingly more egalitarian cultural framework. The country was ranked second in Africa for gender equality by the Mo Ibrahim Index in 2013 (Seychelles Nation 2013), has a matriarchal culture, higher education levels for women than men, as well as more women represented in professional positions than men (Make Every Woman Count 2016; Commonwealth Secretariat 2016). However, the drop in women representatives showed that where gains are not safeguarded in documents such as the constitution, legislation or electoral

law, they can be subject to reversal. Interviewed female parliamentarians noted that despite being known for gender inclusivity and equality, women still faced some discrimination, and that having a quota at the level of the party would be one way to safeguard women's representation. LDS, as a newly formed party (2016), also lacked provisions to ensure gender parity in the party constitution, although the party said it was committed to gender balance. Moreover, as a party made up of a coalition of opposition parties, a party official pointed out that one of the issues affecting the implementation of gender balance in political candidacies was how to make the transition to new candidates without upsetting the 'old hands' who have sacrificed much and therefore have a natural expectation to be next in line as candidates. In short, women face challenges in being recognised in parties jockeying for positions alongside men who have likely been dominant in their own parties. This is a problem that has also been encountered by women political candidates in Kenya.

While Seychelles serves as a reminder of the importance of legislatively mandated political representation, Kenya provides an example of where constitutional provisions on their own also do not necessarily guarantee gender balance, or that minimum thresholds established for women will be met. In 2010, Kenya passed a new constitution with progressive clauses on gender. The constitution made allowance for women to come to parliament through both elected and nominated seats. Under Article 81, not more than two-thirds of representatives on elective public bodies should be of the same gender, thus ensuring that at least one-third would be either male or female. At the local level, each of Kenya's 47 counties must elect a women's representative (Article 97). The constitution also provides for political parties to nominate 16 women to the senate, according to their share of elected seats, with one woman representing youth and another representing persons with disabilities (Article 98) (Ongoya and Otieno 2010; WiLDAF Kenya 2010, pp.41–47). In sum, the constitution provides for women to make up at least one-third of the members of representative bodies in each one of the county governments, and special seats so that they make up at least one-third of the Assembly.

Although Kenya's constitution has made strong provisions for women, lawmakers have struggled to translate constitutional provisions into legislation.

Three different attempts at legislation have failed, despite the 27 August 2015 deadline set by the Supreme Court in 2012 being extended several times. Thus, although Kenyans saw the proportion of women representatives go from 9.8 per cent to 19 per cent in the 2013 elections, the first held under the new constitution, women's representation still fell short of that envisioned.

While the special seat allocations for women have been generally adhered to, where women have struggled is in accessing elected seats. Political parties have either failed to nominate women to run, or have nominated women in seats that were unwinnable due to strong ethno-regional voting affiliations, among other factors. Parties have also argued that there are not enough qualified women for them to meet the quota demands. Although the constitution has been in effect since 2010, it was only in the most recently concluded elections (in August 2017) that women were elected to the senate and to the governorship for the first time, with three women elected to each position respectively (Akwei 2017).

Kenya shows, then, the importance of moving beyond the constitution. While constitutional obligations are important, without legislation to ensure that these measures are implemented, there is no guarantee that progressive mandates will actually be put into practice. At the same time, Kenya also provides a good example of the need for review and verification of party compliance, with sanctions for non-compliance. Although legislation to enact the constitutional quotas remains pending, there are sections within the constitution and the Electoral Act to verify and encourage compliance on some aspects of the constitutional quota provisions, including the content of party lists.

For example,

*Section 34 of the Elections Act requires political parties to submit their party lists to the IEBC [Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission] before the elections. The party lists submitted are to be valid for the entire term of parliament... Parties will be required to submit the following number of candidates in their party lists: 12 names in respect to the list to National Assembly elections; 16 names in respect to the women seats in the Senate; 4 names in respect to the disabled members of the senate and 4 names in respect to the youth representatives to the senate. The lists submitted must respect the Zebra principle, which is to effect that they must alternate*

*between male and female candidates on the list. (Sections 34 and 36 of the Elections Act of 2011; cited in Ongoya and Otieno 2012, p. 70).*

Moreover, there are sanctions for non-compliance: for political parties to qualify for the Political Parties Fund, not more than two-thirds of the registered office holders should be of the same gender, in addition to having secured at least 5 per cent of votes cast in the prior general elections (Ongoya and Otieno 2010). Oversight of these clauses is provided by the Independent Office of the Registrar of Political Parties (ORPP), which is charged with regulating parties and ensuring compliance.

However, some interview respondents in Kenya noted that not all clauses were monitored for compliance, nor were sanctions consistently enforced. For example, cases of political violence did not result in the punitive measures outlined in relevant documents.

There is a need to strengthen electoral management bodies to both monitor as well as enforce compliance of all clauses in the constitution, as well as electoral acts.

Ghana and Sierra Leone are examples of two countries with FPTP electoral systems and no constitutional provisions that mandate women's political representation. Instead, parties in both countries have relied largely on voluntary party quotas, which have not yielded much success. In Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC) committed itself to 30 per cent positions for women, while the New Patriotic Party (NPP) committed to 40 per cent women in leadership positions, in their party manifestos. However, neither party met these targets in the most recently elected parliament. Additionally, NPP leadership floated the idea of allowing current women parliamentarians to run unopposed for their seats in the past elections. However, this was vigorously resisted by grassroots members of the party, suggesting a schism between the party leadership and ordinary party members on the need for affirmative action policies of any type. Party members were resistant to the idea, as they were not satisfied with the women representatives and criticised them as being aloof from their constituencies and unhelpful. Similarly, a request made by gender activists for the 45 new seats added to the Ghana parliament to be made safe seats for women was also rejected. Grounds for rejection were succinctly captured by an NPP

policy analyst in 2012, who observed that 'reserving otherwise competitive positions for women has limitations, imposed by the need to win power, and ambitions of political parties are nurtured over time. Therefore, they cannot take chances to lose such seats which are deemed safe' (Mensah and Taylor 2012).

Without externally mandated and enforced rules to increase women's participation, it has been difficult for Ghana to implement any affirmative action policies. However, Ghana has seen some successes. Both parties have introduced electoral reforms that have expanded their electoral colleges to include more women, allowing more women to vote at the primary level; parties have more women in top-level positions, although these are still below their party targets; more women have been appointed in high-profile positions, including chief justice, minister of justice, director of immigration and director of the prison service, among others; and an affirmative action bill was at the time of writing going through the processes to be presented to parliament for deliberation after many years of resistance (Coalition on the Women's Manifesto for Ghana 2016).

Sierra Leone has also faced difficulty in increasing women's political representation. Quotas are not new to Sierra Leone: there are 12 seats reserved for paramount chiefs in parliament, based on the 12 districts in Sierra Leone, while the Local Government Act of 2004 calls for gender balance in ward committees, with 50:50 representation of men and women in the committees. It has nevertheless been very difficult for women to introduce a quota of any kind. Attempts by women to design an affirmative action bill and to campaign for a revision of the constitution to include a quota for women have failed, in part because 'the women's movement, including the female parliamentary caucus, was fragmented, lacked the funds to sustain such a campaign, and lacked the specific expertise required to engage the state and political elites' (Fofana Ibrahim 2015).

The recently concluded constitutional review process in Sierra Leone provided another opportunity for women to try to get a 30 per cent quota into the constitution. Women's groups were supported to come together and collectively decide on the key issues they wanted a revised constitution to address, including a 30 per cent threshold for women's electoral representation. The central

issues raised in the position paper developed out of these consultations, and was largely reflected in the revisions taken up by the Constitutional Review Committee. At the time of the research, there were ongoing discussions in Sierra Leone about when the constitutional referendum would take place.

While quotas do not exist at the constitutional level, the opposition party at the time of the study, the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) does have a gender policy, which commits the party to improving the socioeconomic condition of women and building acceptance within the party for greater women's participation in the party. Although quotas are mentioned in the document, they are voluntary, and the party only recommends that legislation be passed that reflects these quotas. The quotas are primarily for greater participation of women in the executive structures of the party: advocating that 50 per cent of executive positions at the section, zonal, chiefdom and constituency levels should be held by women; 40 per cent of executive positions at the district and regional levels should be held by women; while 30 per cent of national executive positions should be held by women (SLPP 2007). It also encourages the party to provide safe seats for competent women. While these are progressive indicators, the voluntary nature of the policy makes it largely ineffective, as there are no sanctions for non-compliance. Legislation has yet to be developed to translate the principles into practice, and it also does not establish a quota for SLPP female candidates in parliament. Moreover, interviews conducted with several women parliamentarians in 2016 revealed that few knew of the contents of the gender policy (Fofana Ibrahim and M'Cormack-Hale 2016) and women continue to remain largely under-represented in executive positions in the party. However, there are exceptions: the SLPP fielded a woman vice presidential candidate in 2012 and the Minority Leader was a woman at the time of writing. Moreover, while women remain severely under-represented in parliament, the ruling All People's Congress has appointed women to some prominent posts.

#### 5.4 Women, party executive positions and reserved seats

Across all parties, while there were concrete mechanisms that spelled out the different leadership structures within the parties, as well as

how such positions were to be filled, some parties were unable to provide concrete information on how many women were in executive positions. Nevertheless, for the most part, parties made allowances for women to participate in key executive committees within the party, although the extent to which these allowances were fulfilled differed.

In many cases, women accessed executive-level positions simply as part of their role within women's wings. Parties made allowance for representatives from women's wings to be present in many of the parties' hierarchical structures. As women's wing leaders/organisers and deputy organisers, women had de facto representation on other party committees or institutions. This was the case for both political parties surveyed in Ghana. For example, in the NPP, women's wing leaders were automatically represented on the Regional Executive Committee, National Executive Committee (NEC) and the Steering Committee of the NEC. However, these were appointed positions, rather than elected, and while these institutions are important ones, and play an important role in overseeing party affairs (for example, the National Executive Committee oversees the daily management of the party and can also speak for the party on urgent issues), women's presence was related more to their participation within a women-focused part of the organisation than for any other reason.

The same was true of the National Democratic Congress (NDC), the opposition party in Ghana at the time of the research. The NDC is organised at six levels, with the basic unit of the party organised at the branch level (made up of members at a polling station), and then moving up to the ward, constituency, district, regional and national levels. At every level of the party, women have representation through the presence of a representative from the women's wing. Thus, at the branch level there is a woman organiser, whose role is to, 'be responsible for the mobilisation of women at the branch level for party activities'. Along with the women organiser, the branch executive also consists of a chairman, secretary, an organiser, a youth organiser, a propaganda secretary, as well as two other members from the constituency (NDC 1992). The constituency conference, which is responsible for electing party officers within the constituency, includes a woman organiser, as does the Constituency Executive Committee, which



is responsible for a range of activities, including the organisation of party activities within a given constituency, the implementation of decisions made by the National Congress, Ward Committee supervision, nominations for candidates to run for parliament under the party ticket, and so on. A Regional Executive Committee and the National Executive Committee all mandate women's participation through the presence of the women's organiser and her deputies. Women are also mandated on the Council of Elders, where of the 17 members, four must be women (Ibid). Within the Regional Council of Elders, one-third of the ten members are supposed to be women.

In addition to these roles, both NDC and NPP did have some women in prominent executive positions. In the past, both have had elected vice chairs that were women, including former president Jerry Rawlings' wife, Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings, who was vice chair for NDC until she left the party and formed her own. In the 2016 elections, she became the first woman to contest for president under the National Democratic Party, a smaller party formed in 2012 when it split from then ruling NDC.

Overall, however, women remain under-represented in leadership positions in their parties. While it was difficult to obtain exact numbers from respondents, women leaders within NPP estimated that in the Eastern region alone, there were around 77 women on executive bodies out of 560 people.

Even when parties had women represented in the executive, numbers still lagged behind those of men. In Namibia, the DTA had some representation of women in the executive, although there was only one woman represented among the top-six leadership positions in the party; as the national chairperson, she was number three in command. In other structures, while women were present, there were more men than women in most positions: in the National Executive Committee, six of 22 members were women, while the Management Committee comprised two women and seven men. In parliament, the party had near parity, with three men and two women represented in the national assembly, despite not having any gender quotas.

Although SWAPO, the governing party in Namibia, had a voluntary gender quota, this did not necessarily extend to all positions.

Concerns were also expressed with the implementation of gender quotas, even when enshrined within the constitution, with ramifications for non-compliance. In Kenya, for example, when it came to registration, all political parties had to meet the following requirements: Section 4(2) of the Political Parties Act (PPA), which provides that a political party can only be registered if it meets the gender and inclusivity requirements as spelt out in Article 91 of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK); Section 7(2) of the PPA, which specifies that political parties have to meet the Affirmative Action provisions (two-thirds) before being registered; and Section 25(2) of the PPA, which states that a political party shall not be entitled to the Political Parties Fund if more than two-thirds of its registered office bearers are from the same gender.

Given the implications of non-compliance on registration, a civil society respondent believed that most, if not all, parties complied with the not-more-than two-thirds gender principle on their NECs. Adherence to the two-thirds principle was confirmed by the opposition, the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM). The party's Parliamentary Liaison listed at least seven women in leadership positions, including the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General, two organising secretaries, two deputy treasurers and a deputy chair.

In practice, however, concerns have been raised that despite meeting these numerical commitments, genuine gender inclusivity remains lacking. First, the same civil society representative felt that parties only made sure to meet the minimum requirements, with little or no effort to do more; and noted that the positions that women occupied were not substantive ones.

Second, in parties where women could be found in executive positions beyond that of the women's wing, there was some question about how much power women wielded in these positions. There was concern that women were mostly relegated to deputy positions, which were less influential in decision-making on matters of importance to the party. Despite the existence of quotas, civil society respondents still felt that parties in Kenya continued to be characterised by a male-dominated organisational culture, characterised by rhetoric and emergency interventions in an attempt to accommodate women, usually around the election period.

Other Kenyan CSO leaders felt that even when women did hold executive positions, they generally had little agency in how these posts were distributed. Politics in Kenya has been fluid, with parties forming and dissolving coalitions, particularly around election time. One respondent felt that women were largely passive in this process, rather than taking an active role in how posts were distributed and discussions on the roles they would play (although they did admit that there were some very strong women politicians in Kenya, who did play more instrumental roles). As was also mentioned in Seychelles and Tanzania, male party members appeared to receive preferential consideration for parliamentary – as well as executive – party positions in the cases where different parties merged to form a new party or a new coalition, such as the National Super Alliance (NASA) in Kenya.

Another concern raised concerned the qualifications of women who occupied executive positions. Some respondents believed that the tendency was to give positions within the executive to women who were either related to party leaders, were party loyalists, were disinterested in politics, or who lacked authority to question party leaders and influence party politics in any way. A Kenyan female politician echoed some of these concerns. She found that women politicians in some cases were not seen as leaders in their own right, but rather as a support to men. She had heard women nominees to the County Assembly referred to as 'flower girls', while nominated senators did not have voting rights, all of which seemed to indicate they were valued and respected less than elected colleagues.

#### 5.4.1 Reserved seats

Such statements illustrate the wider concerns expressed in the study about both the concept of reserved seats, as well as reservations about the selection process for these seats. In Namibia, the newly formed opposition party, DTA, felt that quotas could give rise to a 'mechanical or formulaic' implementation of gender balance, without transforming the gendered nature of politics, which continued to discriminate against women.

Respondents in political parties across surveyed countries were wary of reserved seats. Although those who supported quotas and reserved seats believed they could provide women with experience and training that could help them to successfully transition to constituency seats (Yoon 2008, cited

in Bauer 2012), others argued that such seats could perpetuate women's political marginalisation (Tamale 1999; Ahikire 2009). For example, in speaking about the creation of special seats in Uganda, where women's seats are outside of the mainstream constituencies, Ahikire notes the contradictory impact of this on women: 'Therefore, while the presence of women in Ugandan politics has improved significantly as a result of this formal quota system, it has nevertheless had the effect of constructing and entrenching the position of women in society as secondary citizens' (Ahikire 2009, p.2).

Some women parliamentarians who took part in the research project echoed these sentiments. In Tanzania, for example, where reserved seats for women are constitutionally mandated, a few women politicians interviewed indicated that these seats could indeed serve as a training ground for women interested in politics, giving them a sense of empowerment and the courage to try for constituency seats. However, many more admitted that it had been difficult for women in reserved seats to make the transition to successfully compete for open seats and only a few women had succeeded.

A prominent Tanzanian women's civil society leader reiterated these concerns. She noted that women who wanted to run for elected positions had been discouraged from doing so, being told that they already have their 'own' seats and should confine themselves to those. However, these seats had limitations. She found that some women politicians expressed feeling powerless, as these seats were not affiliated with any particular constituency, instead representing women in general. Moreover, they did not come with any funding, unlike constituency seats where representatives had access to a budget as well as constituency development funds, further cementing a sense of marginalisation and powerlessness to adequately address any needs they might see. Thus, while women parliamentarians in the governing party, Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM), mentioned that special seats could be a training ground for women parliamentarians, helping them develop skills and gain a level of political sophistication that could assist them to transition into elected seats, they admitted that this transition was often not easy and few women had been able to do so successfully.

## 5.4.2 Leadership positions and small parties

While women are generally under-represented in executive positions in the large mainstream political parties, such representation is more common in smaller parties. In Ghana, the Convention People's Party (CPP), founded by Kwame Nkrumah but which has considerably dwindled in importance and power since the onset of democratic rule, is the only party in Ghana that has had a woman as national chairperson, as well as two female deputies.

Smaller parties were also found to be more likely to nominate women as their running mates, as the People's National Convention (PNC) did in 2008 and the Progressive People's Party (PPP) did in 2016.

The National Democratic Party (NDP), a recently created (2012) splinter party from the NDC, was the first party to have supported a female presidential candidate in the 2016 elections. These parties seem more receptive to other marginalised groups as well, including youth and people with disabilities (PWDs). The presidential candidate for CPP in 2016 was a person with a disability.

This pattern was noted in several other countries. In Sierra Leone, another recently formed party, the Alliance Democratic Party (ADP), a splinter from the ruling All People's Congress, had a female Secretary-General. Moreover, the party did not have a women's wing, which the Secretary-General felt was simply one way to institutionalise marginalisation. As she put it, 'Other parties have a women's wing – they are telling you, you are a subset of a set. You have nothing to do with the main party'. Instead, she said that the party had members who were committed to gender equality, consisting as it did of primarily young and female members. The executive committee had four women out of a total of 12 members.

Also in Sierra Leone, two women have run for president in the past, both from smaller parties, although one of the two main political parties, the SLPP, fielded a woman vice presidential candidate in the last (2012) elections, as did the smaller, less popular Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFPP).

Smaller parties appear to have less resistance to fielding women candidates in prominent positions, having women in executive posts and complying with gender requirements. One possible reason for this could be that, because these parties have little chance of gaining power, men are less

likely to feel threatened by women – as it is clear these parties are not likely to succeed. It also suggests that women are more willing to invest in the effort required in parties that are outside of the mainstream, as well as illustrates the conditions under which women are least likely to face resistance.

## 5.5 Functions of women's wings

Women's wings in the surveyed countries had a range of functions – from serving largely as a body to mobilise women's registration and voter turn-out in support of male candidates, to playing a more constructive and instrumental role in boosting women's political participation and representation. In Ghana, the range of activities of women's wings was captured well in the NPP's constitutional description of its women's wing, which it describes as 'a special organ within the party which promotes the policies and programmes of the Party amongst women'. However, in addition to promoting the interests and policies of the party among women, the organisation was also charged with promoting policies within the party that place women at the forefront:

- 'Raise public awareness on gender and children's issues;
- Promote policies that will realize the full potential of women and children;
- Oppose vigorously policies and practices that militate against the full development of women and children;
- Create a nationwide organization within the Party to cater for the activities and interest of female members.' (New Patriotic Party 1992)

In Tanzania, female respondents from both CHADEMA (Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo, Party for Democracy and Progress) and CCM felt that their women's wings had a direct impact on women's political participation and in representing women's issues, as well as in the more traditional roles of voter mobilisation. Respondents noted that, historically, women in Tanzania had been afraid of being in politics. However, through the party wings, women leaders travelled around the country and encouraged women to participate politically by telling them that this was the best way for them to hold government accountable.

This helped allay fears, as well as encouraged women to join the party, which was instrumental in boosting party membership rates in addition to increasing the numbers of women who registered to vote. The importance of this cannot be underestimated: in most, if not all countries, women are the majority and so getting them to register is key, as they represent potential votes for a particular party. Women also reached out to other women to mobilise their support for party candidates. In Kenya, a respondent pointed out that women were also seen as the 'best voters in Kenya', as they were patient and could queue in line for hours to vote. Similarly, a female respondent in Seychelles said that women were 'the party's strength', and attributed the party's success stories to the high level of women's involvement – both in party structures as well as general supporters.

Referencing the key role that women play in helping men get elected, an NDC respondent said, 'If women are not on your side you are in trouble. Give the women organizer a special place, because if she is with you, you will go far'. The respondent attributed this success to women's passion and commitment, arguing that when women supported someone or something, they were able to convince others.

At the same time, some women's wings/leagues served as a training ground for future women leaders. Political participation at the level of the women's wing or league helped to build their capacity and enable them to participate in other political structures, or even run for office. Leagues conducted training with women aspirants and leaders at the local level, and encouraged women to vie for political positions.

Women's wings were also used as a vehicle to safeguard and advance women's interests. In particular, strong women leaders were able to lobby the leadership on issues of importance to women. In Kenya, examples of topics addressed by women league members included advocating for reduced nomination fees for women's candidates, and ensuring that women were protected from violence by advocating that cases of violence be speedily addressed. As an executive member of ODM, one of the women politicians said that she had also encouraged the party leader and other high-placed officials to appoint women into executive positions left vacant following defections to other parties. While this is not necessarily a role played by

a women's league, it points to the importance of having strong women in key positions. The former SLPP women's wing leader, and Minority Leader in parliament at the time of writing, Dr Bernadette Lahai, also mentioned playing a similar role of encouraging party leaders to field more women in key positions in the party during her time in this position (Fofana Ibrahim and M'Cormack-Hale 2016).

In Namibia, the purpose of the DTA Women's League was to 'serve and advance the interests of female DTA members as well as that of women and girls within the Namibian society in general'. According to the Secretary-General, the league has been successful in promoting high rates of women's representation. Successes mentioned were that, of the five members of the National Assembly, two were women, a 40 per cent representation, as well as campaigning and ensuring that 55 per cent (24 out of 43) of all the party's regional and local authority councillors were women.

While respondents mentioned a variety of activities undertaken by women's wings or leagues, a recurrent theme was that of organisations that were primarily supportive in helping male candidates get elected. During elections, women were often relegated to activities that reinforced stereotypical gender roles, such as ensuring adequate food during electoral or campaign activities, and overseeing logistical issues such as sleeping and housing arrangements. Women were also responsible for entertainment, singing and dancing at festivals and campaign rallies. Women civil society activists in Ghana pointed out that it was rare to hear the women organiser speak at party functions. This underscores the traditional role that women play in politics – that of winning votes for men during the campaign process, rather than furthering the political aspirations of women themselves.

## 5.6 Funding for election campaigns

### 5.6.1 Women and nomination fees

One of the recurrent barriers women face in running for office is financial constraints. One source of this constraint is the often-exorbitant fees candidates are expected to pay: from party membership fees, to nomination and candidature fees. In this section, policies regarding financing for women candidates are explored.

Three main mechanisms were discussed across the countries. One method was a discount for women aspirants. In most countries, parties reported that women and men did not pay the same amount when it came to nomination fees; instead, women paid half the amount that men did as a way to address women's greater financial constraints. In Ghana, both political parties reported having an internal policy to accommodate women via such discounts, which were applied to positions at all levels. Women aspirants in Kenya also paid half the fees of male aspirants and candidates, while fees for parliamentary seats could be waived.

A second mechanism involved parties paying nomination fees, either for all candidates or for female candidates. This appeared to be more prevalent in opposition, smaller parties and newer parties. In Namibia, DTA said they paid nomination fees for all candidates, both men and women, while Alliance Democratic Party (ADP), another small party in Sierra Leone, did the same. LDS in Seychelles also said the party financed political candidates equally, depending on how much they could raise. SLPP had paid nomination fees for women candidates, but it was unclear how systematic this practice was.

A third option was that there was no differentiation in the fees paid by men and women. In Seychelles, Parti Lepep affirmed that men and women were treated equally, which conforms to the perspective that men and women are largely seen as equal in Seychelles.

In Sierra Leone, the two major parties had no legislative policies in place for women to pay reduced fees, although this was recommended in the SLPP gender policy. Following complaints about the high cost of candidature fees, during the 2012 elections, the president said that he would pay the fees for all candidates. Where reduced fees for women were in place, this was at the behest of the political party, as the National Electoral Commission (NEC) or its country equivalent surveyed, indicated that any attempt by the NEC to set different fees for men and women would be seen as being discriminatory toward men.

### 5.6.2 Women and campaign financing

Some parties provided some level of funding for women candidates, while others provided funding equally to both candidates (as, for example, was the case of DTA in Namibia). In Ghana, the NDC

leader noted that women received some financial assistance, as did candidates with disabilities. He estimated that women were given 30 to 50 per cent more resources than men, but was unable to provide details of how systematically this was being done. Resources mentioned included t-shirts, posters, campaign materials and money, as well as special training programmes for women.

While Sierra Leone's opposition party, the SLPP's, gender policy mentions that resources would be made available to women candidates for campaigning purposes, women politicians interviewed indicated that they did not receive such assistance. In Kenya, parties that meet certain criteria within the Political Parties Act are eligible for government funding for elections.

## 5.7 Development of party manifestos process

Overall, there were several approaches used in party manifesto development. In some cases, processes were largely internal to the party and shepherded mainly by men; in other cases, political parties took advantage of ongoing manifesto development by women's organisations, incorporating aspects of these manifestos into their party platforms; while in yet other instances, CSOs and political parties engaged in collaborative processes, or some combination of the above.

In Ghana, for example, within NPP, political party processes for manifesto development were largely led by the party, using a multipronged process. The process was opened up to academics, lecturers and former ministers within the party, who could send memos, which were collected and sent to the general secretary around six months prior to elections. The presidential candidate also travelled across the country surveying constituency needs, and appointed a committee that reviewed the different requests and concerns collated from citizens' ideas and the views he/she collected. These were then fine-tuned into a readily understandable manifesto.

However, civil society leaders have also been instrumental in working with women across various sectors of society to help collate women's issues and concerns, which have then been developed into a manifesto. In Ghana, for example, women civil society organisations arranged tours around the country to discuss what women saw as their

primary concerns and how they wanted these concerns addressed. These concerns were put into a women's manifesto that was widely disseminated, including to political parties. According to some CSO leaders, while there were no formal processes, per se, some of the issues mentioned in the manifesto did make their way onto party platforms.

In Kenya, ODM's process again appeared to be largely party-led, but broadly consultative. The party conducted desk research, looking at the contents of prior manifestos as well as other relevant documents, prior to holding town hall meetings with party members and opinion leaders. The party also employed private firms to conduct opinion polls to identify pressing issues of concern. ODM, alongside other parties, has also conducted regular intra-party, multiparty and multistakeholder consultative forums on how to integrate women into political parties, which parties have largely integrated into their manifestos, although actualisation of these instruments remains a challenge.

## 5.8 Women's leadership training

All the parties, as well as the civil society organisations interviewed, mentioned some level of training for women. However, while both the nature and frequency of the trainings varied among the different countries, there were some commonalities.

Trainings were largely around building or strengthening the capacity of women aspirants to help them be more effective once elected to parliament. Thus, trainings covered several areas such as training around the political process, including but not limited to: familiarity with laws governing the political process, inner workings of parliament/the political system in place and/or local government, electoral laws, roles of parliamentarians, the art of campaigning, manifesto or platform development and articulation, democracy and good governance, gender mainstreaming and community leadership; and leadership skills: self-esteem and confidence building, individual skills identification and public speaking, among others. Some CSOs also conducted trainings for candidate support staff, such as polling agents and security personnel.

In addition to the more general trainings mentioned above, respondents in some countries also mentioned more specific types of trainings that focused on the policy stances of the parties

themselves. NPP of Ghana, for example (which identifies as ideologically conservative) mentioned that it had trainings conducted by conservative parties in other countries, including the UK and Germany, where subject matter consisted of discussions of conservative principles. Civil society activists mentioned that there were numerous organisations working to promote women's issues, from women's rights, domestic violence and women's economic empowerment to women's political participation.

### 5.8.1 Limitations of training

Three general complaints about training of women candidates were that they started too late, did not address the main needs of women and were subject to financial constraints.

In all countries, respondents felt that training programmes commenced too late, often during the immediate period leading up to elections. For respondents, both CSOs as well as women parliamentarians, training should commence at least a year or two prior to elections, given the severity of the constraints women face, including lower access to education, among other constraints, in many of the countries examined.

The content of the training was also criticised. Existing programmes were often short-term and meant to respond to specific, immediate issues, namely how to win an election. A CSO leader from Kenya, for example, felt that no major programmes of political education had been instituted, either by CSOs or political parties themselves. Training programmes were often also for a limited time. Instead, women politicians reported needing training beyond the electoral period and their election into parliament, for those that were successful. They wanted continued support to build on trainings and enhance their capacity, particularly once they had been elected. Women CSOs mentioned that women parliamentarians also wanted financial support for their election campaigns, rather than simply trainings and electoral-related material.

CSOs also mentioned that funding for electoral-related activities was often insufficient. One reason for the late start to trainings was the lack of funding for longer, more detailed courses. In some countries such as Ghana, CSO respondents felt that donor resources had largely dried up. In Ghana, they attributed this situation to the 'double-edged

sword' of being perceived as a peaceful democratic middle-income country, which they felt meant it was no longer a donor priority.

## 5.9 CSOs and women politicians

Women's organisations can play an integral role in helping to increase women's political participation and representation, as well as support women politicians once elected. All the countries surveyed indicated an active level of civil society activism around women's political participation. However, levels of co-operation between women's organisations and women political leaders varied, depending on the country.

CSOs assisted in a variety of ways. They were instrumental in partnering with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) to train women, as identified above; they provided campaign-related assistance to women, in the form of t-shirts and posters etc.; and they assisted women with getting favourable media coverage, among other forms of assistance. In this section, the relationship between CSOs and women politicians is explored, with a focus on the various ways in which CSOs in the surveyed countries assisted women aspirants and politicians.

In Ghana, several interviews with civil society organisations revealed a high level of activism around women's issues. In 2004, women had coalesced to form a women's manifesto coalition, which investigated various aspects of women's situation in Ghana and developed a manifesto that stated the key issues that women believed needed to be addressed for their socioeconomic and political advancement. Through meetings, focus group discussions and interviews with a range of women, including activists, academics, businesswomen and ordinary women, the coalition recorded and analysed the various issues facing women and tracked policy action on these issues. The manifesto was updated prior to the 2016 elections, and recorded both gains as well as outstanding issues, providing a platform for women to use to hold politicians accountable and to inform part manifestos. In Sierra Leone, meanwhile, the Women Solidarity Group (WSG) was created out of a need to bring women together to lobby for a gender bill. More recently, women representing a broad cross-section of women in civil society came together to provide a unified voice regarding what

women wanted to see in a revised constitution, and worked closely with women parliamentarians on this issue as well.

Civil society organisations have also been the main institutions responsible for training women interested in political representation, depending on their area of interest. Organisations such as the 50/50 group in Sierra Leone, a CSO whose primary objective is gender parity in governance, has conducted trainings with women on all aspects of the political process, from developing a party platform to the requisite skills to mount a successful campaign. Meanwhile, Women Media and Change (WOMEC) in Ghana, whose focus is on women in the media, has worked with female political candidates, bringing them together from across the country to provide training on how to make presentations, engage with the media and articulate issues on the campaign trail.

CSOs have also helped women parliamentarians publicise their work through short, regularly published material like biweekly or monthly newsletters or more in-depth longer autobiographical pieces such as books. WOMEC, for example, in the past has published a short newsletter called *The Female Parliamentarian*, where the editor provided a platform for citizens to get to know their women representatives. They were invited to submit pictures of themselves and discuss their passions and hobbies, as well as their political platforms and agendas. However, the editor eventually stopped producing the newsletter, as it became increasingly difficult to obtain responses from parliamentarians to queries for interviews and material.

In Kenya, Mzalendo, a CSO tracking governance issues, produced a similar document detailing the accomplishments of women MPs (Mzalendo 2015), while the Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK 2015), with the support from Heinrich Boll Stiftung, provided feature stories on all women politicians elected in the first elections under the newly revised 2010 constitution. The publication featured women at all levels: county MPs, constituency and nominated MPs, and nominated senators, and documented their political journey, including their struggles and accomplishments. The Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD) Kenya's *Trials and Triumphs: In our Own words* also documents the struggles and successes of Kenya's female parliamentarians. In Sierra Leone, in the

### Box 5.1 CMD-Kenya – A case study

A CSO comprising membership of political parties in Kenya has carried out considerable work around increasing women's political participation. The Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya) was founded on the 1st of March 2004 as a Trust under the Trustees Act of the Laws of Kenya. CMD-Kenya is a membership organisation for 22 of Kenya's political parties, including all the parliamentary parties, the ruling Jubilee Party, as well as the main opposition Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD). The centre's membership is voluntary and includes all parties with at least one Member of Parliament and those with a minimum of five Members of County Assemblies (MCAs), while all others are members as one entity known as the Forum for Non-Parliamentary Parties ('The Forum'). The vision of CMD-Kenya is to have institutionalised, vibrant and democratic political parties, capable of enhancing and perpetuating multiparty democracy in Kenya. The organisation has worked with political parties in setting priority agendas and rallying political parties around shared purposes or vision. It works with political parties to increase the level of women's participation in the electoral process through issue-based politics, elections, nominations and acquisition of leadership positions in political parties and in the public sphere. It has worked to create an enabling environment in political parties for equal participation of women in politics through the following:

lobbying duty bearers (party leaders, chairpersons etc.) to be gender sensitive during policy formulation;

formation and strengthening women caucuses to lobby for the implementation of gender policies and programmes in political parties; and

working with relevant bodies (mainly the Office of Registrar of Political Parties) to capacitate political parties and ensure they comply with gender and inclusivity legal requirements.

Submitted by Range Mwita, Nairobi, Kenya, 3 March 2017

past, CSOs have assisted in putting together a directory of then-current parliamentarians, as well as of professional women, to serve as a reference for organisations, both public and private, looking to hire qualified women or to appoint them in a variety of positions.

CSOs have assisted women candidates with media coverage as well. Some have helped women secure media spots, either paying for them to appear on radio, TV or in newspaper coverage, lobbying for them to receive free airtime or helping them prepare for effective media appearances. Women candidates have been trained by CSOs on how to use the media as a platform to discuss their manifestos or policy aspirations, while CSO activists have also used the media as a platform for voter sensitisation, including encouraging the public to vote for women. For example, in Sierra Leone, the 50/50 group secured funding from UN Women in August 2017 to showcase women leaders through the media. The project brought together women leaders from across various sectors in weekly panel

discussions aired on radio and television to discuss their accomplishments, their work and their political platforms. The idea behind this was to familiarise the public with women leaders and, in so doing, reduce resistance to electing women and debunk the myth that capable women do not exist.

A few of the organisations surveyed, such as CMD-Kenya and the Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform, have a membership base comprising members of political parties. These organisations have been particularly instrumental in working directly with political parties, irrespective of platform, to deepen their work with women and inform manifesto development, among other things. Box 5.1 provides an in-depth look at CMD-Kenya.

CSOs have also provided women with tangible campaign promotional material, as mentioned in the section on training above, including posters, t-shirts and flyers.



However, there were several key concerns noted. Some women civil society activists indicated that once elected, women parliamentarians did not maintain good relationships with civil society and became unapproachable or too busy to interact with civil society members. On their part, women politicians also expressed feeling abandoned by women civil society activists upon their election.

## 5.10 The media and CSOs

Women CSOs, as well as political aspirants, candidates and officials across the surveyed countries, spoke on the important role the media can play in shaping ways in which women politicians are viewed. For respondents, good media coverage could be one instrumental way to amplify the voices of women in leadership, as increased visibility of women would help sensitise the electorate on their activities and correspondingly increase the likelihood that they would vote for women. However, several concerns were noted. A common argument was that the media tended to focus on things like a woman candidate's appearance, personal life and personality rather than on the substance of their ideas. Several respondents mentioned the importance of sensitising the media itself on proper coverage of women, with a focus on substantive issues as a viable strategy to bolster support of women candidates.

## 5.11 Accomplishments of women parliamentarians

Responses to the question of whether women parliamentarians had been successful in addressing issues of concern to women were mixed, although overall, respondents tended to be more positive about women's accomplishments.

A minority of respondents felt that women parliamentarians did not have a good record, and part of the resistance to quotas stemmed from a sense that women were aloof and arrogant once they got into parliament and did not do much to address the needs of their constituents.

Some respondents, particularly in countries with lower levels of women's representation, felt that the question of women's achievements was the wrong one to ask, as measuring effectiveness was unfair given their few numbers. As one respondent said, 'If you want to be honest, it is difficult to say they are very effective, but unfair to say they

haven't been effective. Their numbers are so low they cannot make the desired impact – they have to fight so hard to stay in these positions that the expectations that [we] have for them are not met'.

Another perspective was that women parliamentarians only appeared to 'push' women's issues on special occasions, such as International Women's Day. They did not appear to push gender issues on a regular, sustained basis.

A final set of respondents believed that women did tackle women-sensitive issues. In Sierra Leone, CSO respondents pointed to the role that women parliamentarians working with CSOs played in the passage of the 2007 gender bills that covered customary marriage, gender-based violence and inheritance rights for women. In Kenya, a respondent pointed to the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), which they felt had been in the fore front advocating for gender-friendly policies, including pushing for the implementation of the not-more-than two-thirds gender principle in parliament. In Seychelles, a respondent pointed to the gender equality campaigns, including equal pay for equal work and paternal leave for newborns, and tackling domestic violence, as issues that women have spearheaded.

## 5.12 Barriers to women in politics

The barriers faced across all countries were remarkably similar. Among most commonly cited barriers were culturally rooted discrimination against women in politics, financial constraints and violence against women in elections (VAWE).

### 5.12.1 Traditional and cultural barriers

Across all countries (although to a lesser extent, Seychelles), respondents mentioned resistance to women's political participation based on cultural norms and mores that saw politics as a male domain. For many respondents, socialisation within a patriarchal society has had considerable impact on the ways in which people respond to women in politics. Women were seen as being outsiders in a male space; rather than competing politically, they were expected to be caring for their husbands and children. Religion reinforced these attitudes, with both Christianity and Islam cited as sources of resistance to women in politics or leadership in general. Traditional society can also militate against women's political participation. In the north of Sierra Leone, for example, women are not allowed to

become chiefs, while in other parts of the country, women's lack of access to secret societies such as the Poro, a male secret society, can pose an additional constraint to their political effectiveness. This is because political matters and decisions are often made within these organisations to which women are largely denied access.

### 5.12.2 Violence against women in politics (VAWP)

Women politicians mentioned facing harassment on several levels. First, respondents in several countries mentioned that women in politics were seen as being 'morally loose', and they faced sexual harassment and other related threats. Unmarried and young women, in particular, mentioned receiving threats and unwelcome propositions. Moreover, because politics is seen as 'dirty', young women who get into politics could be branded as prostitutes or risk of not getting married, which served as a deterrent for some. Furthermore, given the risks associated with politics, some women encountered resistance from family members and lack of support, including from spouses, children and parents.

VAWP was another frequently mentioned barrier for women aspiring to go into politics. Women faced violence at all levels, from members of their own party during party nomination processes to violence from opposition candidates when vying for electoral positions. Women faced both physical and sexual abuse. Incidents mentioned included physical intimidation and assault, acid attacks, shootings, vandalism, rape and verbal abuse. To ensure their physical safety, women reported campaigning with hired security, which depleted their meagre resources.

Related to harassment, women politician respondents noted that vetting procedures for women were often different from those for men, for political appointments, with women subjected to different standards and impertinent questions, including, for example, on their marital status, number of children and their appearance. Women were also judged on what they wore and how they looked. Respondents additionally noted that the public were quicker to condemn and criticise women on scandals than they were men, with scandals concerning women facing more coverage and condemnation than men in similar situations. They believed that women's indiscretions tended

to be blown out of proportion, which in turn discouraged other women from contesting, for fear of being 'tarred with the same brush'.

### 5.12.3 Financial constraints

Women also identified a lack of money as one of the central constraints they faced, and complained that donors did not address this. As one CSO respondent put it, 'Women come to us asking about [financial] help with campaigning. They say, "You have built our capacity, but now what?"' In other words, although women might have a stronger sense of how to run a campaign, develop a message and speak out in parliament, without the finances necessary for mounting a successful campaign, such training could ultimately be of little to no help.

It is important to note, however, that the need for money for campaigns also stems from the public's expectations of parliamentarians that are not commensurate with their actual roles. Frequently, citizens, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, have expectations of politicians, including parliamentarians, which are not necessarily within their remit. Politics has been largely monetised, with expectations that parliamentarians are supposed to take care of both the public and private needs of their electorate. Thus, voting becomes a transactional or commercial exchange, whereby citizens give votes in exchange for financial gifts or promises from parliamentarians. Women, in particular, are affected by financial constraints because, unlike men, they are often relegated to the private sphere, where they lack the opportunity to make business connections, establish political networks and gain the experience that is so necessary to succeed. Women also continue to have differential access to education (although in a minority of countries, like Seychelles, girls report higher levels of education than boys). Lower rates of education not only pose a barrier for women in terms of income generation, but also can have an adverse impact on their ability to run for elections and to compete effectively. This can also prevent them from entering politics altogether, where criteria stipulate that political candidates must be able to read and write to be eligible to contest for political positions.

This then points to an additional area for training and education. Greater civic education that conveys to the populace the actual roles of parliamentarians

and helps to orient citizens away from expectations of financial gain has been identified as a need across several of the countries surveyed. However, the state institutions charged with civic education are often under-resourced, with the burden falling on civil society organisations. They have complained that they often receive funding too late to be able to mount an effective and comprehensive campaign, particularly as this is something that should be discussed beyond election time, given its prevalence in many African countries.

Related to funding, in Ghana, CSO respondents said they had been slightly disadvantaged by Ghana's successful socioeconomic development. They felt that because Ghana has been doing so well, funding to CSOs has been cut; however, the country still has a long way to go when it comes to women's socioeconomic and political empowerment.

## 6. Recommendations and Conclusions

The research above has shown that political parties are indeed instrumental in increasing women's representation in government. The findings also concur with data that dictates that PR electoral systems are better placed to increase women's participation than other systems. Below are key recommendations that emerged from the findings, not just for political parties but other stakeholders as well.

### 6.1 Constitutions and electoral laws

While most countries have constitutions that enshrine gender equality, there are a few that also accommodate discrimination despite such assurances. Citing data collected by the World Bank as part of its Women, Business and the Law research, a 2016 Commonwealth report notes that 15 of 18 Commonwealth countries in Africa recognise customary law as a valid source of law under the constitution, including all the countries reviewed here (De Vito and Robinson 2016). For example, in Section 27(4)(d-e), the Sierra Leone constitution allows for discrimination on the basis of law for 'adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, devolution of property on death or other interests of personal property' (Government of Sierra Leone 1991).

Countries should review their constitutions and eliminate all contradictory clauses that allow for discrimination based on customary law. Where there are differences between customary law and the constitution, the constitution should take precedence.

The research also reinforces the importance of having legally mandated quotas for women. Countries that currently do not have a quota system in place should be continuously lobbied for these quotas to be introduced. In countries with constitutional reviews underway, individuals should work to get quota clauses included within the constitution, as well as adopted by political parties. Several countries surveyed (Ghana, Sierra Leone, Tanzania) have completed constitutional review processes and have managed to include clauses on gender within proposed constitutions. Time will

show whether these constitutions will be adopted and how effective they will be in increasing women's representation.

Given the resistance that men have to quotas, using gender-neutral language – as, for example, Kenya has done – could be one way to help minimise this resistance. In that spirit, language could state, 'not more than two-thirds of membership should be either gender'. While the focus is often on quotas at the level of parliament, parties should be encouraged to implement quotas at all levels. Balanced gender representation should exist in public and private appointments, within top or executive positions in the party, within party membership and within political appointments, among other positions.

However, as Dahlerup and Friedenvall (2005) has noted, it is not enough to have quotas and/or a PR system. As the countries above have shown us, quota provisions must be clearly specified, with clear discussion of how they are to be implemented – i.e. with them ideally enshrined within the law. While parties can be legally encouraged to increase numbers of women through legal means, such methods will not result in substantive change if there are no punitive measures in place to force parties to actually increase numbers of women that are both elected and appointed to key executive posts within political parties, as well as those nominated to stand for elections. At the same time, if parties are simply implementing these measures in order to 'tick boxes', the quality of women that are nominated and the genuineness of the process can also be compromised.

Thus, while having constitutional and party guarantees for women's political representation is one mechanism for these quotas to be enforced, there must be additional steps. That is, quotas must be translated into electoral laws that concretely spell out how they will be implemented in practice. There also need to be rules about how candidates are ranked, as well as sanctions for non-compliance with all gender equality clauses, at the levels of the constitution, electoral law or party, to ensure that they are actually implemented.

For example, any party that does not meet equal representation requirements or submits lists that do not reflect these requirements should be rejected and made ineligible to contest for upcoming elections. These mechanisms are crucial because, as this study has shown, the existence of enforcement clauses do not mean they are necessarily enforced. In Kenya, for example, the Political Parties Act and the Electoral Code of Conduct, as well as the constitution, have thresholds for women's political participation, guidelines for party behaviour, as well as consequences for non-compliance. However, according to interview respondents, these are not robustly enforced. Institutions such as the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and the ORPP in Kenya, as well as country-specific equivalents in other countries, must be strengthened to play their roles, including monitoring compliance and imposing sanctions as outlined in their mandates when and where necessary.

Electoral laws should be developed that place a threshold on campaign financing to discourage gift giving and excessive spending during campaigns that particularly disenfranchise women. Such thresholds should be monitored and enforced by EMBs, with sanctions for non-compliance.

Electoral management bodies should also be strengthened to enforce electoral laws.

Parties should receive incentives to encourage them to both adopt and implement quotas. Incentives could include eligibility to receive campaign financing from national coffers, where such funding opportunities exist.

## 6.2 Electoral systems

This study confirms others that show that the PR electoral system is best placed to increase numbers of female representatives. Where feasible, countries should explore the possibility of adopting some form of proportional representation, including possibly using a combination of PR and FPTP. Here PR could be used, for example, to elect female candidates through party lists that are vetted to ensure they conform with electoral guidelines in place that ensure balanced representation between men and women.

Research shows several mechanisms that parties have used to translate quota requirements into practice. These include designation of safe seats (in party strongholds) or increasing seats that are then reserved for women. However, the countries in this study show some of the limitations of both these mechanisms. Reserved seats, as used at the county level for women in Kenya and at the constituency level in Tanzania, are regarded as being second class and inferior to seats that are contested in open primaries. Care must be taken that women politicians are not sidelined or their seats considered less important than others, thus leading to further marginalisation of female candidates.

Where reserved seats are used, clear mechanisms must be developed and enshrined in electoral law that indicate how women should be selected for these seats, which all parties should adhere to. These mechanisms should be designed so that the best candidates are selected, rather than seats being used as a reward for patronage, party stalwarts or for 'special' friends of male politicians, among other things.

Where possible, mechanisms should be explored whereby women compete for seats alongside men using an electoral system that nevertheless is favourable to women but at the same time takes account of concerns expressed about 'women only' seats. One approach would be to use the PR electoral system, with a zipper list where both male and female candidates are fielded, with women fielded in high positions in these lists. Again, criteria for the seats should be clearly expressed and enforced to field the best possible candidates.

## 6.3 Political parties

Parties should be encouraged to adopt gender policies that mandate gender equality, including through affirmative action and guarantees for women's rights in electoral processes. Political parties must become more proactive and strategic in their promotion of an active policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective, in order to enhance women's participation in politics and at all levels of decision-making.

### 6.3.1 Political parties and quotas

Parties with voluntary quotas should be encouraged to adhere to those quotas. Moreover, legislators should enshrine quotas within laws and strengthen EMBs to monitor and ensure compliance, with

sanctions enforced for non-compliance. Quotas must be in place at all levels, from ensuring a percentage of positions allocated to women within party leadership structures to fielding candidates at all levels, national, regional and local, with women placed in strategic positions on party lists, where applicable.

Again, the country's electoral act should also contain criteria that clearly outline how these women should be selected, as well as necessary qualifications to ensure female candidates of the highest calibre are selected for positions. In some countries, such as Tanzania and Kenya, interview respondents complained that these posts were given to relatives or girlfriends of party stalwarts, and that women who had served the party for a long time with dedication were marginalised. While they asked that mechanisms be put in place for women who had a long history within the party, it is also important that mechanisms prioritise effective candidates, not just those who have served the party over a long period of time.

Parties should be encouraged to field women in their party strongholds, as this would be one way to ensure that women get more seats, beyond the reserved seats that several countries currently have, or to ensure women get seats in countries where reserved seats are not available as a way to meet quota requirements.

Parties should be sensitised on how to implement constitutional requirements, including the design of party lists in ways that ensure women are adequately represented, so that their lists are reflective of these requirements.

### 6.3.2 Political parties and barriers against women

Parties should also provide extra support to women to address the barriers women face. Several types of support are recommended.

First, there is financial support. As the study has shown, women face considerable financial constraints during elections for reasons already outlined. Parties should commit to providing financial support for women, including halving, waiving or paying their nomination fees. Parties should also provide women with some financial support for their campaigns.

Parties should commit to campaign finance thresholds to discourage excessive spending during elections. The relevant electoral management body (EMB) should monitor and enforce these thresholds. Related to this, given the financial constraints women face, some women have argued that governments should set aside special funds for women politicians, like constituency development funds, to enable women to serve their constituencies in more tangible ways – such as implementing development projects that can serve as a source of support in subsequent elections.

Women in Tanzania and Kenya pointed out that one of the shortcomings of women's seats was this lack of finance, which they felt hindered their ability to do anything of substance in their communities. For now, such funds could be considered; however, in the long term, it would be wise to help reorient voters' perspectives on the duties of parliamentarians through civic and voter education, to help combat the view that gift giving and the provision of personalised goods are part of the duties of elected representatives.

A second area of support is against violence against women in politics. Parties should adopt codes of conduct that have explicit consequences and sanctions for party members that engage in violence against women in elections. Parties should take steps to ensure that party primaries are free, credible and fair. Members who behave in ways that go against these criteria should face repercussions at both the party level as well as EMB level. Sanctions could include a fine, ineligibility to contest for at least one election or expulsion from the party. EMBS should be strengthened to enforce these sanctions. Where relevant and appropriate, parties should also provide security for women campaigning for positions to encourage them to run for political office.

A third type of support is to combat male resistance to women representatives. Consistent engagement should be held with political parties (as well as the general public), and particularly men, on the need for and importance of women representatives, and ensuring that nominations should be of qualified women. Such engagement should take place prior to the electoral period and continue even after nominations and elections. Engagement should cover, among other things, the benefits that greater women's representation would provide to the party, including greater

recognition of women's issues within party policies. This could be one potential way to muster political will within parties that have been largely resistant to opening up to women. This is particularly true in cases such as Kenya, where the parliament as well as the senate have resisted passing legislation that could translate constitutional provisions into practice. Three attempts at passing legislation have failed, and political parties have been unable to whip members to vote for different iterations of the proposed legislation. In addition, interviewed respondents noted that it was difficult to both convince men to cede power and women to vote against party loyalties. To this end, the party should engage the assistance of male supporters within the party to help articulate and disseminate the message among others in the party.

In Kenya, several respondents mentioned that there were new cadres of younger progressive MPs who supported women. They advised working closely with these MPs to assist in changing the dominant narrative that was still resistant to women's participation. In Sierra Leone, a similar group of women-friendly male MPs known as 'He4She', have been identified and women work closely with them to help to build support for women MPs.

### 6.3.3 Political parties and training

Political parties should make training opportunities and support available to women parliamentarians, in conjunction with civil society organisations, to ensure that women have the support and know-how necessary to be effective advocates and legislators for women's socioeconomic and political advancement. Such training should start well before the electoral period and be provided even after women are elected, as women have expressed a need for capacity building beyond elections.

### 6.3.4 Political parties and women's wings

Women's wings should be strengthened to implement one of the tasks with which they were charged: that of encouraging greater women's participation by identifying interested potential candidates in their interactions with women at the local level, and through the training and support they provide. Wings can also lobby their parties to provide more opportunities to women, both as candidates as well as in leadership positions within the party. They can serve as a link between parties

and women in society, working with CSOs and women's groups to help identify constraints and concerns that can feed into party manifestos.

### 6.3.5 Political parties and manifesto development

Parties need to have more explicit ways to ensure that women's concerns are examined and incorporated in their manifestos. Women's issues must be incorporated more systematically into the party agenda, through using women's wings more effectively to research and incorporate women's issues, as well as utilising women manifestos in countries where these exist.

## 6.4 Public education and awareness

Across all the countries surveyed, a common complaint was the need for political will at all levels. While the existence of quotas is important, as well as institutions in place to enforce such legislation, these institutions need adequate funding and political will to do their jobs properly. Alongside political will is the need for corresponding societal change, with people convinced about the importance of women's representation. Strengthening of the institutions that can conduct such public education and awareness raising is necessary.

For example, one of the primary purposes of the Ministry of Gender or its counterpart in any particular country is to make policies and promote policies to advance gender equality and women's rights. However, such ministries are chronically underfunded in many countries, under-resourced and understaffed, thus crippling their effectiveness. Furthermore, the ministry is often charged with representing additionally vulnerable populations, including social welfare/social protection and children. This potentially further dilutes the capacity of the organisation to focus on women; this is especially the case when addressing the concerns of other vulnerable categories of representation is more politically expedient than focusing on women.

Political will is also necessary, as most countries, if not all, have signed up to a plethora of international and regional protocols that commit them to working toward women's equality and development. Yet, they have failed to domesticate these protocols and agreements or to design a framework that would translate these commitments into real change. Public education and awareness through voter and

civic education, with the general populace as well as political leaders, could be one mechanism to encourage such change.

Public education should take place on several levels:

- Civic education should start in primary schools, encouraging both girls and boys to learn about the political system, the importance of being active in politics, as well as the benefits that both men and women bring to the political landscape.
- Extensive civic and voter education should be conducted with the voting-age electorate on the electoral process, criteria to use in selecting political candidates, and on issues concerning human rights and gender equality. Women, in particular, should be targeted, as they tend to be less informed around electoral processes than men.
- Public education should also be conducted with political party members and key members within government institutions and structures charged with enforcing electoral law on promoting gender parity in political representation. Those trained could then become champions within their institutions.

## 6.5 The media and women's political representation

As discussed earlier in this report, in some countries there have been increases in the number of women in high-profile positions. Respondents noted the impact such nominations could have. One suggestion was for more publicity on women in these positions so as to normalise the idea of having women in prominent positions, as well as to publicise their accomplishments in an effort to nurture an environment supportive to women in high-profile positions.

For example, Ngeyi Kanyongolo et al. (2010) have noted in Malawi that public awareness campaigns on the importance of equal representation have been found to increase support for women's representation among society, as have voter and civic education programmes and publicity for women's campaigns (Gender Links 2010). However, it is important to stress that this coverage must be gender sensitive, with a focus on gender equality and fair and balanced coverage of women aspirants.

CSOs and the media can work together to document and publicise women's accomplishments. For example, publications such as *Debunking Myths: Women Contributions in Kenya's 11th Parliament* (Mzalendo 2015), *Trials and Triumphs: In our Own Words* (CMD-Kenya 2015) and *86 and Counting: Women Leaders in the 11th Parliament*, (AMWIK 2015), all outline in women's 'own words' their journey, their struggles and their accomplishments, helping to debunk the myth that women cannot lead. The publications help to establish the breadth of women's political activism, including documenting that women have not only passed laws of interest to women, but as professionals in their own right have also brought their professional background to bear in designing and supporting bills with application. While these documents were all researched and written by Kenyan CSOs, the media can help to publicise such documents to sensitise the public on the benefits that can accrue from women's representation, as well as help to counter narratives that discriminate against women.

Respondents in all the countries also pointed to the lack of gender-sensitivity in the ways in which the media had covered women candidates, their campaigns and their platforms. Media practitioners should be trained on gender-sensitive ways of covering women candidates, including focusing messages on platforms rather than dress, for example, while women candidates in turn should receive training on media interviews and appearances to optimise coverage. More widely speaking, the media should also receive training to help it cover issues in a gender-sensitive manner and report in ways that promote gender equality – in not just political and electoral processes, but in society in general.

The media can also be an effective tool for civic/public education and awareness-raising activities on the importance of women representatives.

## 6.6 Civil society and women's political representation

Alongside political parties, women-centric civil society organisations are well placed to help ensure greater women's representation, and nearly all countries recorded active civil society organisations. Given their mandate of working with and interfacing with the public, these organisations are well placed to bring about societal change, an



issue that is key as respondents across all countries felt that politics was largely perceived to be a male domain. Consequently, concerted outreach to women and men, to deconstruct this perspective and change mind-sets, is crucial. CSOs can provide civic and voter education using a variety of approaches.

CSOs can identify and engage with committed male champions, both within political parties as well as society at large, to promote the message of the importance and need for women political representatives. Women's organisations that are explicitly committed to increasing women's political representation, should be assisted to help identify and target women well before elections.

CSOs should identify and maintain a directory of women active in the public and private sectors, as well as women interested in running for office. Women who are interested in running for political office should be mobilised and trained well before election time. The roster of women professionals could be a source for political parties, and for public and private enterprises to source potential appointees for posts: one of the excuses that CSO respondents said was often used to justify not meeting gender quotas was that government agencies and ministries were unable to find professional women with the requisite skills and education to fill the necessary positions.

During the feedback workshop, to validate findings from this research, participants noted the dearth of roles for former women politicians. They felt that women who had stepped out of public office could serve as an international resource for activities such as election monitoring in other countries, and/or could form part of training teams for new aspirants in their countries as well as internationally, among other roles. CSOs can help facilitate the identification and selection of women for such posts.

CSOs should be supported to help in knowledge dissemination to women, both aspirants and women in general, around women's entitlements under the law, as feedback from CSOs in Kenya in particular mentioned that women, even those running for political office, were unclear about the content of laws regarding women's political space. Thus, although women were constitutionally promised reserved senate and county seats, some were still trying to get into these seats through seeking the favour of party leaders rather than as their right.

CSOs should hold programmes with political parties prior to the electoral period and even after nomination and elections, on the need for and importance of women representatives, and to ensure that nominations should be of qualified women. As mentioned under the political parties' section, such engagement should include the benefits that more women representatives can bring to the party, as a tactic to minimise resistance to women.

Women CSOs should be supported to develop women's manifestos that political parties can use when designing their own manifestos. Respondents in Ghana and Kenya mentioned the instrumental role these played in political party manifestos. In Sierra Leone, one of the women CSOs was undertaking this process at the time of writing in anticipation of the 2017 elections, with external donor funding.

Finally, CSOs should be supported in their programmes and projects geared toward improving women's socioeconomic empowerment. These include education programmes targeting women and girls, as well as self-help, micro finance and other initiatives aimed at increasing women's financial independence, as greater education and income-generating opportunities are important, given links that have been made between financial security, confidence and boldness.

# Annex 1: List of Respondents/ Interviews

## Ghana

Interview with Honourable Lawson, Chair, National Democratic Congress, 22 February 2017.

Interview with Dr Portuphy, Leader, National Democratic Congress, 22 February 2017.

Interview with Kwadwo Antwi-Agyei, Director of Protocol, New Patriotic Party, 22 February 2017.

Interview with Abigail Ampofo, Head of the Gender, Youth and Disability Unit at the Electoral Commission of Ghana, 22 February 2017.

Interview with Adwoa Bame, National Coordinator, Women Situation Room, Women's Manifesto Coalition, Deputy Convener, 23 February 2017.

Interview with Hamida Harris, Convener of the Women's Manifesto Coalition and Abantu, 23 February 2017.

Interview with Frank Bodza, Programme Manager for Governance, Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF), 23 February 2017.

Interview with Jacqueline Boatemaa Bonsum, Former parliamentary aspirant and current aspirant for Tema Metropolitan Chief Executive, CPP, and Margaret Darko Darkwa, Eastern Regional Women's Organiser, Suhum Municipal Chief Executive, CPP, 24 February 2017.

Interview with Dr Charity Binka, Executive Director, Women, Media and Change, 24 February 2017.

## Kenya

Interview with Jessica Musila, Executive Director, Mzalendo, 27 February 2017.

Interview with Tony Moturi, Legal Affairs and Parliamentary Liaison, Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), 27 February 2017.

Interview with Christine Lemein, National Deputy Chair of the Party, ODM, 27 February 2017.

Interview with Milkah Wanjiru, Programme Manager, Jubilee Party, 27 February 2017.

Interview with Jane Serawanga, Gender Expert, United Nations Development Programme, 28 February 2017.

Interview with Regina Opondo, *Constitution and Reform Education Consortium (CRECO)*, 28 February 2017.

Interview with Beth Syengo, Head of State (HSC) Commendation, National Chairlady of ODM Women's League and Women's President, 28 February 2017.

Interview with Range Mwita, Centre for Multiparty Democracy (CMD-Kenya), 3 March 2017 (remotely).

## Namibia

Interview with Mr Manuel Ngarinombe, Secretary-General, DTA of Namibia, 9 May 2017 (remotely).

Interview with Advocate Notemba Tjipueja, Chairperson, Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) (previously conducted by Commonwealth Secretariat).

## Seychelles

Interview with Honourable Audrey Vidot, Parliamentarian, Parti Lepep, 15 April 2017 (remotely).

Interview with Honourable Noline Sophola, Parliamentarian, Parti Lepep, 15 April 2017 (remotely).

Interview with Roger Mancienne, Chairman and Party Leader, LDS, 6 April 2017 (remotely).

## Sierra Leone

Interview with Zainab Moseray, Acting Registrar, Political Parties Registration Commission, 20 March 2017.

Interview with Lawrence Lahai, Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) Public Relations Officer, 24 April 2017.

Interview with Aisata Abdulai Kamara, Alliance Democratic Party, Secretary-General, 24 April 2017.

Interview with Aisha Fofana Ibrahim, Past Immediate President, the 50/50 group, 3 May 2017 (remotely).

Interview with Honourable Emma Kowa, Parliamentarian and Incumbent Women's Leader, Sierra Leone People's Party, 16 May 2017 (remotely).

## Tanzania

Focus group discussion with Chama Cha Mapinduzi (Party of The Revolution, CCM) Top Leaders, 2 March 2017.

Interview with Dr Ave Maria Semakafu, National Coordinator, Tanzania Women Cross Party Platform, 3 March 2017.

Interview with Esther Daffi, Chama cha Demokrasia na Maendeleo (Party for Democracy and Progress, CHADEMA) Women's Wing, officer, 2 March 2017.

Interview with Piencia Christopher Kiure, Assistant Registrar, Office of the Registrar of Political Parties, 3 March 2017.

Interview with Jessica Mongi, Focal Person of Gender, and Irene Kadushi, Deputy Secretary, Elections Management, National Electoral Council, 3 March 2017.

# Annex 2: Questionnaires

## Questionnaire for CSOs

1. Can you briefly describe your organisation and the work you do?	
2. What support if any does the electoral commission offer women in politics?	
3. What are some of the gender equality issues that your organisation focuses on?	
4. How would you assess political parties' current measures to increase the number of women within the party, particularly at executive level?	
5. How would you assess the various parties' commitments to increase the number of women within their parties? a. What are the successes? b. What are the limitations/constraints? c. What do you think parties need to do to better incorporate more women?	
6. What consultative process takes place by political parties to include gender equality issues in their manifestos?	
7. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women to enter into politics?	
8. Are you aware of any leadership training that has taken place in the country within the last 10 years?	
9. Have female parliamentarians in the past promoted or advocated for gender equality issues?	
10. To your recollection, what are some of the national policies that have mainstreamed gender or been developed with a gender lens?	
11. What has been the public's reaction to women in politics?	
12. Are there any civil society organizations that you know of who have worked or are working on Women's Political participation?	
13. From your perspective what are some of the structural and or social barriers that prevent women from entering into politics?	

14. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevents young women from entering into politics in your country?	
15. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
16. Several countries have established special measures to promote women's political participation, what are some of the points that could be made if this discussion is brought to the fore in your country?	
17. To your knowledge, has any publication been produced on female parliamentarians in your country? If yes, can you kindly provide the name of the publication? Additionally, can you kindly provide an electronic copy if available, or an online link to the document?	
Thank you so very much for your kind assistance with this questionnaire!	

## Questionnaire for EMBs

1. Can you briefly describe your organisation and the work you do?	
2. What support if any does the electoral commission offer women in politics?	
3. What are some of the gender equality issues that your organisation focuses on?	
4. How would you assess political parties' current measures to increase the number of women within the party, particularly at executive level?	
5. How would you assess the various parties' commitments to increase the number of women within their parties? a. What are the successes? b. What are the limitations/constraints? c. What do you think parties need to do to better incorporate more women?	
6. What consultative process takes place by political parties to include gender equality issues in their manifestos?	
7. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women to enter into politics?	
8. Are you aware of any leadership training that has taken place in the country within the last 10 years?	
9. Have female parliamentarians in the past promoted or advocated for gender equality issues?	
10. To your recollection, what are some of the national policies that have mainstreamed gender or been developed with a gender lens?	
11. What has been the public's reaction to women in politics?	
12. Are there any civil society organisations that you know of that have worked or are working on Women's Political participation?	
13. From your perspective, what are some of the structural and or social barriers that prevent women from entering into politics?	
14. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent young women from entering into politics in your country?	

15. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
16. Several countries have established special measures to promote women's political participation, what are some of the points that could be made if this discussion is brought to the fore in your country?	
17. To your knowledge, has any publication been produced on female parliamentarians in your country? If yes, can you kindly provide the name of the publication? Additionally, can you kindly provide an electronic copy if available, or an online link to the document?	

## Questionnaire for Political Party Leaders

1. Kindly share with me a brief background of your political party.	
2. What are the main political structures that exist in the party?	
3. How are members selected for these structures and how often are they selected?	
4. Do you have a document outlining the roles of the various political structures that you can share with me?	
5. How many men and women are in each of the established structures?	
6. Does your party's constitution have any statements or policy regarding the nomination of women on any of the party's committees or executive positions?	
7. What is the process to become a contender in a political election for your party?	
8. Are there any fees that contenders are expected to pay? If yes, how much?	
9. How does your party develop its manifestos?	
10. Can you share with me any leadership training hosted for party members in the last ten years?	
11. What are the functions of the women's wing in your party?	
12. What has been some of its major achievements, thinking back to the last two general elections?	
13. In the recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number of proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has the issue of quotas been a point of discussion by your party? If yes, what has been the result of the discussion?	
14. What is your party's policy regarding financing of contestants during an election campaign? Do you have different policies regarding financing of female candidates versus male candidates?	
15. What are the procedures to establish policies within your party?	



16. From your perspective, what are some of the barriers that prevent women from entering into politics in your country?	
17. How would you assess your parties' current measures to increase the number of women within the party, particularly at executive level?  a. What are the successes?  b. What do you think parties need to do to better incorporate more women?  c. What are the limitations/constraints?	
18. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women to enter into politics?	
19. Have female parliamentarians in the past promoted or advocated for gender equality issues?	
20. Will you be able to share with us the following data for our analysis  a. Sex disaggregated data of party membership  b. List of party member members who contended for electoral seats in the last three general elections  c. List of elected officials of the party disaggregated by sex  d. List of candidates who contested for the last three general elections	
Thank you so very much for your kind assistance with this questionnaire!	

## Questionnaire for Political Leaders

1. Kindly share with me a brief background of your political party.	
2. What are the main political structures that exist in the party?	
3. How does your party select candidates for the various constituencies in the country?	
4. How does your party develop its manifestos?	
5. Can you share with me any recent leadership training hosted for party members in the last 10 years?	
6. What are the functions of the women's wing in your party?	
7. What have been some of its major achievements, thinking back to the last two general elections?	
8. Does your party's constitution have any statements or policy regarding the nomination of women on any of the party's committees or executive positions?	
9. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has this issue of quotas been a point of discussion in your party?	
10. What is your party's policy regarding financing of contestants during an election campaign?	

## Questionnaire for Youth Wing Representatives

1. What is the function of the youth wing in your party?	
2. What role does the youth wing play during an election campaign?	
3. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has this issue of special measures to include women been a point of discussion in your party?	
4. Has your party held any leadership training for its members within the last 10 years?	
5. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent young women from entering into politics in your country?	
6. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
7. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote young women entering into politics?	

## Questionnaire for Leader of Youth Wing

1. What is the function of the youth wing in your party?	
2. What are the main political structures that exist in the party?	
3. How are members selected for these structures and how often are they selected?	
4. Does your party have any special measures to include women and youth in the hierarchy of its political structures?	
5. Does your party's constitution have any statements or policy regarding the nomination of women or youth on any of the party's committees or executive positions?	
6. Can you share with me any recent leadership training hosted for party members to your recollection?	
7. Has the party also held leadership training specifically for youth or young women?	
8. What role do women play during an election campaign?	
9. Are there any special measures to assist female candidates financially during an election campaign?	
10. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has this issue of special measures to include women been a point of discussion in your party?	
11. Has your party held any leadership training for female contestants prior to or post an election?	
12. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent young women from entering into politics in your country?	
13. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
14. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote young women entering politics?	

## Questionnaire for Political Party Executives

1. Kindly share with me a brief background of your political party.	
2. What are the main political structures that exist in the party?	
3. How are members selected for these structures and how often are they selected?	
4. Do you have a document outlining the roles of the various political structures that you can share with me?	
5. How many men and women are in each of the established structures?	
6. Does your party's constitution have any statements or policy regarding the nomination of women on any of the party's committees or executive positions?	
7. What is the process to become a contender in a political election for your party?	
8. Are there any fees that contenders are expected to pay? If yes, how much?	
9. How does your party develop its manifestos?	
10. Can you share with me any recent leadership training hosted for party members in the last 10 years?	
11. What are the functions of the women's wing in your party?	
12. What have been some of its major achievements, thinking back to the last two general elections?	
13. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has this issue of quotas been a point of discussion in your party?	
14. What is your party's policy regarding financing of contestants during an election campaign?	
15. What are the procedures to establish policies within your party?	
16. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent women from entering into politics in your country?	

<p>17. Will you be able to share with us the following data for our analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List of elected officials of the party disaggregated by sex</li> <li>• SDD of party membership</li> <li>• List of candidates who contested for the last three general elections</li> <li>• List of party members who contended for electoral seats in the last three general elections.</li> </ul>	
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### Questionnaire for Women's Arm Representatives

1. What is the function of the women's wing in your party?	
2. What role do women play during an election campaign?	
3. Are there any special measures to assist female candidates financially during an election campaign?	
4. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has this issue of special measures to include women been a point of discussion by your party?	
5. Has your party held any leadership training for its members within the last 10 years?	
6. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent women from entering into politics in your country?	
7. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
8. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women entering politics?	

## Questionnaire for Leader of Women’s Arm

1. What are the main political structures that exist in the party?	
2. How are members selected for these structures and how often are they selected?	
3. How many men and women are in each of the established structures?	
4. Does your party have any special measures to include women in the hierarchy of its political structures?	
5. Does your party’s constitution have any statements or policy regarding the nomination of women on any of the party’s committees or executive positions?	
6. Can you share with me any recent leadership training hosted for party members in the last 10 years?	
7. What is the function of the women’s wing in your party?	
8. What have been some of your major achievements, thinking back to the last three general elections?	
9. Does this group articulate women’s interests and opinions pertaining to the party’s internal and external policies?	
10. What role do women play during an election campaign?	
11. Are there any special measures to assist female candidates financially during an election campaign?	
12. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election. Has this issue of special measures to include women been a point of discussion by your party?	
13. Has your party held any leadership training for female contestants prior to or post an election?	
14. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent women from entering into politics in your country?	
15. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
16. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women entering politics?	

## Questionnaire for Gender Bureau

1. What are some of the gender equality issues that your organisation focuses on?	
2. Are there any civil society organisations that you know of who have worked or are working on women's political participation?	
3. Are you aware of any leadership training that has taken place in the country within the last 10 years?	
4. What has been the public's reaction to women in politics?	
5. What support does the bureau offer to women in politics?	
6. From your perspective, what are some of the structural barriers that prevent women from entering into politics?	
7. Are there any social barriers that prevent women from entering into politics?	
8. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent young women from entering into politics in your country?	
9. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
10. Several countries have established special measures to promote women's political participation - what are some of the points that could be made if this discussion is brought to the fore in your country?	
11. To your knowledge, has any publication been produced on female parliamentarians in your country?	
12. Have female parliamentarians in the past promoted or advocated for gender equality issues?	
13. What are some of the gender mainstreaming activities that take place with other ministries?	
14. To your recollection, what are some of the national policies that have mainstreamed gender or been developed with a gender lens?	
15. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women to enter into politics?	



## Questionnaire for Gender Equality Advocates

1. What are some of the gender equality issues that your organisations have focused on?	
2. Are there any civil society organisations that you know of who have worked or are working on women's political participation?	
3. Are you aware of any leadership training that has taken place in the country within the last 10 years?	
4. What consultative process takes place by political parties to include gender equality issues in their manifestos?	
5. What has been the public's reaction to women in politics?	
6. Are there any specific roles that women and men perform during an election campaign?	
7. From your perspective, what are some of the structural barriers that prevent women from entering into politics?	
8. Are there any social barriers that prevent women from entering into politics?	
9. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent young women from entering into politics in your country?	
10. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred for some of the women in politics in your country?	
11. Several countries have established special measures to promote women's political participation, what are some of the points that could be made if this discussion is brought to the fore in your country?	
12. To your knowledge, has any publication been produced on female parliamentarians in your country?	
13. Have female parliamentarians in the past promoted or advocated for gender equality issues?	
14. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women to enter into politics?	

## Questionnaire for Female Parliamentarians

### (Past or Present)

1. What is the process to become a political contender in your political party?	
2. How are members selected for the party's political structures and how often are they selected?	
3. Does your party have any special measures to include women in the hierarchy of its political structures?	
4. Does your party's constitution have any statements or policy regarding the nomination of women on any of the party's committees or executive positions?	
5. Can you share with me any recent leadership training hosted for party members in the last 10 years? Or that you might have been a part of nationally or regionally?	
6. What is the function of the women's wing in your party?	
7. What have been some of your major achievements, thinking back to the last three general elections?	
8. Does this group articulate women's interests and opinions pertaining to the party's internal and external policies?	
9. What role do women play during an election campaign?	
10. Are there any special measures to assist female candidates financially during an election campaign?	
11. In recent years, some political parties globally have established policies to ensure a certain number or proportion of women are selected by the party as candidates for a general election, has this issue of special measures to include women been a point of discussion by your party?	
12. Has your party held any leadership training for female contestants prior to or post an election?	
13. What do you believe are some of the barriers that prevent women from entering into politics in your country?	
14. Some women who enter politics have expressed experiencing abuse, has this occurred in your country?	
15. From your perspective, what measures can be put in place to promote women to enter politics?	

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# Endnotes

1. The Commonwealth played a part in establishing this resolution, through then Chair-in-Office Kamala Persad-Bissessar.
2. A more comprehensive review of agreements on women's participation can be found in the complementary publication: *A Handbook for Gender Inclusive Elections in Commonwealth Africa: Achieving 50/50 by 2030*, Chapter 2, Commonwealth Secretariat (2018).
3. Commonwealth rankings for the selected countries can be found in Table 4.1.
4. A list of Commonwealth African parties with voluntary quotas is available at: <http://www.quotaproject.org/systemParty.cfm> [accessed 2 January 2018].
5. Commonwealth rankings are as of November 2016, while IPU rankings are as of June 2017.



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