Missing the mark?

Audit of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development Women in Decision-Making



Edited by Collen Lowe Morna

Missing the mark: Audit of the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development; Women in Decision-making.

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Gender Links is a Southern African NGO that is committed to a region in which women and men are able to realise their full potential and participate equally in all aspects of public and private life. This book is a sequel to GL's groundbreaking Study: "Ringing up the Changes: Gender in Southern African Politics."

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About IDEA
Founded in 1995, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance is an international organization that seeks to promote and develop sustainable democracy world-wide. IDEA's current areas of activity include:

- Electoral systems and management.
- Political participation, including women in politics.
- Political parties, management and financing.
- Post-conflict democracy building and dialogue.
- Democracy indicators and assessment.

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ANNEXES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Page 2

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY Page 3

1. REPRESENTATION Page 9
Parliament Page 10
Local government Page 13
Cabinet Page 13
The outlook for 2005 Page 14

2. LESSONS LEARNED Page 15
Socio political context Page 16
Political parties Page 17
Electoral systems and quotas Page 18

3. CASE STUDIES FROM CONSTITUENCY SYSTEMS Page 21
The constituency system is stacked against women Page 22
No strategy in place in most Constituency based systems Page 23
Half hearted measures yield limited gains Page 25
Missed opportunities but increasing pressure Page 28
Legislated quotas in a FPTP system Page 30
Getting around the backlash of reserved constituencies Page 32

4. CASE STUDIES FROM PR AND MIXED SYSTEMS Page 33
The dilemmas of voluntary party quotas in a PR system Page 34
Legislated quotas in a PR system Page 36
Mixed systems and mixed blessings Page 38

5. PARTICIPATION IN DECISION-MAKING Page 41
Top leadership Page 42
Cabinet portfolios Page 45
Parliament Page 45
Local government Page 46
Easing the burdens of the dual roles of women Page 47
Capacity building Page 50
Awareness raising Page 53
Research, monitoring and evaluation Page 54

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS Page 57

Case studies
One: Zambia: No easy walk for women Page 22
Two: Botswana: Too little too late Page 24
Three: Zimbabwe: When push comes to shove, who gets shoved Page 26
Four: Mauritius: Advocacy pays off after government fails to act Page 29
Five: Lesotho Court of Appeal upholds gender quotas Page 31
Six: Tanzania's mixed system provides a clever compromise Page 32
Seven: South Africa: How to move beyond 30% Page 34
Eight: Namibia: "Three in one" approaches leads to mixed results for women Page 37
Nine: South Africa: Dilemmas and challenges in the 2005 local elections Page 38
Ten: Malawi: Media plays its role Page 53

Annexes

ANNEX A: REIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS FOR WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING

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Colleen Lowe Morna

Executive Summary



Sheila Bapoo, Minister of Social Security and National Solidarity, Mauritius
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

This report is an assessment of the extent to which Heads of State of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) have honoured their commitment to achieving at least thirty percent women in all areas of decision-making by 2005 as part of an audit undertaken ahead of the SADC Heads of State summit this year.

Table one summarises key indicators for measuring progress in achieving women's increased participation in decision-making. It shows that while there have been pockets of good practice and rapid progress in some instances, overall SADC countries have missed the target they set for themselves, which in turn is supported and amplified in various continental and international agreements.

Strong provisions

Attached at Annex A is a matrix that shows provisions on women-decision making in the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development (SDGD); the African Protocol on the Rights of Women (African Protocol); the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA); the Convention for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). This shows that:

- **Targets:** The SDGD is the only one of the instruments reviewed that sets a specific minimum target of thirty percent women in decision-making by 2005, but makes it clear that the ultimate objective is "the equal representation of women." But the Inaugural Session of the African Union (AU) Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 2002 in Durban, South Africa endorsed the principle of gender parity. The Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly in Maputo, Mozambique, in 2003 implemented this decision through the election of five female and five male Commissioners.
- **Scope:** The SDGD and all related commitments make it clear that decision-making is not just political, but includes governmental bodies and committees, the judiciary and "public office" (CEDAW).
- **Strategies:** The BPFA, CEDAW and the African Protocol elaborate on how women's increased participation in decision-making can be achieved. Strategies include: affirmative action; the reform of electoral systems; ensuring that women are represented in political party structures in the BPFA; criteria for selection and recruitment in the case of women appointed as opposed to elected to office and awareness raising.
- **Effective participation:** The continental and international instruments specify measures for ensuring effective participation, including through capacity building, as well as research, monitoring and evaluation to ensure that targets are achieved.
- **Quantitative versus qualitative approaches:** As a package, the commitments provide a powerful case and strategies for ensuring equal and effective participation by women in decision-making.

Gaps in international and regional instruments

Among the gaps in the regional and international provisions are:

- **Lack of timeframes beyond 2005:** The weakness of the AU position is that it does not have any time frames; while that of the SDGD is that it has no timeframes beyond 2005.
- **Narrow political focus:** The MDGs, that are commanding centre stage in current UN and global efforts, have only one indicator on decision-making as part of the provision on gender equality: women's equal representation in national parliaments. This is not only a narrow interpretation of decision-making; it is a narrow interpretation of political decision-making.
- **Fixation with numbers:** The SDGD, which is the best known instrument in the region in the area of decision-making because of the 30 percent target, focuses narrowly on numbers with no regard for effective participation. This includes ensuring that women have access to leadership positions within decision-making structures and can input effectively into policy processes.

Table one: SADC Performance indicators for women in decision-making

Commitment	Ang	Bots	DRC	Lesotho	Malawi	Maur	Moz	Nam	South Africa	Swd	Tanz	Zamb	Zim	Total
Representation														
% women lower / single house	15	11	12	11.7	13.6	17	36	26.9	**32.8**	10.7	21.65	12.7	16	19.87
% women in upper house			2.5	**36.4**				11.21	**33.3**	**30**				15.7
% women cabinet	5.9	25	16.7	27.8	12.5	10	25	24	**43**	18.8	14.8	22.73	13.9	19.46
% women deputy ministers	14.58	25		20	**37.5**		26.67		22.2	**45.4**	23.5	9.8	5.3	19.8
% women local gvt				1.2	23.3	8.31	8.73	**43.5**	29	18.46	**34.2**	7	9.54	22.6
% women perm secs				31.6	12.9	**38.7**	23.5	26.3	13.5	6.67	25.9	18.6	9	20.8
% women judges		25		**36.4**	18.2	41.7			13.3			24.2	30	18.21
Quota	No	No	No	Yes - LG	No	No	Yes	Yes - LG	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	
Electoral system														
PR	FPTP	FPTP	M	FPTP	FPTP	PR	PR	PR;M	FPTP	FPTP	FPTP	FPTP	FPTP	
Participation														
Speakers of parliaments	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	F	M	M	M	M	15.38
Cabinet														
% women in top leadership	0	0	0	0	0	0	50	33	50	0	0	0	33	13.33
% women economic spheres	5.9	22.2	13.6	**33.3**	0		16.7	20	**41.7**	12.5	10	27.3	20	17.8
% women in security/state spheres	0	**33**	0	25		0	**33.3**	25	**33.3**	0	11.1	20	0	15.7
% women ministers social spheres	16.6	**50**	30	**33.3**	**50**		25	25	**57.1**	**66.6**	**40**	25	12.5	**33.9**

KEY: PR= Proportional representation; FPTP= First Past the Post; M= Mixed; LG=Local government ; Bold figures= thirty percent or more

Achievements

Of all the fronts for advancing gender equality in the region, decision-making has been the most high profile, and significant gains have been made. These include:

- **Momentum:** The increase of women in decision-making in Southern Africa in the ten years since the Beijing conference has been more rapid than anywhere else in the world. As a region, Southern Africa is second only to the Scandinavian countries. Despite the many gaps, there is now an unstoppable march towards women's equal participation in decision-making. Around the region, the Fifty-fifty campaign is being embraced, buoyed by the recent African Union position in support of gender parity and evidence that some countries in the region are ready to take this plunge.
- **Awareness** is far higher than it has ever been, with the media beginning to play a greater role in raising critical debates and tracking progress.
- **Political commitment evident in recent cabinet reshuffles:** The pressure on Heads of State to act more decisively at national level is apparent in some instances in recent cabinet appointments, where leaders have the greatest leeway to act. Between 1997 and July 2005, the proportion of women in cabinet has increased from 12 to 19.5 percent; the biggest gain in any area of decision-making. South Africa's President Thabo Mbeki has led the way, coming close to achieving gender parity in his cabinet, and assigning women to non-traditional and key delivery ministries. Similar trends are apparent in Botswana and Namibia, where women hold prominent cabinet posts in areas such as local government, health, finance, home affairs, justice and information.
- **Women in top leadership:** The period under review has witnessed three women being appointed to top leadership: as deputy presidents in Zimbabwe and South Africa and as Prime Minister in Mozambique. South Africa and Zambia have broken new ground by having women leaders of opposition parties.
- **Significant changes in the parliaments of previously worst performers:** The countries which had the lowest proportion of women in parliament at the time of the SDGD have all improved. For example, the proportion of women in lower or single houses has increased from three percent to 10.7 percent in Swaziland; 5.6 percent to 17.1 percent in Mauritius and 7 percent to 13.6 in Malawi. Against the conservative climates in these countries, and the First Past the Post (FPTP) system that globally does not favour rapid increases in women's participation, these increases are commendable.
- **Rapid changes at local level in some countries:** The willingness to adopt special measures for achieving rapid increases in women's representation has been especially apparent at local level. Legislated quotas have been adopted and upheld by the Supreme Court following a legal challenge in Lesotho's constituency system. Local elections in Namibia are run on a PR basis, and all parties are obliged to have at least thirty percent women evenly distributed on their lists. Namibia has 43 percent women in local government. In South Africa, where local elections are run on a mixed FPTP and PR system, and the law encourages parties to field equal numbers of men and women, the African National Congress (ANC) has set itself a fifty percent target for local elections scheduled for December 2005.
- **Women claiming their space in other areas of decision-making:** Across the region, there are pockets of good practice in other areas of decision-making. For example, 36 percent of the judges in Lesotho are women. The recent appointment of Pendukeni Ithana as Minister of Justice and Attorney General in Namibia, and of Justice Athalia Molokomme as Attorney General-designate in Botswana shows that attention is beginning to be paid to women's representation in the male-dominated justice sector. In Mauritius, 38.7 percent of the permanent secretaries are women; compared to 13.5 percent in South Africa!
- **Ground breaking research and new yardsticks:** Studies such as the Gender Links report Ringing up the Changes, Gender in Southern African Politics, the first to assess the qualitative difference that women bring to decision-making in the region, have helped to move the debate beyond numbers to why gender equality is integral to good governance.

Challenges

Despite the successes, there are several challenges. These include:

- **Missing the mark:** Despite the commendable progress, with the exception of three countries (Mozambique and South Africa that have achieved the thirty percent and Tanzania that has a constitutional quota of thirty percent and will be holding elections in October) the SDGD target for women in parliament will not be met. The drop in women's representation in parliament in Botswana, host country of the SADC Secretariat, from 18 percent in 1999 to 11.1 percent in 2004, came as an especially painful disappointment. Our prediction is that overall by the end of 2005, the representation of women in parliament in SADC will have risen from an average of 17.5 percent in 1997, to 20.7 percent in 2005; 9.3 percent short of the thirty percent target although with significant variation between countries.
- **Lack of effective strategies and action plans:** Many SADC countries missed opportunities through lack of effective strategies and action plans devised well ahead of elections. Countries with the FPTP system that is least conducive to women's participation made little or no effort to review the electoral system, or to explore options within their system.
- **Failure to learn from best practices in the region:** There has been a lack of willingness to learn from the best practices in the region which show that without tackling the key issues of electoral systems and quotas, there can be no rapid increase in women's representation in elected office. These best practices are drawn both from country's with a PR system (Mozambique and South Africa) and with a FPTP system (Tanzania and Lesotho).
- **Effectiveness of participation is a key concern:** Indicators in the audit to measure the effectiveness of women's participation including access to top leadership and distribution of women within decision-making structures showed that women constitute only 13.3 percent of top political leadership and 15 percent of the speakers of parliament. Within the cabinets of the region women still predominate in the social ministries.
- **Apparent lack of sincerity in local government gestures:** The tendency in some countries to yield way on local government (e.g. in Namibia, South Africa and Lesotho) is welcome but carries the concern that the only reason this is happening is that local government is not regarded as important as other spheres of governance. Gender and local government have, up to now, not formed a significant part of gender and governance discourse, activism or policy measures. It is critical that these now come to the fore.
- **Gaps in non-political areas of decision-making:** To the extent information could be obtained, the audit found that women constitute 20.2 percent of permanent secretaries and 18.2 percent of judges in the region. No comprehensive studies have yet been conducted on women in other areas of decision-making such as the private sector and civil society. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women are likely to be even less well represented in these areas.

Moving ahead

What the audit shows is both the value of having specified targets and the need to tighten up on implementation. Some have questioned whether new targets should be set before old ones have been met. There are two responses to this in the report. One is that all SADC member states belong to the AU, and they therefore have an obligation to now work towards gender parity. The other is that those countries that have already achieved the set target should not be held back. What the report does, however, is to recommend different targets for different countries, with an ultimate target of equal representation by women in all areas of decision-making by 2020. The report also urges that much greater emphasis be placed on achieving not just representation but also effective participation; and that Southern Africa blaze the trail in moving beyond numbers towards a deeper understanding of the relationship between gender and good governance.

Structure of the report

The report is in six parts:

- Representation: an overview of commitments versus outcomes.
- Lessons learned: a summary of the key lessons learned in the campaign for rapid increases in women's political representation.
- Case studies from constituency electoral systems
- Case studies from PR and mixed systems.
- Participation in decision-making.
- Conclusions and recommendations.

1 Representation



Elvira Mabunda, Frelimo MP, Mozambique
Photo: Ruth Ayisi

This section of the report analyses how SADC countries have performed with regard to the representation of women in decision-making. It provides an overview of the performance of member countries as well as an analysis of performance in the different areas of decision-making.

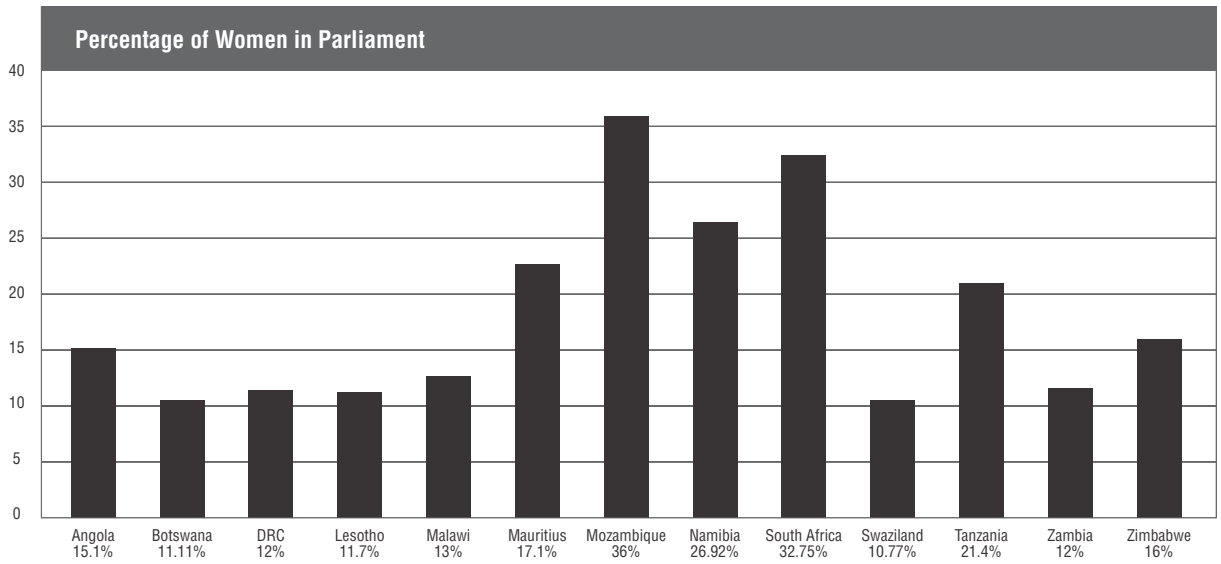
Table one summarises how countries have performed against some key indices for women's representation. These include representation in parliament (lower and single houses; as well as upper houses where these exist); cabinet and deputy ministers; local government; permanent secretaries and the judiciary**.** At a glance, the table shows that to the extent information could be obtained:

- As a bloc, SADC countries did not achieve the 30 percent target in any of these areas. The lowest overall area of achievement has been women in top decision-making (13.3 percent).
- Four SADC countries (Angola, Botswana, the DRC, Lesotho, Mauritius, Zambia) have not achieved thirty percent in any of the categories in the table.
- South Africa has achieved thirty percent in the highest number of categories (eight out of eleven) but lags behind badly in the representation of women in top levels of the bureaucracy and as judges.
- There are pockets of good practice in different areas around the region. For example Swaziland has 10.7 percent women in its lower house (the lowest in the region) but 30 percent in the upper house; Zimbabwe has 30 percent women judges; Namibia 43.5 percent women in local government and Botswana 33 percent women in ministers in the portfolios classified for this study as security/state.

Parliament

At the time that heads of state signed the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development, women in the region constituted 17.5 percent of members of national assemblies (lower and single houses) in the region. The average figure of women in parliament has since increased by 2.4 percent to 19.9 percent at present. Seychelles, a country that has been a consistently high performer where women in parliament is concerned, ceased to be a member of SADC during this period.

Three countries, South Africa, Mozambique and Tanzania (scheduled to hold elections in October 2005 but is sure to register an increase as a result of the Constitutional quota being raised from 20 to 30 percent) largely account for the comparatively high regional average.
The graph below illustrates the huge disparities that still exist between countries ranging from 10.7 percent in the lowest performer, Swaziland, to 36 percent in Mozambique (a range of about twenty five percent).



However, thanks to the increases in women's representation in countries that had been the worst performers (Swaziland, Malawi and Mauritius) no country in the region falls below the ten percent mark.

Indeed, many SADC countries can be regarded as "fast track" countries in so far as they have made significant gains in just one election cycle. The most dramatic of these is in South Africa, where the representation of women increased from 2.7 percent in the apartheid government to 27 percent following the country's first democratic elections in 1994: a tenfold increase. By contrast, in Scandinavia it has take women 60 years to reach over 35%. This is important as it shows that women in SADC are not willing to wait that long.

Table two shows the gains and one loss that have been made in sample countries since the signing of the Declaration in 1997. Malawi and Mauritius posited the highest gains (9.5 percent and 8.8 percent respectively). One country slid backwards: Angola (the only country that has not had an election during this period, because it lost one woman MP.) Zimbabwe slipped from 15 percent to 10 percent in the 2000 elections, but picked up again to 16 percent in the 2005 elections. At 11.1 percent Botswana gained marginally from its 1997 position of 9 percent, but is down by 7 percent from 1999, when it had achieved 18 percent women in parliament.

Table two: Changes in women's representation since the SDGD in 1997

Country / election	**1997**		**2005**		**Change**
	No of Women	Percentage	No of Women	Percentage	Percentage
Angola	34/220	15.4	33/22	15.0	- 0.4
Botswana (1999; 2004)	4/44	9	7/63	11.1	+ 2.1
Lesotho (2000)	4/80	5	14/120	11.7	+ 6.7
Malawi (1999;2004)	9/171	5.2	26/191	13.6	+ 8.8
Mauritius (2001)	5/65	7.6	12/70	17.1	+ 9.5
Mozambique (1999; 2004)	71/250	28.4	90/250	36	+ 7.6
Namibia (1999; 2004)	14/72	19.4	21/78	26.9	+ 7.5
South Africa (1999; 2004)	111/400	27.8	131/400	32.8	+ 5.0
Swaziland	2/65	3.1	7/65	10.8	+7.1
Tanzania (2000)	45/275	16.3	63/295	21.4	+ 5.1
Zambia (2001)	16/158	10.1	19/158	12.0	+1.9
Zimbabwe (2000; 2005)	21/150	14	20/150	16%	+1 %

Source IPU and SADC GU

Table three shows where SADC countries rank globally and relative to each other. Mozambique and South Africa have surpassed the thirty percent mark, but only Mozambique is in the global top ten (where Rwanda, with 48.8 percent women in the lower house leads the way). South Africa has dropped to number 13. Globally, SADC countries span all ranks from positions 7 to 85. This is a significant improvement on the position before the July 2005 elections in Mauritius, when the island occupied 110th position

Table three: Global and regional ranking of women parlimentarians			
Country	% Women in lower or single house	Global rank	SADC Rank
Mozambique	36 %	7	1
South Africa	32.8%	13	2
Namibia	26.9 %	21	3
Tanzania	21.4 %	36	4
Mauritius	17.1 %	54	5
Zimbabwe	16%	60	6
Angola	15.0 %	63	7
Malawi	13.6%	67	8
Zambia	12.7 %	69	9
DRC	12.0%	77	10
Lesotho	11.7 %	78	11
Botswana	11.1 %	82	12
Swaziland	10.8 %	86	13

Table four: Regional averages of women in single or lower houses	
Region	**Average**
Nordic countries	39.9 %
Southern Africa	19.7 %
Americas	18.8 %
Europe excluding Nordic countries	15.2 %
Asia	15.2 %
Sub Saharan Africa including SADC	15.0 %
Pacific	11.2 %
Arab states	8.8 %
Global average	16.1 %

Source: IPU, with Southern Africa average inserted

According the South African Speaker Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile the upshot of the advocacy around women in decision-making since 1997 is that there is now a "culture of zero tolerance for no women in decision-making".

Despite the unevenness between SADC countries, with its average of 19.7 percent women in single or lower houses, SADC is still ahead of the global average of 16.1 percent, and the sub-Saharan average of 15 % (see Table four). On average, SADC also ranks second only to the Nordic region, and is ahead of both the Americas and Europe where the representation of women legislators is concerned.

Local government

The relative lack of priority accorded to gender and local government in the region is underscored by the fact that there are no comparative figures for the representation of women in this sphere of government at the time of the signing of the Declaration. An important contribution of the SADC Gender Unit has been to compile statistics of women's representation in most areas of decision-making in the region including up to date figures on local government. [1] As illustrated in table one, of the three areas of women in decision-making, local government is the highest at 22.6 percent.

This average, however, masks even more glaring disparities than in the case of parliament, with figures ranging from 1.2 percent in Angola to 43.5 percent in Namibia. Namibia, Tanzania, Mozambique and Lesotho (following the adoption of a quota in the first democratically elected local government in 2005) have achieved the thirty percent mark in local government. South Africa is likely to achieve and surpass the thirty percent mark in local elections scheduled for this year thanks to the ANC's fifty percent quota.

Cabinet

Cabinet is the one sphere of decision-making in which it is theoretically relatively easy to "ring up the changes" since leaders have the leeway to appoint their inner team. The average representation of women in cabinet in the region has increased from 12 percent in 1997 to 19.5 percent in July 2005 (a 7.5 % increase), and for deputy ministers from 17.6 percent to 19.2 percent.

Some Heads of State have shown a willingness to use cabinet appointments for bringing women into leadership, especially in the smaller countries. There have, for example, been marked increases in the representation of women in the cabinets of Namibia, Lesotho and Botswana, even though these do not translate into big numbers in absolute terms, given the small size of the cabinets.

In Mozambique, there is a disparity between the representation of women in parliament (at 36 percent) and in cabinet (at 25 percent) although the women in cabinet have often been appointed to important non-traditional posts, including the only woman prime minister in Africa.

South Africa leads the way in this area of decision-making, both with regard to the numbers (43% in cabinet, and 45.5 % deputy ministers) and the diversity of the portfolios assigned. President Thabo Mbeki has openly stated in both recent cabinet reshuffles that he viewed these as an opportunity to increase the representation of women.

[1] SADC (2002): "Women in Politics and Decision Making in SADC", SADC.

The outlook for 2005

Table five shows that the range between highest and lowest performing countries is vast and in all areas of politics has *increased* between 1997 and 2005, underscoring the variation in political commitment to achieving the target.

Table five: Summary of progress since 1997

Area	Av % 1997	Av % 2005	Range 1997			Range 2005		
			High	Low	Range	High	Low	Range
Parliament	17.5 %	19.7 %	27 %	7.6 %	19.4%	36%	10.7%	25.3 %
Cabinet								
Ministers	12 %	19.5 %	29.6 %	8.3 %	21.3%	43.3 %	5.8	37.5%
Deputy ministers	17.6 %	19.2 %	61.5 %	7.1 %	54.4%	45.4	5.26%	40.1 %
Local government	-	22.6 %	-	-	-	43.5	1.2 %	42.3%

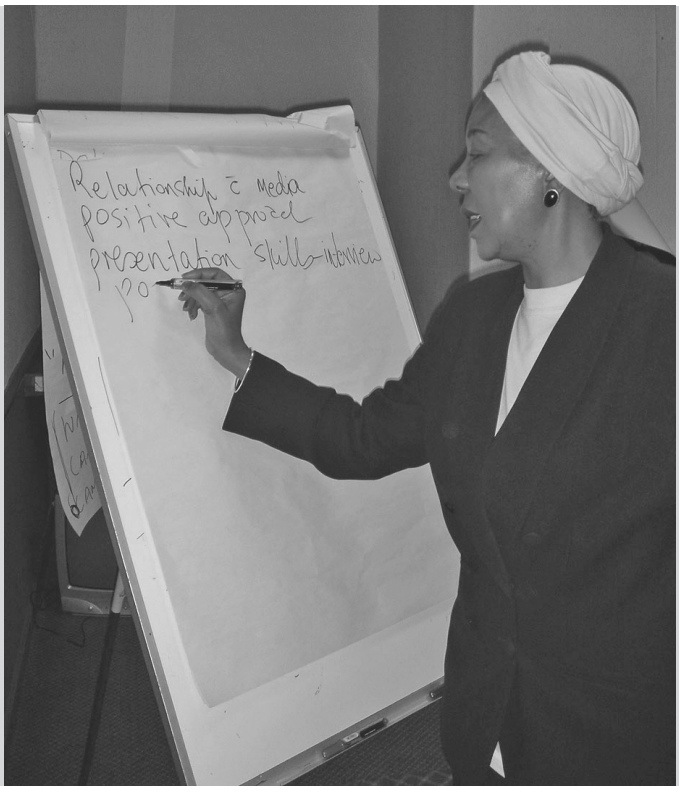
Estimates of where the region will be at the end of 2005, taking account of local elections in South Africa, national and local elections in Tanzania suggest that by the end of the year, SADC countries are likely to achieve or slightly exceed the one-fifth mark for women in parliament and local government. But collectively they are unlikely to achieve the thirty percent target in any area of political decision-making.

At the level of individual countries, three SADC countries will fulfil their commitment to achieving the thirty percent target for women in parliament; four for women in local government; and one for cabinet.

This forecast is just for political decision-making. There has been some progress in the senior ranks of the civil service, as evidenced by the average figure of 20.2 percent women permanent secretaries in table one. But, at 18.2 percent, the judiciary lags behind. And there have been no comprehensive studies to determine the extent of women's representation in the armed forces; civil society (including unions and academic institutions) and in the private sector. Anecdotal evidence suggests that women are even more under-represented in these areas than in the more high profile political spheres that have tended to be the focus of attention. [2]

[2] For more discussion on this, see Women in Politics and Decision Making in SADC, pages 34 to 48

2 Lessons Learned



Ntombi Setshwaelo, Botswana.
Photo: Trevor Davies

The picture that emerges - big gender gaps in most instances interspersed with flashes of progress – suggest that to the extent that the thirty percent target *has* been achieved in some cases, such a target, with the requisite will and strategies, *can* indeed be achieved! What is clearly lacking is a coherent strategy for achieving this across all areas; in each country. Such strategies in turn have to be closely linked to national circumstances.

This section of the report probes more deeply into the lessons that have been learned during the unprecedented drive over the last eight years to increase women's representation in political decision-making. These include what environments are most conducive to change; the role of political parties; electoral systems and quotas.

Socio political context

Table five provides a snap shot of the socio-political context of each SADC country as well as the electoral system in operation. It shows that the countries with the highest level of women's representation are those that have recently emerged from political struggle and have a Proportional Representation (PR) system or that come from a socialist background and have legislated or put quotas in their Constitution.

The representation of women is weakest in those countries with a First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system that are socially conservative and/or have monarchies regardless of whether they have strong democratic traditions or not (such as Botswana and Mauritius). The table suggests that there is no relationship whatsoever between levels of economic development and women's representation. Mozambique, which has the lowest per capita income in SADC, has the highest level of women in parliament.

The key factors therefore for achieving a high level of women's representation are a politically conducive climate; political will; the electoral system and the willingness to take special measures to increase women's representation. Even where the political climate and electoral system are conducive, no country in Southern Africa that has achieved a high representation of women has done so without invoking quotas: whether legislated or voluntary.

Table five: Socio-political context

Category	New liberation	Older liberation	Older liberation and civil war	Old democracies	One party-multiparty	Monarchy	Conflict
Examples	Mozambique South Africa Namibia	Angola Mozambique	Zimbabwe	Botswana Mauritius	Tanzania Zambia Malawi	Swaziland (Traditional Lesotho (Constitutional)	DRC
Features	Time frame-links to Beijing Constitution making	Two revolutions; women in non traditional roles	Women fighters forgotten	Socially conservative Democratic traditions	More open environment	Socially conservative	Flux
Electoral system	PR	Mixed- Angola PR- Mozambique	FPTP	FPTP	FPTP	FPTP	
Women in decision-making	High	Average to high	Low	Low	High only in Tanzania, an ex socialist country	Low	Unsure

Political parties

Political parties play a critical role in "opening the door" for women to enter and participate in decision-making. After all, in parliamentary systems, it is only through political parties that anyone can be elected into office.

It is frequently pointed out that while some political parties have quotas for women's representation in parliament, they do not apply these same quotas to internal party structures. International studies show the importance of holding office in political party structures as a training ground for local and national politics. [3]

The Socialist International which is an association of social-democratic political parties around the world has a stipulation that new members joining the organisation should adopt quotas to ensure women's representation not only in internal party structures but also for election candidacies. This is an important mechanism for getting parties to discuss the issue and propose their own measures to meet the requirements of Socialist ISnternational.

When parties fail to ensure that women assume leadership posts within the party, this raises questions about their commitment to advancing gender equality more broadly. At a practical level, having women in decision-making within parties plays an important role in pushing for, and implementing special measures like quotas for women.

For example, Thenjiwe Mtintso recalled how, when she served as Deputy-Secretary General of the ANC, she had to call local branch officials to inform them that she was changing their lists as they had not complied with the ANC's "zebra" requirement for women on party lists in the 2000 local government elections.

Parties in the constituency system need to make an even greater commitment to ensuring the representation of women in decision-making, as (in the absence of reserved seats) women can only get their foot in the door in this system if they are fielded in seats where the party is sure to win.

The research showed, however, that women in parties in such countries seem to have limited support and encouragement from their parties. In Lesotho, women make up the majority of supporters within political parties but are grossly under-represented in party decision-making structures. For example, there is only one woman in the executive committee of the ruling party. Female MPs noted that when they bring up gender issues within their parties, they are perceived as confrontational, divisive and criticised for challenging party leaders.

The National Deputy Women's Secretary in the opposition United National Independence Party's (UNIP) Women's League in Zambia, Patricia Mulasikwanda agrees that more work has to be done with and within the parties. She notes:

> UNIP sponsored 40 women as MP candidates during the last elections (2001), but only two went through. This is because women voters were sensitised by the Women's Lobby, but not by the political party itself to vote for women. It is important for the political party to go to the people and make them aware of the importance of voting for women.

[3] Lowe-Morna, C (1996), "Strategies for increasing women's participation in politics", paper prepared for the Fifth Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs.

Electoral systems and quotas

By way of background, there are two main types of electoral system:

- In the Proportional Representation (PR) or "list system" citizens vote for parties that are allocated seats in parliament according to the percentage of vote they receive. Individual candidates get in according to where they sit on the list. In an open list system, voters determine where candidates sit on the list.In a closed list system, the party determines where candidates sit on the list, although this is usually based on democratic nomination processes within the party.
- In the constituency or "First Past the Post" (FPTP) system, citizens vote not just for the party, but also for the candidate who represents the party in a geographically defined constituency. Thus a party can garner a significant percentage of the votes, but still have no representative in parliament, because in this system "the winner takes all".

There is overwhelming evidence internationally to suggest that women stand a better chance of getting elected under the PR (and especially the closed list PR system) as opposed to the constituency electoral system. [4] The reason for this is that in the former case, candidates focus on the party and its policies, rather than on a particular individual. This works in favour of women - at least in getting their foot in the door- because of the in-built prejudices against women in politics. The chance of women getting elected is even higher when the PR system works in concert with a quota.

As illustrated in table six, in addition to the two types of electoral system (PR and constituency) there are two main types of quota (voluntary as well as constitutional and/or legislated). It is also possible to have either of these in a mixed PR and constituency system.

Table six: Possible combinations of quotas and electoral systems

Type of quota	Constituency based system	PR system	Mixed PR and constituency based
Voluntary party quota	E.g. Opposition parties in Botswana in the 1999 elections	E.g. ANC in South Africa; Frelimo in Mozambique voluntary quota for list seats	E.g. SA local government in 1995- ANC
Constitutional or legislated quota	E.g. The Tanzanian constitution reserves 20 % of seats for women (distributed on a PR basis).	E.g. Local government elections in Namibia.	E.g. SA local government elections in 2000; act stipulated that parties should strive to ensure parity

Briefly, voluntary party quotas have the advantage of party buy-in, but they can only deliver large numerical increases in closed-list PR systems where the party has a significant say on who gets onto the list. In constituency systems, voluntary party quotas can only succeed in delivering the numbers if women candidates are fielded in safe seats, which is often not the case.

Constitutional or legislated quotas have the advantage that they guarantee the numbers. But in the case of the constituency system, where seats have to be "reserved" for women, this may have the disadvantage that such seats are regarded as second-class or token.

[4] For more information on the comparative global data on quotas for women in politics see www.quotaproject.org

The combination of the PR system and legislated quotas has the advantage that it delivers the numbers and gives the parties leeway to choose which women go on the list as long as the quota is met. But some parties argue that *any* quota infringes on freedom of choice. What is abundantly clear is that without quotas, women stand little chance of making substantial headway in political decision-making.

As table six and the case studies in the next two sections show, Southern Africa has examples of all these different combinations.

At the lowest end of the spectrum, countries with the constituency system and no quota or special measures have the lowest representation of women. While recent increases in women's representation in these countries have shown that there is scope for increasing women's participation in this system through lobbying and advocacy, it is painfully slow.

The alternative of electoral reform is one that many countries with a constituency system have contemplated, but not really taken seriously. This leaves the option of legislated quotas within the existing FPTP electoral system, as implemented in local elections in Lesotho and at national level in Tanzania: the only two instances in which the thirty percent target has been achieved in FPTP countries.

At the other end of the spectrum, the combination of a PR system and legislated quota in local elections in Namibia has delivered dramatic increases in the representation of women. Countries with a PR system and voluntary party quotas such South Africa and Mozambique have fared well. The fact that political parties have taken responsibility for ensuring greater representation of women has enhanced ownership and reduced resistance. The debate in these countries is how to ensure commitment by parties other than the ruling parties, and how to move forward from being stuck in the thirty percent mind set to the next logical step: gender parity.

Elections run on a mixed system, like the local elections in South Africa, demonstrate dramatically the differences between the two electoral systems when it comes to women's representation. If these are to be evened, special measures are required.

Political will

Underpinning all these debates, or lack of them, is political will. If ever there were a case of "where there is a will there is a way" it is that of women's increased representation in decision-making. The case studies that follow show that whether the issue is electoral reform, voluntary or legislated party quotas, or exercise of the leader's prerogative to appoint persons to high office, if there is an underlying commitment to ensuring rapid increase in women's participation this can be achieved. Sadly, as the case studies show, this political will has often been lacking.

3 Lowe-Morna, C (1996), "Strategies for increasing women's participation in politics", paper prepared for the Fifth Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Women's Affairs.

3 Case studies from constituency systems



Woman politician in Mauritius explains the process to a journalist.
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

This section of the report examines in greater depth, through case studies, how the constituency system works against women's increased representation in politics. It also demonstrates the failure by governments in these countries to formulate meaningful strategies for accelerating women's representation in recent elections except in two cases: national elections in Tanzania, and local elections in Lesotho. The latter are important, because they demonstrate that there *are* measures that can be taken in countries with the FPTP system - short of changing the entire system – for achieving rapid increases in women's political representation.

The constituency system is stacked against women

As illustrated in Table one, eight out of the 13 SADC countries have a FPTP system. This system is stacked against women for several reasons. First, there is the problem of winning a party nomination which is heavily influenced by money, name recognition and the advantages enjoyed by (male) incumbents. There is the problem that political parties maintain firm control over the selection of candidates to compete in an election. Many political parties are closed entities, maintaining patronage systems and 'old boys' networks', which make it difficult for women to infiltrate the party leadership. Many parties operate without clear and transparent rules on candidate selection and are dominated by personality male leaders.

The 2001 Zambian elections illustrate the odds against substantial gains for women in countries that have constituency-based systems with no affirmative action measures in place, relying solely on the persuasion and goodwill of political parties.

Case study one
Zambia: No easy walk for women



At one level, the 2001 elections marked a political milestone in Zambia's history. Thanks largely to lobbying by the Women's Lobby Group (WLG) and an umbrella organisation of NGOs under the banner "Movement 2000" political parties adopted a record 198 women for parliamentary elections and 673 for local government elections (see table seven).

Yet of the parliamentary candidates, only 19 (9.5 percent of those who stood) and of the local government candidates only 91 (13.5 percent of those who stood) got elected. This represented a 1.9 percent increase in the representation of women in parliament (which now stands at 12 percent) compared to the previous election in 1996, and a 2.8 percent increase in the representation of women in local government (which now stands at 7 percent) compared to the previous election in 1998.

Put differently, in the period since Zambia's independence in 1964, there have been eight elections. In that time the representation of women in parliament has increased from 6.67 percent in 1964, to 12 percent in 2001; an average increase of 0.6 percent in each election.

Table seven: Snapshot of women in the Zambian elections

	Candidates adopted 2001	Candidates elected 2001	% adopted who got elected	No of women 1996/1998*	% increase in 2001
Parliament	198	19	9.5 %	13	+1.9 %
Local government	673	91	13.5 %	80	+2.8 %

- Local government elections are held every three years in Zambia, while national elections are held every five years. National and local elections coincided in 2001. Source: Zambia National Women's Lobby Group (2001),"Election Monitoring Report: A Gender Analysis of the December 2001 Tripartite Elections."

In a gender analysis of the 2001 elections, the WLG noted that the electoral system in Zambia is "inherently gender insensitive and has heavily contributed to the failure by women to make it in politics". [5] The WLG sees proportional representation as a more favourable system.

In the constituency system, "It is difficult to ensure 30 percent representation of women, because the outcome is left to chance," said Ludwig Sondashi, the Zambian Minister for Works and Supply and a member of the ruling MMD party during an interview for the Gender Links study, *Ringing up the Changes*. "Zambia should advocate for a block voting system like in South Africa. That is the only way we can ensure 30 or 50 percent representation of women."

"Any method of affirmative action should be grabbed, because the movement of women into governance at the same level as men will not happen in the course of time," added UPND MP Inonge Wina. "Targets have not made an impression in Zambia because we think God will make it happen." **-** *Pat Made, Independent Researcher*

No strategies in place in most Constituency systems

Like Zambia, most SADC countries with a Constituency system failed to put special measures in place for achieving the thirty percent target; least of all a review of their electoral systems. As the case study that follows shows, a classic example of this is Botswana, headquarters of the SADC Secretariat, and a country that had made good progress in the 1999 elections, only to slide backwards in 2004. Last ditch efforts by President Mogae to appoint women to parliament helped to save face but did little to mask the real problem: that there had been insufficient advance planning and strategies.

[5] Election Monitoring Report- A Gender Analysis of the December 2001 Tripartite Elections, published by the Zambia National Women's Lobby, p. 49

Case study two
Too little too late for women Botswana



To the greater community of nations, Botswana is, and has always been, a unique African democracy. From the time of independence in 1966, Botswana, unlike many African countries, has known no strife. HIV/AIDS aside, in the 38 years of independence, Botswana has known nothing but growth - in the economy and human resources. In fact, the term "shinning example of democracy" must have been coined for our beautiful desert.

That is our problem. In our eye-twisted world of news, Botswana's stability means the country and the nation hardly make "news". In fact, politics and Botswana hardly fall in the same sentence to many. What works is that in politics men are the leaders, and women are the workers.

Women emerged from the 2004 general elections wounded. Of the 57 parliamentary seats contested in the 2004 elections, only four went to women, all of the ruling Botswana Democratic Party. It was not by accident that these four - Pelonomi Venson, Botlogile Tshireletso, Lesego Motsumi and Gladys Kokorwe - made it.

First, they stood in "safe" constituencies for the BDP - rural Botswana. Second, as individuals, they are strong and able leaders. Venson, Motsumi and Kokorwe were in the last cabinet. Tshireletso, a new comer to Parliament, has served for years in the Central District Council, as a councilor, and is the chairperson of the BDP Women's wing.

What is hard to swallow is the knowledge that we as Batswana halved the number of the elected female MPs. In 1999, there were 8 in a Parliament of 40 – a 20% representation. Now only four were elected to a 57-member Parliament - a mere 7%.

To sooth the pain, President Festus Mogae answered the call of many, to allocate the specially nominated parliamentarian seats to women. In all, these seats are four, and are intended to assist the President to draw talent and expertise that may be lacking in the pool of elected members.

Word in the BDP is that Mogae went to the party's parliamentary caucus with a list of five women - four for Parliament, and one for the Speaker of Parliament. The BDP settled for three - Dr Margaret Nasha, Professor Sheila Tlou and Ms Moggie Mbaakanyi. The other seat, set aside for the youth, was given to BDP executive secretary, Botsalo Ntuane, while the Speaker's job went to retired politician, Patrick Balopi. This happened days after gender activists from around the region echoed the sentiments of a shocked and embarrassed nation.

The good news however is that the President went further, giving five of the seven women MPs (Venson, Nasha, Tlou, Motsumi and Mbaakanyi) cabinet posts. In a 15-member cabinet, this represents 33 percent.

There are lessons to be learnt from this experience.

For a start, the electoral system is up for challenge. While the world is moving into more inclusive and effective systems, we are still stuck in the old and ineffective electoral system - the constituency system. While we appreciate that the system worked in the past, allowing the electorate to have a say on who represents them, it does have shortcomings.

In its current format, the constituency system is proving that it disadvantages the most disadvantaged - women, the youth, the disabled, and the minority groupings, such as the San peoples, and of course the opposition parties. Under the current system, it is virtually impossible for a woman, or a young person, to win the "public" contest against the financially muscled men who are still viewed in awe.

It is even worse for women in opposition. In the 2004 elections, the opposition garnered 49% of the popular vote, but had to settle for only 22% of the seats in Parliament. Competition is fierce. Women get the short end of the stick.

The call has been made for positive discrimination when dealing with the disadvantaged groups - field them en-masse, in safer constituencies. But as illustrated in Botswana, where many women lost out at the primaries, the challenges start long before the actual elections. Some say in difficult constituencies, parties should agree to field only women. In that case, the seat is secured - for a woman.

Even more important, I say, let's consider electoral reform. The FPTP system had its time, and it still has a place in our system. But it has proven detrimental elsewhere. Maybe we should consider what others are doing - mixing the constituency system with the proportional representation system. This way, the electorate has a say, while ensuring that women and other disadvantaged groupings play a part in nurturing democracy. In the end that is what democracy is all about.- *By Pamela Sethunya Dube, Editor, Mokgosi and GEMSA country representative for Botswana*

Half hearted measures yield limited gains

Zimbabwe's 2005 elections took place in fraught circumstances amid threats of boycotts and allegations of unfair practise. Zimbabwe had experienced a five percent drop in the representation of women in the previous elections to ten percent and needed to seriously regain lost ground to meet the SADC target. As the case study below shows, the country made some progress but still fell short of its previous achievements and of the regional target.

Despite concerted efforts by lobby groups to get electoral reform and quotas on the agenda, too much else was at stake in the Zimbabwe elections. Inevitably, gender fell to the bottom of the agenda. Zimbabwe is an illustration of the fact that half hearted attempts to introduce voluntary quotas in a FPTP system do not yield much gain, as women are often assigned constituencies in which they are unlikely to win. The case study also demonstrates that in politically charged circumstances, fragile gains for gender equality are often the first to suffer.

Case study three
Zimbabwe: When push comes to shove, who gets shoved?



The March 2005 elections provided an opportunity for women to gain their rightful place in positions of political decision-making in Zimbabwe. But political parties did not do enough to ensure women's increased candidature and ultimately their representation.

As early as 2004, the Parliamentary Women's Caucus, with technical assistance from the Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) had begun lobbying for a women's quota**.** Study visits were conducted in the region to assess how other countries had managed to increase women's representation. The women MPs in Zimbabwe wanted a constitutional amendment or the passing of secondary legislation as well as reform of the electoral system into a PR or mixed system.

The proposed quota would have compelled political parties to field a certain number of women candidates. It failed for two reasons. Relations were heavily polarised between the two main parties: the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) and the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union Patriotic Front (ZANU PF). Constitutional amendments would have meant cooperation between the two, as neither had the two-thirds majority required to effect a constitutional amendment.

Further, ZANU PF resisted discussing the Constitution. The Constitution of Zimbabwe does not have positive discrimination provisions. In fact section 23 makes it possible for women to be discriminated against in certain instances. This would have had to be amended to allow for positive discrimination. But a referendum in 2000 had seen the rejection of a proposed government constitution. Since the then government had closed the chapter on constitutional reform.

Given this background and limitations, political parties became the next target. Political parties largely determine through their candidate selection processes who become a candidate in elections. WiPSU developed a lobby document giving a variety of options that political parties could adopt to increase women candidates and also their chances of victory.

Options for parties in the FPTP system

Some of these choices included:

- A provincial quota where each province would be required to field women in a third of its constituencies. Making it provincial was advantageous in that women would be spread throughout the country and not concentrated only in certain areas depending on the party's thinking.
- Women be fielded in the party's stronghold areas. The two main political parties are MDC and ZANU PF. MDC has an urban support whilst ZANU PF has a rural support. The proposal was that parties field women in their strongholds where there is greater chance of success.
- Sitting women MPs be retained as candidates. This increases the success rate for women as these women already have experience and exposure. Retaining sitting women MPs as candidates is a strategic means of increasing women's numbers in Parliament. 11 of the 13 sitting women MPs won back their constituencies.

As a result of intense lobbying from the women's league, ZANU PF decided to adopt a 30 percent provincial quota for women candidates. But this met with allegations of women candidates being imposed. In the end ZANU PF fielded only 30 women candidates, compared to the promised minimum of 40. Quite a number ran in urban constituencies against sitting women MPs from the MDC. All the ZANU PF women in urban constituencies lost.

The candidate selection process in the MDC merely encouraged the retention of sitting women MPs as candidates. All 7 sitting women MPs were retained and five won. ZANU Ndonga, one of the small political parties broke new ground by fielding 8 women candidates out of a total of 11, but these had little chance of winning.

Fact box: Women candidates in the 2005 Zimbabwean elections

- There were 58 women candidates out of 272, i.e. 21.3%.
- ZANU PF had 30 women out of 120 candidates, i.e. 25%.
- MDC had 17 women out of 120 candidates, i.e. 11.3%.
- All the 13 sitting women constituency MPs who were retained as candidates.
- ZANU Ndonga had 8 women out of 11 candidates, i.e. 72.7%.
- There are 2 Independent women candidates out of 18, i.e. 11.1%.

The constituencies in which women contested had a profound impact on whether they would win or not. The MDC gets most of its support from urban areas. Yet 13 women MDC candidates contested in rural areas and 5 in urban areas. Of the 6 women who won in the MDC, 5 were in urban constituencies and the sixth in Matebeleland, traditionally an opposition stronghold.

ZANU PF has its stronghold in rural areas. Twenty of the women who contested did so in rural and ten in urban constituencies. All the 14 who won ran in rural constituencies. Of the 10 in urban constituencies, 6 were in Harare, 3 in Bualwayo urban and 1 in Masvingo urban; all of these MDC strongholds.

If ZANU PF had fielded more women in rural constituencies and MDC more in urban constituencies then more women would have won. With 14 women contesting each other in 7 constituencies, women effectively contested 51 constituencies. For women to achieve 30%, 40 or about 80 % of them would have had to win. This would have been unlikely in the best of circumstances; let alone in the highly competitive and tense environment in which the Zimbabwean elections took place.

Of the 14 women contesting each other, 6 of them won, i.e. women won in 6 of the 7 constituencies. Out of the 44 women contesting against men, 14 women won.

Another key factor in the chances of women winning in the FPTP system is the extent to which they can build on previous experience. The results of the elections demonstrated the significance of prior experience.

Fact box: The role of prior experience in the Zimbabwe elections

- 21 of the women had been MPs in previous sessions of Parliament.
- 37 were new contestants.
- Of the 21, 13 won.
- Of the 37, 7 won.

As elsewhere in FPTP systems, the Zimbabwe experience showed that women stand a better chance of winning if they are within the dominant political parties. The competition for political space in Zimbabwe is between MDC and ZANU PF. Women stood their best chance of getting in if they were in these parties.

Fact box: Belonging to the winning party
- ZANU PF has 14 women MPs
- MDC has 6 women MPs
- There were no winning candidates from ZANU Ndonga and the Independents

Zimbabwe has the largest number (30 out of 150) appointed members of parliament. After the disappointing outcome for women of the 2005 elections, hopes turned to President Robert Mugabe to appoint women. Theoretically if all the appointments had been women (30 appointees plus 20 elected or 50 out of 150) Zimbabwe could have achieved the thirty percent mark. Mugabe is one of the few remaining SADC leaders who actually signed the SDGD back in 1997.

The appointed seats consist of ten governors, eight appointees to the council of chiefs, and 12 others. Of these only two of the 10 governors and two of the non-constituency MPs are women. There are no women on the Chiefs Council. Thus overall there are 24 out of 150, or 16 percent women in the new parliament.

The Zimbabwe case illustrates lack of political commitment to women's increased political representation. When push came to shove, both parties cast gender considerations aside. This goes to show that mechanisms at legislative level are always better than those at political level because they provide some safeguard. *Tsitsi Matekaire, WiPSU, and Loveness Jambaya, GEMSA*

Missed opportunities but increasing pressure

Like Zimbabwe, Mauritius came under intense pressure to review its FPTP electoral system and to adopt a legislated quota for women in parliament well ahead of the 2005 elections. Political expediency stood in the way of long term strategies, leading to this critical debate being postponed. But the increase in women's representation without adopting any special measures, and the fact that 75 percent of women candidates won, demonstrates the effectiveness of civil society campaigns around the region; especially when these have a strong media component.

Case study four
Mauritius: Advocacy pays off after government fails to act

Like many other countries in the region, Mauritius has been quick to sign commitments on women's rights, but slow to deliver. Like other countries in the region Mauritius is party to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action; Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the SADC Declaration on Gender and Development.

On 8 July 2004 at a special session on gender during the SADC Heads of State Summit in Mauritius, SADC leaders signed the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa. This calls for an equal, not just thirty percent, representation of women in decision-making.

Mauritius was conscious at the time of the embarrassing irony of being one of the region's most progressive political and economic success stories, but last as far as women's political representation was concerned. Yet the political will to act in an island steeped in patriarchal traditions was sadly lacking.



GL workshop in Mauritius
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

More than two years before the elections in July 2005, a commission on electoral reform led by South African Constitutional Court Judge Albie Sachs commented on the "democratic deficit" in Mauritius as a result of the low representation of women. Noting that women tend to be much better represented in proportional representation (PR) systems it suggested a mixed First Past the Post (FPTP) and PR system.

But the ruling party alliance clung relentlessly to the outmoded "winner-takes-all" system. This did not help in the election, as the alliance lost to Dr Navin Ramgoolam's Labour Party. In the build up to the campaign, Media Watch Organisation led a high profile campaign on Mauritius' position within SADC and failure to honour the thirty percent commitment. A Women's Lobby Group made a special effort to support and give visibility to women candidates.

On the 16 women fielded by the two major alliances 11 were elected and one nominated as best looser out of a total of 70, giving women 17 % of the seats, up from 5.7 percent in the previous parliament, which had represented a drop from the one before. Mauritius moved dramatically from being last to being fifth in the SADC ranking and posited the highest gain of any of the SADC countries during the period under review.

One woman, Kalyanee Virahsawmy made history. A Labour Party candidate, she came first in a constituency that had been dominated by the Mouvement Militant Mauricien (MMM) for the last 30 years, defeating two male MMM candidates including former Minister of Lands Joe Lesjongard.

Virahsawmy reflected:

> "Women are close to the people. We are honest and our mandates believe in us without expecting anything from us. We do not have to bribe people to get votes. I will be the first Member of the Legislative Assembly to represent the Labour Party in the Port Louis-North-Longue Mountain Constituency after 30 long years. While my mandates especially women have all been fantastic, the attitudes of the male opponents have been horrible. They did not do honour for a Mauritius where it is said that elections are free and fair. The vulgar and grotesque caricatures and posters distributed on me were unbelievable. They fabricated another side of my private life and made this public. This is why women hesitate to go into politics. But I nevertheless dedicate my victory to the women and the people of Mauritius."

Sheila Bappoo, veteran politician also succeeded in her impossible mission in an MMM constituency. She outshone two MMM/MSM candidates: the former Minister of Agriculture, Nando Bodha and a former Principal Parliament Secretary, Francoise Labelle.

At a Media Watch and Gender Links workshop on Gender, Media and Elections held on 14th February 2005 Bodha said that "putting a greater number of women candidates will not guarantee that they will be elected."

The results of the 2005 elections have proved the former minister wrong. Women do get elected. With proper lobbying and education women do get the message. Both Media Watch Organisation and Gender Links started this campaign when the book "Ringing up the Changes" was launched in Parliament in May 2004. This helped to galvanise women into action.

Political parties have a major role to play in increasing women's representation for the 2010 general elections. The electoral manifesto of the Labour Party highlights electoral reform. Gender activists and other stakeholders must see to it that the new Prime Minister keeps to his promise. It is only then that we will be able to talk of gender democracy.
- Loga Virahsawmy, President, Media Watch Organisation

Legislated quotas in a FPTP system

While the hope is that there will be electoral reform in countries with the FPTP system in the coming few years before the next major round of elections, it is unrealistic to believe that eight SADC countries will change their electoral systems to PR systems in the near future. At best some may adopt the mixed system that is being used at national level in Lesotho. However, as the last elections there demonstrated, unless a mixed system is coupled with special measures, there is no guarantee that women will do better in the PR seats.

The more immediate question is therefore what can be done within the existing FPTP system to achieve rapid but sustainable increases in women's representation. Lesotho and Tanzania have demonstrated two possible approaches to quotas in FPTP systems that have advantages and disadvantages, but have been successfully used to guarantee increases.

Facing pressure after failing to achieve the thirty percent target in national elections, Lesotho adopted a legislated quota for its first democratic local government elections in 2005. As in India, this system essentially reserves one third of seats for women only on a rotational basis. The criticism of such an approach is that men in the reserved constituencies can claim to have been discriminated against, which is what happened in Lesotho. But a landmark Supreme Court ruling upholding affirmative action for women in politics has set an important precedent for Lesotho and for the region.

Lesotho is the first system of reserving *constituencies* for women in Africa. It was largely accepted in India because there is a long tradition of providing for group representation not only for women but also for under-represented castes etc. The court case that accompanied this is a landmark case in that it upholds the principle of affirmative action.

Case study five
Lesotho Court of Appeal upholds gender quotas



In July 2005, a landmark ruling in the Lesotho Court of Appeal dismissed an appeal to declare the reservation of one third of the local government seats for women as unconstitutional. The decision, a first for the Southern African Development Community (SADC), puts paid to the critics who argue that the use of quotas is undemocratic.

The ruling is in response to a complaint laid by an aspirant male ward councillor Mr. Molefi Tepe with the Lesotho Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). He argued that the reservation violated his constitutional right to contest the elections in a constituency of his choice. His council requested that certain provisions of the country's Local Government Elections Act, be struck down as unconstitutional.

The respondents also relied on the constitution which provides for the Lesotho government to take positive steps to redress existing inequality that is: "reasonably justifiable" in a constitutional democracy. The Constitution states that the: "state shall take appropriate measures in order to promote equality of opportunity for the disadvantaged groups in the society to enable them to participate fully in all spheres of public life."

In a judgment handed down on June 30, 2005, the Court dismissed the appeal and upheld the High Court's ruling. It held that the amendment which provided for a temporary and rotating quota of electoral divisions reserved for women was indeed reasonably justifiable in Lesotho's circumstances. These included what Justice Peete in the High Court described as "an undisputable fact… that women in our society have long stood disadvantaged and marginalised socially, economically and… even politically." While women make up more than 50 percent of the population in Lesotho, only 12 percent of the countries' legislators are women.

The Court also considered Lesotho's international obligations in terms of the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; and the African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights. All these human rights instruments provide for positive measures to achieve restitutionary equality.

The Court concluded that the Constitution contemplates substantive and not merely formal equality. Both directly through the Constitution and through Lesotho's international law obligations, measures to achieve restitution equality are authorised in principle.

The judgement stated that the measures taken: "…met the threefold test in such matters; they are rationally connected to the wider objective; secondly they impair as little as possible the rights in question; thirdly there is a proportionality between the effects of the measures and the objective. The elections were in no way tainted by unconstitutionality."

The ruling is significant for the region as it is a public and formal recognition of the affirmative action principles behind the quota system. These principles it is argued are essential if the region is to meet the targets it has set regarding women's representation in decision-making. -*Tom Mapesela, MISA Information Officer, Lesotho and GEMSA Secretary*

Getting around the backlash of reserved constituencies

While the court ruling came as welcome news, the backlash caused by the system of reserving constituencies in Lesotho should be pause for thought. Indeed, as the Tanzania case study illustrates, there is an alternative to this in the FPTP system, which is to reserve *seats* for women (and distribute these on a PR basis) rather than reserving *constituencies*. Although this leads to two different kinds of women MPs in one chamber and allegations that one is superior to the other, it pre-empts the kind of court challenge and accompanying negative publicity that ensued in Lesotho.

Case study six
Tanzania's mixed system provides a clever compromise



Strategising in Tanzania
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

The Tanzanian case study shows how the only way to ensure significant increases in numbers in constituency-based systems is to have legislated quotas. Of the 63 or 21.3 percent women in the Tanzanian parliament after the 2000 elections, 47 women (20 percent) owe their presence to the constitutional quota which reserves a fifth of the seats in parliament for women.

While the elections are contested on a constituency basis, the seats reserved for women are allocated between parties on the basis of the proportion of votes that they garnered, in other words, on a PR system. Women in the parties thus compete among themselves for a place on their party list, but not with men. Women are of course free to contest the constituency seats. The additional 1.3 % of women in the Tanzanian parliament consists of 12 women who contested the election as candidates and two appointed by the President.

To achieve the thirty percent target, Tanzania has increased the constitutional quota to thirty percent for the October 2005 elections. The latter is the quickest and surest route, but activists fear it may have other consequences, because of the relative disadvantage that women who come in on "special seats" face.

According to Tanzania Gender Networking Project (TGNP) board member Agrippina Mosha activists are concerned that in the long term, the affirmative action measure could have a "crippling effect because women can become scared to stand on their own in constituencies. We are pushing for the parties to have a policy that requires that at least 30 percent women should be nominated by the party to stand for constituency seats. If the parties throw their support behind women in constituencies as they do for men, the women will win."

Mosha notes that in the 2000 elections, of the 13 women nominated by the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) party to stand in constituencies, 12 went through. She says this shows that women can succeed in the constituency system if their parties are genuinely committed to increasing the representation of women. - *Colleen Lowe Morna, Executive director, Gender Links and Chair, GEMSA*

4 Case studies from PR and mixed systems



Getting it right in Namibia
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

This section of the report consists of case studies taken from countries with Proportional Representation and mixed electoral systems. The case studies show that while these systems have been more successful in increasing the representation of women, they are not without their dilemmas and contradictions.

The dilemmas of voluntary party quotas in a PR system

Sitting high in the regional and global ranking lists for women in parliament, South Africa and Mozambique have both achieved their successes through the voluntary party quotas of the ruling ANC and Frelimo parties respectively. Both countries have a PR electoral system. The case of South Africa, often touted as a best practise in the region illustrates that despite the many advantages of a voluntary party quota and a PR system, there are concerns. These relate to the difficulty of moving beyond the thirty percent within the ruling party; and the fact that too much rests on the goodwill of one party with no obligation on other parties to honour the Constitutional commitment to gender equality.

Case study seven
South Africa: Getting out of the thirty percent quagmire



SA Speaker Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile
Photo: GCIS

South Africa's national elections are run on the basis of a simple PR system in which seats in the 400-strong assembly are allocated according to the proportion of votes won in the elections. Since the country's first democratic elections in 1994, the African National Congress (ANC) is the only party that has had and effected a thirty percent quota for women, by ensuring that women are evenly distributed in its lists.

In 1994, the ANC had to make some amendments to its election list to ensure that women constituted at least one third of the top half of the list (reckoning that it would win at least fifty percent of the vote). But by the second elections in 1999, a sufficient proportion of women had made their way onto the list through the branch nomination system for the party not to have to "engineer" the list. [6]

Today, women constitute 37 percent of the ANC seats and 20.8 percent of opposition seats, giving an overall average of 32.8 percent women in parliament. Table eight illustrates the snowball effect that the ANC has had on other political parties, especially the main opposition Democratic Alliance (DA) in which the representation of women has increased from 14 percent in 1994 to 26 percent in the present parliament.

[6] Interview, South African Minister in the Presidency Essop Pahad.

Table eight: SA- REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT 1994 to 2004

	1994			1999			2004		
PARTY	**Total**	**Women**	**% women**	**Total**	**Women**	**% women**	**Total**	**Women**	**%women**
ANC	252	90	**35.7**	266	95	**35.7**	279	104	**37**
DP/DA	7	1	**14**	38	6	**15.7**	50	13	**26**
IFP	43	10	**23**	33	9	**27.2**	28	5	**18.5**
NP/NNP	82	9	**10**	28	4	**14.2**	7	0	**0**
UDM				14	1	**7**	9	4	**44.4**
ID							7	3	**43**
ACDP	2	0	**0**	6	2	**33**	6	2	**33.3**
FF				3	0	**0**	4	0	**0**
UCDP				3	1	**33**	3	0	**0**
PAC	5	1	**20**	3	0	**0**	3	0	**0**
Other				5	2	**40**	4	0	**0**
TOTAL	400	111	**27.7**	400	120	**30**	400	131	**32.75**

Source: Gender Links

However, the table also illustrates the dangers of other parties not having quotas. Representation of women in the IFP dropped from 27.2 percent in 1999 to 18.5 percent in 2004.

While opposition parties publicly oppose quotas, many of the women in these parties said they supported them. They looked to the ANC to help move the gender agendas in their parties, and acknowledged that quotas have had a snowball effect.

This has given rise to two lines of argument in South Africa. While accepting that the ANC quota has jolted them into action, opposition parties argue that as the level of women's representation is increasing in their parties without resorting to quotas, there is no need for them.

Gender activists, on the other hand, have argued that the danger of voluntary party quotas where only one party adopts such a quota is that if the support of that party declines, the representation of women will also drop. There is also the more fundamental question about the responsibility of *all* parties for ensuring women's equal participation in politics.

The Fifty-Fifty campaign in South Africa points out that if the country adopted a legislated quota that would require all political parties to have a quota of fifty percent while retaining the PR system, it would become the first country in the world to achieve gender parity in its national assembly. [7]

The campaign won an important first victory when it lobbied against the changing of the PR system for national elections in South Africa to a mixed system in the 2004 elections.

The ANC has argued that the PR system is not necessarily in its interests because as the party with the greatest support among the majority black population it could arguably win more seats through the "winner takes all" system.

But it has supported the retention of the PR system because it is more inclusive (an important factor in a country with as divisive a history as South Africa) and because it has been an important factor in boosting women's participation from 2.7 percent during the apartheid era to the present 30 percent level. [8]

The ANC has also stated its support for a 30 percent legislated quota but has fallen shy of the fifty percent being called for by gender activists.

This is especially so in light of the apparent apathy among senior ANC women towards legislated quotas. While the ANC Women's League raised the issue of a 50 percent legislated quota at the ANC congress in December 2002, it did not get much support.

According to Thenjiwe Mtintso, then Deputy Secretary General of the ANC: "I think there is beginning to be complacency; this feeling that we are there in our own right, why do we still have to push for the numbers.
It's not articulated, but there is a bit of subtle backlash from the women themselves."

Still, the quota has been critical in South Africa in ensuring a virtual overnight boost to the numbers of women in decision-making. The internal struggles within the ANC to secure even the thirty percent quota has also been a key mobilising tool for women, and a critical component of transforming the attitudes of men within the party.
- Colleen Lowe Morna, Gender Links

Legislated quotas in a PR system

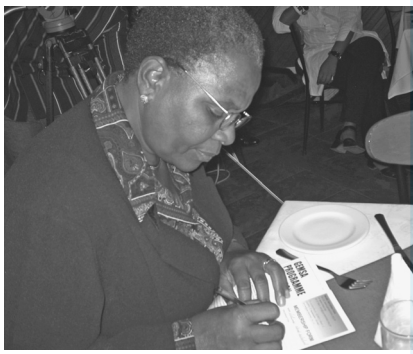
As South Africa dithers over the issue of a legislated quota, local government in Namibia provides an example of the powerful combination of the PR system, a legislated quota, and voluntary measures by a political party
for achieving a rapid and guaranteed increase in the representation of women in politics.

But the inconsistency between this achievement and the representation of women in other areas of politics in Namibia raises concerns about the coherence of government strategy and - underpinning this - its commitment to achieving the thirty percent target in all areas of decision-making.

Namibia has three different kinds of gender and electoral arrangements in operation. As the case study that follows shows, the upshot is that women's representation ranges from 11.2 percent at regional level to 43.4 percent at local level. Namibia missed the opportunity, virtually in its hands, of achieving the thirty percent target at national level in the 2004 elections by not adopting quotas or by the president making use of the appointed seats to increase women's representation.

7 Led by the Gender Advocacy Project (GAP), campaign members include the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), Gender Links (GL), Women's Net and the Institute for Democratic Alternatives in South Africa (IDASA).
8 Interview, South African Minister in the Office of the Presidency, Essop Pahad.

Case study eight
Namibia: "Three in one" approaches leads to mixed results for women



Namibian Minister of Information Nandi Nentumbo-Ndaitwa
Photo: Colleen Lowe Morna

In Namibia which has three electoral and quota systems in operation for the different spheres of government the 2004 results produced mixed results for women.

Local elections are run on a PR basis and political parties are obliged by law to have at least thirty percent women scattered evenly throughout the list so that they stand a chance of winning. SWAPO voluntarily upped the legal requirement to a "zebra" system of one woman one vote.

The local elections held in May resulted in women increasing their presence from 41.3% to 43.4%, holding 123 out of 283 seats.

National Assembly elections that are run on a PR basis; there is no legislated requirement for women's representation and only COD and UDF placed a zebra arrangement of candidates in Parliament. President Nujoma's personal support for women continued to be strong, with 6 women amongst the 10 persons selected by the President to head the party list – but there were only 9 other women amongst the additional 45 persons on the SWAPO list who made it into the National Assembly. Thus out of the 55 SWAPO representatives that made it into parliament, 15 were women, bringing the total number of women to 21 out of 78.

If President Pohamba had used the option he had to appoint six MPs to increase the proportion of women, Namibia could have just made the thirty percent mark. The fact that he failed to do so raised serious questions as to the commitment of the new Head of State to fulfil his obligations under the SDGD, in what would be Namibia's last elections before 2005.

Regional elections in Namibia are based on the constituency system and there is no legal or voluntary quota in place for these elections. Only 12 women made it amongst the 107 persons elected to fill seats on the 13 regional councils, for a total of 11.2 %.

Six of the 13 regions have no women at all on their regional councils, although the Khomas region bucked this trend with 6 women amongst its 10 councillors. One of them has been appointed Regional Governor, and two others represent the region in the National Council. Women's representation in the National Council has increased from 2 to 7 out of 26 members, which equals almost 27%. Three of the 13 Regional Governors are women.

The steady progress made at the Local Authority level, where women now constitute 43.3%, shows that legislated affirmative action measures are the most reliable tool to achieve gender democracy and gender justice in women's political representation.

But the inconsistency between the representation of women at local, regional and national level in Namibia casts doubt on the extent to which the government there has mapped out a clear strategy for achieving the thirty percent target in all areas of decision-making.

A particular concern expressed by gender activists in Namibia during focus group meeting facilitated by Sister Namibia as part of the GL Study *Ringing up the Changes* is why the ruling party has been more amenable to special measures for women's representation in local but not in other spheres of government.

The interpretation of this in Namibia is that rather than this being a positive recognition of the role of women at community level, this is a cynical reflection of women's unwaged work.
- Liz Frank, Director, Sister Namibia

Mixed systems and mixed blessings

The region has yet one other interesting example of the gender implications of combinations of quotas and electoral systems – the mixed system for local government in South Africa. This system illustrates in microcosm the advantages of the PR system over the FPTP system for increasing women's representation. The ANC's commitment in the December 2005 local elections to achieving fifty percent women poses interesting challenges in the FPTP seats.

Case study nine
South Africa: Dilemmas and challenges in the 2005 local elections



Johannesburg councillors at work
Photo: Collen Lowe Morna

In a bid to find a compromise to the kind of dilemma that Namibia faced between a pure constituency system that would perpetuate racial geographical divisions and a PR system that could result in councillors being too distant from voters on the ground, South Africa had a mixed PR and constituency system for its local government elections in 1995.

This means that some councillors contest elections as candidates in constituencies, while others are on party lists and get allocated seats based on the proportion of votes that each party garners.

Table nine illustrates the impact of this dual system on women. In South Africa's first local government elections in 1995 the ANC applied its 30 percent quota to the PR seats, in which overall women won 27.9 percent of the seats. In the constituency or ward seats, women won only 10.84 percent of the seats. This gave women an overall average of 19 percent of the seats in local government - substantially below the 27 percent in the national assembly, where elections are held on a simple PR basis.

Table nine: Progress made by South African women in local elections

	Ward	PR	Average
1995	10.84 %	27.9 %	19 %
2000	16.9 %	38.1 %	28.2 %

Source: Electoral Institute of Southern Africa (EISA)

In the period leading up to the 1999 elections, the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), a constitutional body, and the Gender Advocacy Project (GAP), an NGO, lobbied both to retain the mixed system (against the possibility of a shift to a constituency system) and for a legislated quota. The ANC supported the idea of a fifty percent quota for the PR seats, but faced resistance from opposition parties who said this limited the choice of parties and of voters.

The lobbying effort resulted in the Municipal Structures Act (1998) changing the system in the 1995 elections from 40 percent PR and 60 percent ward to equal numbers of both in the 2000 elections. A clause in the act states that: "Every party must seek to ensure that fifty percent of the candidates on the party list are women and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed throughout the list."

While this fell short of being a statutory quota it did place parties under the spotlight. Taking a leaf from SWAPO and local elections in Namibia, the ANC adopted a "zebra" system for its PR seats in local elections in 2000. While the main opposition DA posited some significant increases in the representation of women in a number of metropolitan council ward seats, it did not heed the call in the legislation to ensure equal representation of women throughout its local government lists.

Overall, women's representation in the PR seats increased from 27.9 percent to 38. 1 percent and in the ward seats from 10.84 to 16.9 percent, giving an overall average of 28.2 percent.

For the 2005 elections, the ANC has committed to ensuring 50% women candidates in both the PR and the ward seats. The question that arises is whether in the heat of competitive electoral politics the ANC will honour its commitment to ensure women stand in the hotly contested ward seats. As in Namibia, the other question that is being asked is why the ANC has acceded to 50 percent women at local but not at national level.

Yet another key question raised (see excerpts from the Benoni Declaration below) is where other political parties stand on this issue and what measures can be taken to ensure compliance.

Excerpts from Benoni Declaration, Women in Local Government, June 2005
Noting that the 50% quota has now been incorporated into the South African Local Government Association (SALGA) Constitution but there are no monitoring mechanisms to realize this commitment, the women pledged

- To the implementation of the SALGA National Conference Resolutions on Women in Local Government Gender Equity and Equality and also monitor and evaluate progress made by municipalities on an ongoing basis.
- To engage all political parties represented in the South African National Government and urge them to adopt and implement strategies to promote the 50/50 representation in Local Government.
- SALGA to initiate and facilitate the formation of relevant structures within the UCLGA that will deal with gender and women empowerment issues (including peace keeping efforts in Africa);
- SALGA will continuously engage political parties to adopt and implement the zebra system during the 2005/06 local government elections;

Short of legislating that parties adopt quotas, a measure that has been tried in some Eastern European countries, where there is a reluctance to pass quota regulations as they interfere with a party's internal workings, is to pass laws that require political parties to uphold their own regulations or party constitutions as they relate to democratic functioning.

Thus, for example, if a party has a voluntary requirement that 30% of its parliamentary caucus should be women, the national legislation requires that the parties would uphold it in practice. This might be a novel way around the dilemmas on legislated quotas in Southern African countries.

5 Participation in decision-making

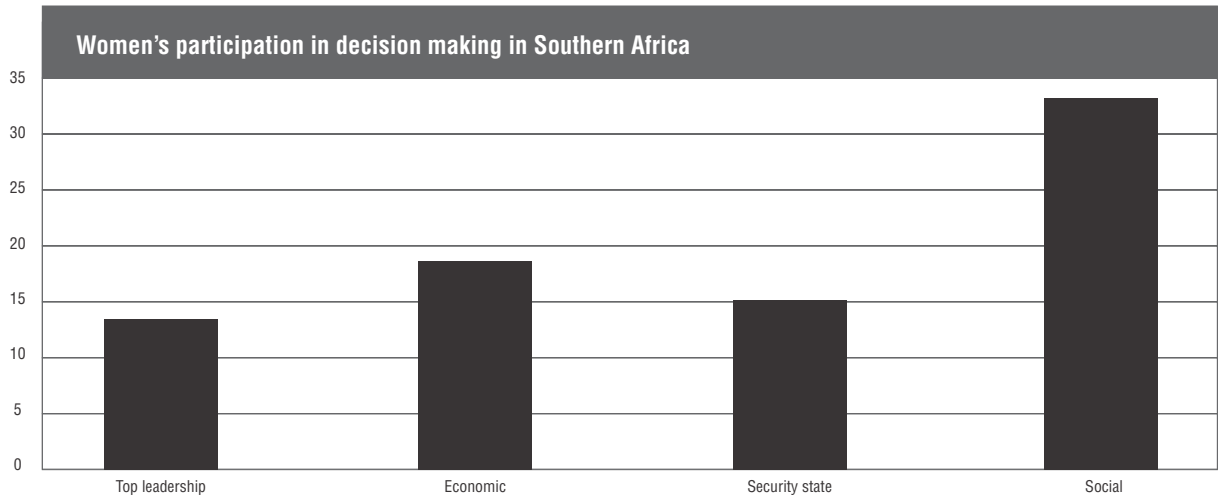


South Africa's new Deputy President, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka.
Photo: Ministry of Energy and Minerals

As noted in the analysis of commitments earlier in this report, there is more to women in decision-making than simply mechanisms for ensuring their representation. The provisions include ways of ensuring women's effective participation in decision-making. The GL study, *Ringing up the Changes,* identifies several ways in which women's effective participation can be measured. These include the extent to which women are in leadership positions within these decision-making structures; the extent to which women participate in all areas and sectors of decision-making as well as measures put in place to ease the dual burden of work that women often face.

In the audit, indices for participation include women's representation in leadership positions within decision-making structures (speakers and top political leadership, defined as presidents, deputy presidents, prime ministers or deputy prime ministers.) Another measure used is the different sectors of decision-making that women are assigned to, using cabinet portfolios as the litmus test.

Table one (executive summary) provides an analysis of positions held by women in cabinet in Southern Africa as a key set of indices in probing further women's effective participation. These are summarised and illustrated in the graph below:



Top leadership

Zambian women broke new ground in the 2001 elections when two women stood as presidential candidates. Neither Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika (Agenda for Zambia Party) nor Gwendolyn Konie (Social Democratic Party) won. But the fact that they stood made an important statement.

The graph illustrates that at 13.3 percent, women are still scarce in top leadership (defined as President, Deputy President, Prime Minister, and Deputy Prime Minister) and that this is the area of decision-making in which women are least represented. What is significant however is that compared to 1997, when there were no women in these positions, Southern Africa now has two women deputy presidents and one woman prime minister. As the excerpt from the *Financial Gazette* in Zimbabwe suggests, this is helping to change perceptions about women and power in the region. However, this has to some extent been marred by the controversial circumstances in which the two women deputy presidents acceded to their positions.

Southern Africa's most powerful women

Journalists in the SADC region could soon be scouring their dictionaries for adjectives to describe the advent of female rule if three women who now have a foothold in the top echelons of state power finally make the giant leap to the apex.

A triumvirate (oops, the dictionary defines triumvirate as "any group of three men associated in some way" or "joint rule by three men") of three women who could one day become leaders of their countries has emerged in the last few weeks.

These are Joyce Mujuru, co-Vice President of Zimbabwe, Luisa Diogo who is the Prime Minister of Mozambique and, to complete the troika, the brand new Deputy President of South Africa, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka. Both Mujuru and Mlambo-Ngcuka ascended to their powerful positions in rather controversial circumstances. Mujuru made history about six months ago when she was nominated to fill the post of vice president of the ruling ZANU PF at the party's congress in December last year. The position had fallen vacant following the death of Vice President Simon Muzenda.

However, despite being impeccably qualified for the job because of her liberation war credentials, Mujuru's rise to the number two position was a bitter-sweet experience. While it undoubtedly caused euphoria in the women's wing of the party, which had been vociferously clamouring for higher numbers of women in parliament and other decision-making bodies, the former freedom fighter's appointment as Vice President also sparked one of the bitterest political feuds within ZANU PF in recent years.

The idea of nominating a woman to the powerful position of vice president within the ruling party, which meant that she also automatically became vice president of the country, only gained credence amid intense and bitter jostling by ambitious ZANU PF politicians to position themselves as candidates to succeed President Robert Mugabe.

The President's decision to spring Mujuru to within a heartbeat of the most powerful position in the land ahead of them did not, therefore, exactly cause glee in these circles. Some felt that the move was a cynical ploy by President Mugabe to postpone or altogether thwart debate on his retirement plans and the divisive issue of who would succeed him. Zimbabwe's first female vice-president, therefore, assumed power amid acrimonious bickering and charges that her candidature had been imposed on party provinces, which were instructed by the top leadership to nominate her.

Her husband, retired army general Solomon Mujuru, was widely perceived to have played a pivotal role behind the scenes to smooth the way to the top for his wife. Some within the ruling party felt so affronted by the development that they allegedly actively but covertly set about plotting a palace coup to scupper Mujuru's promotion to the coveted position. The infamous Tsholotosho indaba, during which a group opposed to Mujuru's candidacy allegedly made a declaration that it would throw its weight behind former speaker of parliament Emmerson Munangagwa, resulted in the suspension of six party provincial chairmen.

It also led to the eventual and sensational downfall of former information and publicity tyrant Jonathan Moyo, who now sits in parliament as an independent. Moyo, who was rightly or wrongly cast as the protagonist in the Tsholotsho debacle, was expelled from ZANU PF after he decided to contest the March parliamentary elections as an independent.

Mlambo-Ngcuka, a former minerals and energy minister, ascended to the post of deputy president of South Africa last week amid an almost similar political storm following President Thabo Mbeki's surprise decision to give Jacob Zuma his marching orders.

The vacancy that Mlambo-Ngcuka filled resulted from the ramifications of the most damaging scandal involving the most senior government official since the African National Congress (ANC) came to power in 1994. Before she was sworn in last week, there were fears that Mlambo-Ngcuka would have a bruising ride into the number two slot after the ANC'S powerful allies, including the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) and the South African Communist Party had voiced strong support for Zuma prior to his sacking. The new deputy president was also perceived to bring unacceptable baggage to her new job arising from what is known as the Oilgate scandal in South Africa in which her brother was implicated.

In addition, her husband, Bulelani Ngcuka, former head of the National Prosecuting Authority, had initiated the investigation that eventually led to Zuma's downfall. All these issues could have been a recipe for bitter resentment, but indications are that the calculated risk Mbeki took in appointing her has paid off. Latest reports from South Africa indicate that Mlambo-Ngcuka's appointment has been warmly received all round. Most commentators have praised her for her hard work, efficiency, astuteness and affability.

Of these three women, Diogo's appointment to the post of prime minister of Mozambique was the smoothest. She was promoted to the position by former head of state Joaquim Chissano in 2004. She succeeded Pascoal Mocumbi, who resigned after serving as prime minister for 10 years.

Commentators noted that her appointment was a deliberate passing of the baton from the generation that fought for independence in Mozambique to one that had been in training since then. Diogo, who was only 17 when Mozambique gained its independence from Portugal, does not have liberation war credentials. Similar comments have been made about Mbeki's decision to appoint as his deputy someone of a similar profile and age. Both Diogo and Mlambo-Ngcuka are approaching the age of 50 years.

Zimbabwe's co-vice president Mujuru is in the same age group but differs from the other two women in that she was actually a fighter during Zimbabwe's liberation war. She has been a government minister in various capacities for the last 25 years and so is the most experienced of the three.

Her appointment to the second highest office in the land, however, is a clear reaffirmation of President Mugabe and the ruling party's regular assertions that only those who participated in the liberation struggle are entitled to rule in Zimbabwe.

So mirror, mirror on the political wall, which of these daughters of the soil will burst through the glass ceiling first to become the first female head of state in her country? Could it be Mujuru when President Mugabe retires in 2008? Will Mlambo-Ngcuka step into Mbeki's shoes when his second and final term ends in 2009? And will Diogo contest the next presidential elections in Mozambique? It is an interesting situation to watch although other women could beat them to the post if more countries take the SADC protocols on gender more seriously in the conduct of democratic elections.
* Written by Mavis Makuni. **Source:** http://wwwfingaz.co.zw

Cabinet portfolios

Globally, women are least well represented in cabinet, and the gender division of labour within cabinets is stark. According to the Inter parliamentary Union (IPU), the highest percentage of women ministers is those responsible for women's affairs (24.7 percent) followed by social affairs (23.2 percent) arts and culture (1.8 percent) and health (15.8 percent). The lowest are sport (3.7 percent) agriculture (3.7 percent) finance (4.7 percent) tourism (5.8 percent) science and technology (4.7 percent).[9]

As noted earlier in this report, cabinet is one of the areas in which there have been substantial gains for women since the signing of the SDGD, with the proportion of women increasing from 12 percent to 19.94 percent or almost one fifth of the total. However, as illustrated in the graph, women still predominate in the social ministries, where they constitute 33.9 percent of the total (the only area of decision making where, in the indices used in this research, SADC as a region has exceeded the 30 percent target).

In contrast, women constitute 17.8 percent of the ministers classified as holding economic- related posts and 15 percent of those holding posts classified as security/ state related. What is significant, however, is that there is indeed a growing proportion of women in these areas, especially in the economic-related fields.

South Africa demonstrates a balance across the three clusters, with women constituting a commendable 41.6 percent of the economic and development related portfolios. According to South Africa's new Deputy President Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka: "I think our president has gone beyond looking at people as men and women. He thinks in terms of who can give the job their best shot."

Namibia also demonstrates considerable diversity, with women ministers of finance, home affairs, justice and information.

Parliament

It was not possible within the scope of this research to do an overall analysis of where women sit in the decision-making structures of parliament, especially the leadership of portfolio committees. Out of the 13 speakers in the region, only two (in South Africa and Lesotho) are women. Evidence gathered during the GL study *Ringing up the Changes* suggests that the position of women in other decision-making structures of parliament remains weak.

In Lesotho, parliamentary committees are relatively new. There are three committees: a business committee (with one woman) public accounts committee (with one woman) and HIV/ AIDS committee (with three women and a woman chair). The speaker is cited as playing an important role in setting up the latter committee and ensuring that a woman chairs it. But because there are so few women overall in the parliament of Lesotho, they are heavily outnumbered by men in each of the committees.

The problem of not having enough women to go around surfaced in interviews in Zambia. Mutale Bwembya, Assistant Clerk to the National Assembly noted that although there is a policy to try and ensure that women sit on all committees, there are simply not enough to do so: "The few women MPs are actually overstretched and their constituencies might suffer causing them to lose their seats due to their non-availability. Many of the invitations that the National Assembly gets specifically request female representation so that the women are always circulating."

Forum for Democracy and Development (FDD) MP Patricia Nawa, who served as the mayor of Lusaka from 1994-1996, added: "We would like to be more on the committees, but we need the numbers."

[9] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2000), "Politics, Women's Insight": IPU:p131

UPND MP Inonge Wina says that Zambian women MPs face the continuous dilemma that "we cannot actively debate on economic and defence issues (because we are not spread through all the committees). This makes the men think that women are so shallow-minded… Also, women have not been put on the public accounts estimates committee and women have challenged this."

Capacity is another concern. According to Wina, women MPs need to know more about technology, foreign policy, military technology and how to use New Information and Communications Technology (NICTs). "Out of the 19 women in Parliament, only four know how to use the computer to access information. We need to empower ourselves," Wina said.

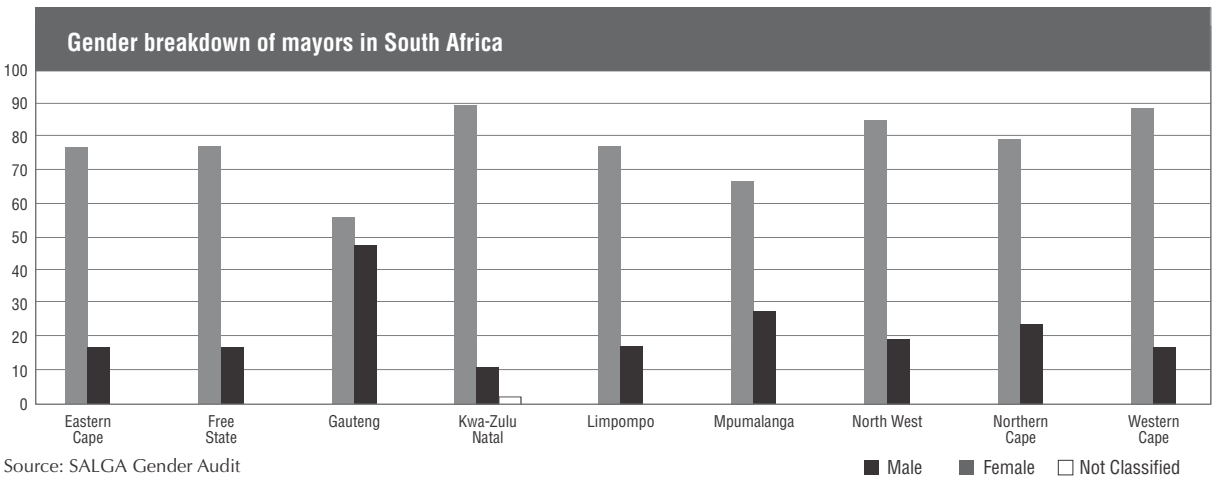
South Africa has probably taken the greatest strides in ensuring that women are active in all areas of parliament. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker are women; the chairperson of the upper house, the National Council of Provinces is a woman; and women chair eight out of twenty five portfolio committees (35 percent). The distribution of female chairpersons of committees is also instructive. Women in the South African assembly chair the portfolio committees of transport, finance, housing, defence, arts culture science and technology, home affairs, forestry and water affairs, sports and recreation.

Local government

Very little information is available on women in decision-making structures in local government. Available information suggests that women are still excluded from the leadership positions within these structures. As Mbatha observes:

> Women are less likely to occupy important seats in the executive committees of local councils, are less likely to be supported in their work by their peers and by their political parties, and are frequently the object of distrust by constituents and ridicule by their male colleagues. Due to women's low representation in councils, they are thinly spread in the different committees of the council, which prevents them from providing support to each other or from developing effective strategies.[10]

The chart below on mayors in South Africa demonstrates the gender gap in all provinces except Gauteng, where there have clearly been efforts to close this gap.



Source: SALGA Gender Audit

[10] Mbatha,L. (2002) "Democratising Local Government: Problems and Opportunities for Advancing Gender Equality in South Africa." In "No Shortcuts to Power", Hassim,S. and Goetz, A. (eds) Zed Books.

Easing the burden of the dual roles of women

Institutional culture reflects in many ways: physical facilities, dress, rules and norms, work place habits, and the nature of communication, formal as well as informal. This section, which draws on the GL Study *Ringing up the Changes*, explores the extent to which these are changing in the decision-making structures of Southern African countries.

Facilities

In the many instances in the region where parliament sits in old buildings built with men in mind, the first practical issue that arises when larger numbers of women join the workplace is providing women with facilities to be able to conduct their work as comfortably and conveniently as men. These include such practical considerations as women's toilets, hairdressers and shopping facilities.[11]



Lesotho speaker Nthoi Motsamai
Photo: Government of Lesotho

In Lesotho, women MPs said that parliament has remained the same despite the fact that the number of members has increased almost threefold. Women MPs complained that they find the sitting arrangement uncomfortable as members sit close to each other and have to rub against each other when they move. In a traditional society like Lesotho, rubbing against a male member of parliament can be easily misread. Some also raised the concern that if a woman MP fell pregnant, she would find the sitting arrangement most uncomfortable and embarrassing.

Women also complained of inadequate sanitary facilities, with the increased number in parliament still sharing the same two toilets as before, along with eleven women from the upper house.

Women in South Africa confronted similar problems in 1994, when the representation of women increased tenfold from 2.7 to 27 percent. The sheer numerical increase helped. One of the first successful battles women waged, with support from a woman speaker, was to have adequate sanitary facilities and a woman's gym installed.

Family friendly work environment

Studies globally show that among the first changes that take place in political decision making structures and especially in parliament when women gain entry are recommendations for child care centres, family-friendly sitting hours and increased travel for family members. [12]

[11] Inter-Parliamentary Union (2000) "Politics: Women's Insight." IPU: p108.
[12] See, for example, Sawer, M. (2000), "Parliamentary Representation of Women: From Discourses of Justice To Strategies of Accountability." International Political Science Review 21(4): p361-380 and Brown, A. (1996) "Women and Politics in Scotland." Parliamentary Affairs 49 (1): p 26-40.

Child-care: Of all the possible work place innovations, few make a stronger statement about family- friendly practices than having child-care facilities paid for and arranged by the institution. Bringing children to the hallowed halls of power has the symbolic effect of demystifying power as well as driving home the point that in the end decision-making is about a better world for those who come after us.

In Mozambique, Mozambique National Resistance Movement (Renamo) MP Rosa Florencia Chucua praised the parliamentary regulation that covers the travel costs for the caretaker of young children to accompany the MP to parliamentary sessions in Maputo. However, all the women MPs and civil society groups maintained that more needed to be done to help women balance their dual roles. Most Mozambican women MPs advocated a crèche, and cited delays as an illustration of the patriarchal nature of parliament despite rhetoric to the contrary.

A crèche is one of the symbolic early gains made by women in parliament in South Africa. The debates on this show the strong voice of women in arguing for the facility.

In her study on women in politics in South Africa, Mtintso quotes one man as saying: "Women have to choose whether they want to be leaders and policy makers or they want to be carers of children." But another man said: "One of the most beautiful things is that when we came to parliament we kicked out the police from the place where they were and installed the children. Children of both workers and MPs in parliament can for the first time claim a place in parliament and that is mainly thanks to the presence of women." [13]

Mtintso comments that in a tangible way the crèche began to close the private-public gap that has played such a powerful role in keeping women out of decision-making. [14]

Serote, January-Bardill and Liebenberg add that the establishment of the crèche acknowledged "the fact that women bear the brunt of child care duties. The fact that some men have used and benefited from the crèche facility makes it evident that, often targeting women inadvertently benefits men too." [15]

But according to Speaker Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile, to ensure that the children of workers had equal access, the committee decided on a cost structure that involved a percentage of salary that proved too high for members of parliament.

She concedes that a more fundamental issue around the crèche is a discussion prompted by the Public Finance Management Act on whether "looking after children is part of the core business of parliament." This posed a test question on the extent to which parliament has progressed in its understanding of gender. As she put it:

> It is fundamentally a question about our integrated approach to our responsibility as society. How we see our children is a barometer for so many other things. Of course, where you place your children is not the first thing people in the finance portfolio committee think about.

[13] Mtintso, T. (1999) "The Contributions of Women Parliamentarians to Gender Equality." A research report submitted for the degree of Master in Public and Development Management. University of Witwatersrand (unpublished).
[14] Ibid.
[15] Serote, P., January-Bardill, N. and Liebenberg S. (1996) "A Report on What the South African Parliament has done to Improve the Quality of Life and Status of Women in South Africa." Parliament, Cape Town (unpublished): p38.

The Speaker acknowledges that losing this debate points to the fact that gender transformation still has some way to go in South Africa.

Local councillors in South Africa noted that despite inconvenient working hours for councils (which are part time) little consideration has been given to child-care (see section on working hours below). They cite this as one of many examples that gender transformation has hardly started in this sphere of government.

***Maternity leave*:** Maternity leave is another sore point, even in the supposedly progressive countries. An African National Congress (ANC) MP who formerly served in a provincial legislature and wished to remain anonymous recalls that:

> There were no guidelines on parental leave. When a woman member of the provincial legislature had a baby, she wrote to the speaker (a woman) to ask for guidance. She got a letter back saying: 'if woman want to have babies, they should not come to parliament.' We crafted our own rules and set a trend. We set up a day care centre at the provincial legislature so that she could breastfeed her baby.

Although parliament has since recognised maternity leave, Thandi Modise, Chair of the Defence Portfolio Committee and a former guerrilla with the ANC's military wing says there are still problems of mentality: "Parliament has failed to recognise that there are women of child bearing age and that maternity leave should no longer be disguised as sick leave."

South Africa's Minister of Agriculture and Land Affairs Thoko Didiza became one of the first women ministers to take maternity leave. She made public appearances through to the final months of her pregnancy. She said this sent home the important message that "people in political office are human beings."

Sitting times: Traditionally, parliaments and councils have assumed that decision-makers have no family responsibilities and therefore that meetings can start and end late. This continues to be the case in countries like Zambia and Lesotho, where women are still a tiny minority.

In South Africa, changes in sitting times are another important symbolic and practical victory of the new women MPs. The sitting times of parliament have been changed and the parliamentary calendar aligned to school holidays. Speaker Mbete-Kgositsile says that there is an effort to ensure that meetings do not extend beyond six pm if for no other reason but that it is costly to have to pay overtime and provide transport for staff.

But Anna van Wyk of the opposition New National Party (NNP) says: "Parliament is still not family friendly. Meetings often go beyond six pm. The work could be much better organised. We need more order and predictability instead of all the to and fro at great expense. It takes a toll on family life, leads to depletion of personal resources and exhausts women more than men. Women have support structures, but they are all female. The men have still not learned to help out."

Women councillors expressed similar sentiments. As noted in Chapter three, in most Southern African countries, council is a part time job. Mbatha notes that council meetings are usually scheduled for the late afternoon and take several hours. While this might accommodate those who work full time, it is not convenient for women. She notes that little attention has been paid to possible alternatives like child-care while meetings are being held. [16]

[16] Mbatha,L. (2002) "Democratising Local Government: Problems and Opportunities for Advancing Gender Equality in South Africa." In "No Shortcuts

Capacity building

The various regional and international commitments to increasing women's equal and effective participation in decision-making place a strong emphasis on capacity building. Addressing the specific needs of women decision-makers is not something that most decision-making institutions had considered before the clamour for greater representation by women in these structures. It is one of the several changes that women have had to struggle for.

There is no particular professional course or degree for political decision-making. Much of this kind of work involves common sense and intuition that are advanced through experience. But there are formal ways in which the skills of decision-makers can be enhanced. Women and men who are newly elected or appointed to councils, cabinet and parliament need to learn the basic rules of the game, often under considerable time pressure, if they are to effectively use, let alone change these rules.

This is especially important for women, for whom political decision-making is more likely to be a new experience; who find themselves under the public spotlight and who are more likely to lack self-confidence than men because of their socialisation and prior exclusion from the hallowed halls of power.

However "training" decision-makers poses special challenges. Former Chair of the SADC PF Regional Women's Parliamentary Caucus Lulu Xingwana notes: "Politicians do not like to be trained because this implies that they do not know anything. Most of them will say we know about gender." So sensitive has the SADC Gender Unit (GU) been to the issue of inadvertently implying that MPs aren't up to their jobs that they refer to short courses as "additional empowerment strategies."

For women in particular, the dual roles they continue to play at home and work also mean they have greater time constraints than men. Some of those interviewed were taking correspondence courses to upgrade their formal educational qualifications. These women have even less time for other forms of training.

However, *Ringing up the Changes* found a keen interest among women decision-makers in improving their skills. A SADC GU report on a gender course in Malawi in 2003 commented on the thirst for learning among women MPs because "they came from backgrounds where they had been denied opportunity. They wanted this knowledge so that they can use it both in parliament and so that they can go back and change the conditions they came from. Furthermore women attend most of the parliamentary activities. They are enthusiastic, keen to learn and keen to participate. They do not take power for granted, as men sometimes do. This is not to say there are no problems or exceptions".[17]

In countries that have higher levels of women decision-makers, thought has been given to training tailored to the needs of these women, often with support from foreign donors. Regional bodies have also initiated such training. But, as will be discussed below, these efforts have suffered from insufficient attention to the needs to decision-makers; lack of clarity as to the objectives (general skills as opposed to gender analysis skills or both) and the absence of systematic roll out plans.

Generic training

There have been several different kinds of approaches to improving the skills of politicians in general and women politicians in particular. Most political parties, parliaments and councils seem to offer some basic orientation on what it means to be a politician and how to function as a legislator/councilor. Sometimes this is done with the help of international organizations like the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Commonwealth Parliamentary Forum (CPF), International Union of Local Authorities (IULA) or regional organizations like the SADC PF.

[17] SADC (2003), "Report on the Gender Training of Trainers Workshop in Malawi." SADC (unpublished).

The South African parliament has a two-week orientation at the start of each year where various courses are offered, including gender (interview, Mbete-Kgositsile). The South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and the Association of Local Authorities in Nambia (ALAN) both mentioned that they offer training to councilors on how to improve participation. In Namibia, several councilors mentioned team-building exercises supported by organizations like the German-based Friedrich Ebert Foundation.

In her research, Mbata found that women councilors she interviewed needed training in such basic things as procedures on how to conduct meetings, confidence building and raising issues in council meetings. Training provided appeared to be once off, and was not preceded by a needs assessment.[18]

The difficulty with all generic "one size fits all" training is that it does not always address the particular needs of women, especially where they are in small minorities. This has led to the design of several empowerment programmes focusing on women.

Women specific training at national level

Capacity building programmes focusing specifically on women decision-makers may be at national or regional level.

At national level, examples include the Women's Empowerment Unit (WEU) supported by the Swedish government in South Africa, presided over by the Speakers Forum that comprises speakers of the national and nine provincial legislatures. South African Speaker Baleka Mbete-Kgositsile conceded that the programme lacked an overall vision, strategy, and co-ordination. The project folded after donor funding came to an end.

In Namibia, the local government association ALAN did not have any programmes specifically focusing on women councilors. Director Lister Chaka said in an interview that ALAN is setting up a research department that among other topics will examine the gender dynamics and needs of local government, and that capacity building programmes would be based on these findings.

Training specific to women at regional level

At regional level, the SADC Gender Unit has developed a Gender Tool Kit for SADC Decision Makers that comprises basic concepts, tools and exercises on mainstreaming gender into legislation. This has been used for training trainers as well as women MPs from around the region.

From evaluation reports of training workshops, it is clear that these "additional empowerment" initiatives have played an important role is developing linkages between women MPs across the region and sensitizing them to gender issues. However, they have suffered from some drawbacks such as:

- Lack of follow though mechanisms to provide ongoing support or evaluate impact.
- Absence of strategies at national level to ensure that those trained as trainers apply their skills.
- The subject matter so far only covers gender skills and not some of the immediate practical skills that decision-makers need such as communication training (including the Internet, debating, working with the mainstream media etc).
- Although the focus on women MPs is understandable, the disadvantage (especially where there are small numbers of women MPs) is that they then go back into male-dominated institutions that have little sympathy for their ideas.

[18] Mbatha,L. (2002) "Democratising Local Government: Problems and Opportunities for Advancing Gender Equality in South Africa." In "No Shortcuts to Power", Hassim,S. and Goetz, A. (eds) Zed Books.

Gender mainstreaming training at regional level

In an effort to bring men on board, the SADC PF gender unit has run a number of workshops for chairs of portfolio committees on mainstreaming gender in their work. Given the male dominance of these committees, the majority of participants at these workshops have been men. The unit focused initially on finance and public accounts, and has since fanned out into other sectors like education and HIV/AIDS.

An evaluation of the programme found that there had been general awareness raising on gender among MPs that participated in training like the Lubambo roundtable on gender budgets. But the evaluation stressed that for this to be effective regional processes have to be cascaded to national level.[19] The evaluation added that training should be more tailored towards needs, and link to the Parliamentary Leadership Center that is being planned by the SADC PF.

Regional structures and local government

It is significant that none of the regional bodies have offered gender training at local government level. The SADC PF focuses specifically on parliaments. There is no similar body at local level. However, the SADC GU has a broader brief. Local councils featured in the design of training materials, but they have so far not been targeted as participants in "empowerment strategies."

Mentorship

South African Speaker Mbete-Kgositsile believes that one of the most effective forms of capacity building for politicians is mentorship. She cited the example of the ANC, where attached to each study group is a whip that takes a close interest in members of the group and their personal growth.

She cites as an example the former chair of the arts and culture committee and renowned South African poet Wally Serote who, "when he noticed that some members of his committee were quiet, went out of his way to talk to them. He said that the day one rural woman on the committee spoke, she shocked everyone with the depth, wealth and understanding that she had from the ground. She may have been missing out, but the committee was missing out even more."

Mentorship overcomes many of the shortcomings identified in other forms of capacity building. It does not show up politicians as people who might be ignorant. Because it is one on one, it is more effective. It is hands-on. Perhaps most important, such training is ongoing.

On- the-job training

With the exception of Tanzania, *Ringing up the Changes* did not reveal many examples of on-the-job training for women decision-makers. It did however show that this is the direction of thinking among activists and trainers.

As the head of Zambia's Gender in Development Division (GIDD) Dr Auxillia Ponga points out, if women MPs are given training on the job, and not just in workshops, they will be able to speak on economic, defence and other issues too. "Women MPs should be provided throughout their term with information packs and one-on-one discussions with experts on all the issues coming up for debate so that they have the facts at hand which they can lay on the table," she said. "Women also need training to build their oratory and public speaking skills."

[19] Meena, Ruth and Machangane Keboitse, "Evaluation of the Endendering SADC Parliaments Project" USAID 2002, p13.

Awareness raising

The various regional and international commitments cited earlier in this paper place considerable emphasis on awareness raising.

It would be fair to say that women in decision-making is the one area of the SDGD that has been the focus of considerable lobbying and advocacy in the region, both by civil society organisations and the gender structures within SADC and the SADC PF. Several NGOs in the region (for example Sister Namibia, Gender Links, the Gender Advocacy Project, Tanzania Gender Networking Programme, WIPSu) etc are partners in the global 50/50 campaign. Many of these have been active in advocating strategies for increasing women's representation; tracking and monitoring progress within their countries.

GL embarked on a programme of newsroom visits and training on Gender, Elections and the Media in all countries where elections took place or are taking place in 2004 and 2005. This led to an improvement in both the quantity and quality of coverage on gender issues in the elections of the various countries. In South Africa, a study by the Media Monitoring Project showed that women as sources increased from 8 percent in the 1999 elections to 25 percent in the 2004 elections. In conservative FPTP countries like Malawi, the media made a commendable effort to feature and profile women candidates, and to place the issue of Malawi failing to meet the thirty percent target on the table. Women's representation in Malawi increased from 7 percent to 13.6 percent in the 2004 elections.

Case study ten
Media plays its role in Malawi



The gender and elections media monitoring took place during the month of May and part of June, 2004 in the run up to, and shortly after, Malawi's second multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections.

The monitoring team comprised four journalists from the Malawi Media Women's Association (MAMWA) who monitored nine media: public electronic media (TV Malawi and MBC Radio One) and the private broadcast media (Capital Radio, 102.25 Fm and MIJ 90.3 Fm); two daily papers (Daily Times and the Nation) and the three weeklies (the Malawi News, the Weekend Nation and the Chronicle).

The findings showed that the print media carried a number of stories on gender issues in the elections (27 in the Times and 23 in the Nation). The stories included profiles and interviews with women candidates, stories about women's under-representation in politics quoting women NGOs and political commentators as well as commentary on the possibility of the country attaining 30 percent women representation in parliament and other decision-making positions. Although there were no specific stories on women voters, the monitoring showed an effort to include the views of women among those of citizens commenting on their concerns.

While the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) seemed to shun candidates from the opposition parties, it did give even-handed coverage to women candidates highlighting such instances as the former president and the presidential candidate from the ruling party campaigning in a constituency fielding a woman candidate. MBC Radio One carried general stories on gender issues but without in-depth analysis. For example, when male politicians castigate female candidates during presidential rallies no alternative perspectives were offered.

Capital Radio 102.25 FM, a private radio station (see Case study nine), aired balanced gender stories and gave access to candidates from both camps. It gave alternative views to the national broadcaster on campaign issues including gender. The radio station's deliberate policy to promote and prioritise coverage of women candidates when airing campaign news reflected in the extensive coverage of the perspectives of women candidates including several rejected by the ruling party who eventually stood as independent candidates.

MIJ, 90.3 FM, the community radio station run by the Malawi Institute of Journalism, aired constructive and balanced gender stories, promoting debate on women's representation in politics. The radio, which doubles as a training radio station, carried several analytical stories on gender issues emanating from political rallies, press releases and other sources. The radio also carried stories from outlying areas, despite broadcasting only in the Blantyre area.
Stella Mhura, GEMSA country representative

Research, monitoring and evaluation

The regional and international instruments place a strong emphasis on research, monitoring and evaluation. There has been a substantial amount of work in this area as well during the period under review.

The SADC Gender Unit commissioned a study on Women in Political Decision Making that provides baseline data for tracking progress in women's representation. SARDC/WIDSA has developed and is updating profiles on gender progress in each country, including decision making.



Among the significant collaborative research efforts is the groundbreaking study quoted in this paper: *Ringing up the Changes, Gender in Southern African Politics* coordinated by GL. The study is the first in the region, and one of the few globally to assess the qualitative difference that gender equality brings to governance. This was achieved through a comparison of countries that have achieved a high level of women in decision making with those that have not.

The study found that numbers do make a difference for a host of reasons, including: The sheer presence of women in decision-making is a powerful tool for challenging societal stereotypes and creating role models.

- When there are a few women who are in influential positions trying to make a difference but without a "critical mass" of women to draw on, they find it difficult to effect these changes.
- In countries that have higher proportions of women in decision-making, obstacles to participation are more likely to begin to be turned to advantages.

The difference that women make

The tangible difference that women's participation in decision-making, especially in substantial numbers, is seen to make in the study include:

- The marked difference between the style, procedures, norms and discourse in institutions of decision-making in the countries that have a high representation of women compared to those that do not.
- The link between the presence of a substantial proportion of women in decision-making and the extent to which men have engaged with the issue of gender equality and become agents of change.
- The fact that although all the case study countries have undertaken significant gender justice reforms the breadth and depth of such reforms are greater in countries that have achieved higher levels of women in parliament, and especially in those countries with a history of political struggle and progressive constitutions.

The championing role that women in top decision-making positions have played in ensuring that gender is taken into account in policies and laws in mainstream portfolios like mining and agriculture.

- The support that women decision-makers have given to innovative approaches like the gender budgeting initiatives that have captured the imagination of the region and provide a potentially powerful tool for gender mainstreaming through tracking resource allocations.
- The links made by women MPs between women constituents and parliament, as well as ensuring greater accessibility and responsiveness of service delivery.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations



Youth march in Windhoek
Photo: Liz Frank

The final section of the report summarises key conclusions arising from the audit of the provisions in the SDGD and related international commitments on women in decision-making. This is followed by specific recommendations for inclusion in the draft Protocol on Accelerating Gender and Development in SADC that it being advocated as part of this initiative.

Conclusions

- ***Decision-making is still a hostile terrain for women:*** Despite the positive rhetoric towards women's increased participation in decision-making, there are still major barriers to be overcome. These are deeply rooted in custom, culture, religion and tradition. The structural barriers explain why there is little correlation between women's level of education and their political participation. Personal empowerment does not translate into political empowerment for women because society is not ready to accept women in these roles. Such change can only come about through concerted effort that begins with a strong political will and leadership, accompanied by deliberate strategies and special measures.

- ***Heads of state have largely failed to keep their promises:*** Governments made a commitment to achieving a minimum 30 percent representation of women in all areas of decision-making by 2005. The study shows that with a few exceptions, this commitment has not and will not be met. While there were some attempts by Heads of State to make good on their promises through appointments to cabinet and parliament, often even these opportunities were missed. Most important, countries with the FPTP system that is least conducive to women's participation made little or no effort to review their electoral systems, or to learn from other such countries (eg Lesotho and Tanzania) as to what special measures might be adopted within such electoral systems to effect increased participation by women.

- ***Raising the stakes:*** Even as countries struggle to achieve the thirty percent target for women in decision-making, SADC countries have effectively committed to raising this to fifty percent as a result of their membership of the AU. Some countries, eg South Africa, have openly stated that this is their intent. The SDGD target was always intended as a stepping stone. Thus while one line of thought is that targets should not be increased before they are universally met, another is that there should be no holding back those who are ready to move.

- ***Women's access to political decision-making requires special measures:*** The unequivocal lesson from the region is that no target for women in decision-making will be reached in the absence of special measures. There is no easy recipe for ensuring women's access to political decision-making, but the ingredients are well known. They include electoral systems, quotas, gender aware parties, and democratic environments. The overwhelming evidence from the region is that the Proportional Representation (PR) system, and especially the closed-list PR system applied in South Africa, Mozambique, Angola and Namibia is more favourable for ensuring women's entry into politics.

- ***Quotas are a necessary and beneficial short- term measure:*** All SADC countries that have come close to, or are likely to achieve the thirty percent target, have done so through either voluntary party quotas (in South Africa and Mozambique) or legislated quotas (in local elections in Namibia as well as in Tanzania). Quotas are not a panacea, but they are the best short-term method for ensuring that that the quagmire is broken and progress is made. When accompanied by supportive strategies, quotas have delivered rapid and tangible benefits.

- ***Local government needs to be brought centre stage:*** The tendency in some countries to yield way on local government (eg Namibia, South Africa and Lesotho) is both welcome but carries the concern that the only reason this is happening is that local government is not regarded as important as other spheres of governance. Gender and local government have, up to now, not formed a significant part of gender and governance discourse, activism or policy measures. It is critical that these now come to the fore.

- ***New approaches to empowerment should be encouraged:*** So far, training for women in politics has not been preceded by needs assessments. It has tended to be off site, and once off. Such training also needs to be holistic in its approach. In addition to gender analysis skills, it should include an understanding of the nature and exercise of power, confidence and assertiveness skills, leadership training and communication skills, including debating, use of the Internet, accessing the mainstream media and integrating gender issues into political campaigns. While there is a place for empowerment strategies that specifically target women decision-makers, it is also important to design strategies that include the "new" men in politics.

- ***Research, monitoring and evaluation are key:*** Research, advocacy and lobbying by the women's movement have been critical to the achievements made to date. Structures and mechanisms should be found for strengthening collaboration between civil society and women in decision-making.

Recommendations for inclusion in the Draft Protocol for the Acceleration of Gender Equality in SADC

The proposed protocol is envisaged as a comprehensive instrument that incorporates and enhances all existing commitments as set out in Annex A. This report recommends that other than featuring prominently in the proposed protocol, the women in decision-making provisions be broadened into a section in the proposed protocol on "Gender and Governance." Key components of this would be:

- ***Defining the arenas of governance*** to include: the executive (cabinet, the public service); the legislature (national, regional, provincial, local); the judiciary; political parties; diplomacy and international relations; the media; private sector;s civil society.
- ***Targets for representation***: Setting a target of 50% representation of women in all areas of decision-making by 2020 with an incremental approach adopted by each country depending on their current circumstances:
  - Those that have achieved the thirty percent in any area of governance to aim to achieve 50% by 2015 or earlier.
  - Those that have not achieved the thirty percent to aim to achieve this by 2015 or earlier. (Include an annex with options for rapidly increasing the representation of women in different countries and situations.)
- ***Measuring the extent of participation:*** Adopt the measures set out in the BPFA for ensuring effective participation and adopt indicators for achieving this (including equal representation of women in top decision-making and in all areas of the decision-making structure. Provide an annex from this audit with measures for ensuring effective participation.)
- ***Qualitative measures:*** Institute measures and develop indicators for measuring the qualitative difference that gender equality makes to governance (a checklist of indicators drawn from *Ringing up the Changes,* including institutional change, policy and legislative reforms, changes in the attitudes of men and the empowerment of women in such positions).
- ***Action plans***: A mandatory action plan for achieving the above targets and indicators (provide a framework) by August 2007.
- ***Reporting mechanisms:*** Annual progress reports towards achieving these targets, made to the proposed Regional Commission on the Status of Women, an independent body that would adjudicate, offer advice and commission research.
- ***Sanctions for non-compliance*** in accordance with SADC procedures for the observance of protocols.

ANNEX A: REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS FOR WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING					
SPECIFIC PROVISIONS	**SDGD**	**AFRICAN PROTOCOL**	**BPFA**	**CEDAW**	**MDG**
REPRESENTATION					
Setting targets for achieving gender balance	**Provision H (ii)** Ensuring the equal representation of women and men in the decision-making of member states and SADC structures at all levels, and the achievement of at least thirty percent target of women in political and decision-making structures by year 2005	**Article 9 : Right to Participation in the Political and Decision-Making Process** 2. State Parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.	**Critical Area G. Women in Power and Decision-making G.1** Take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making. **190:** a)Commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary g) Encourage greater involvement of indigenous women in decision-making at all levels;	**Article 7 :** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;	**Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women** **Indicator 12** Women's equal representation in national parliaments
Affirmative action		1.States Parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that: b) women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes;	**190:** h) Encourage and, where appropriate, ensure that government-funded organizations adopt non-discriminatory policies and practices in order to increase the number and raise the position of women in their organizations; **192:** d) Encourage efforts by non-governmental organizations, trade unions and the private sector to achieve equality between women and men in their ranks, including equal participation in their decision-making bodies and in negotiations in all areas and at all levels; f) Restructure recruitment and career-development programmes to ensure that all women, especially young women, have equal access to managerial, entrepreneurial, technical and leadership training, including on-the-job training;		

ANNEX A: REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS FOR WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING					
SPECIFIC PROVISIONS	**SDGD**	**AFRICAN PROTOCOL**	**BPFA**	**CEDAW**	**MDG**
REPRESENTATION					
Specific strategies for women elected to office			**190:** d) Review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those systems;		
Specific strategies for women in party structures			**190:** b) Encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non-elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men; **191:** a)Consider examining party structures and procedures to remove all barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against the participation of women;		
Specific strategies for women appointed to office			**G.1** **192:** c) Review the criteria for recruitment and appointment to advisory and decision-making bodies and promotion to senior positions to ensure that such criteria are relevant and do not discriminate against women; **G.2** **195:** b)Have transparent criteria for decision-making positions and ensure that the selecting bodies have a gender-balanced composition;	**Article 8 :** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.	

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SPECIFIC PROVISIONS	**SDGD**	**AFRICAN PROTOCOL**	**BPFA**	**CEDAW**	**MDG**
PARTICIPATION					
General		**Article 9 :** **Right to Participation in the Political and Decision-Making Process** 2. State Parties shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision-making.		**Article 7 :** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.	
Easing the burden of the dual roles borne by women			**G.1** **190:** i) Recognise that shared work and parental responsibilities between women and men promote women's increased participation in public life.		
Leadership positions in structures of governance			**191:** b)Consider developing initiatives that allow women to participate fully in all internal policy-making structures and appointive and electoral nominating processes; c) Consider incorporating gender issues in their political agenda, taking measures to ensure that women can participate in the leadership of political parties on an equal basis with men.		
Effective inputs into policy development and implementation		c) women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of State policies and development programmes.		**Article 7 :** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;	

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SPECIFIC PROVISIONS	**SDGD**	**AFRICAN PROTOCOL**	**BPFA**	**CEDAW**	**MDG**
CAPACITY BUILDING					
General			**G.1** **192:** a)Take positive action to build a critical mass of women leaders, executives and managers in strategic decision-making positions; g)Develop career advancement programmes for women of all ages that include career planning, tracking, mentoring, coaching, training and retraining;		
Leadership training			**G.2** Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. **195:** a)Provide leadership and self-esteem training to assist women and girls, particularly those with special needs, women with disabilities and women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities to strengthen their self-esteem and to encourage them to take decision- making positions; e) Develop mechanisms and training to encourage women to participate in the electoral process, political activities and other leadership areas.		
Gender sensitivity training			d)Provide gender-sensitive training for women and men to promote non-discriminatory working relationships and respect for diversity in work and management styles;		
Mentoring			**195:** a)Create a system of mentoring for inexperienced women and, in particular, offer training, including training in leadership and decision-making, public speaking and self-assertion, as well as in political campaigning;		

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SPECIFIC PROVISIONS	**SDGD**	**AFRICAN PROTOCOL**	**BPFA**	**CEDAW**	**MDG**
CITIZEN PARTICIPATION					
Women as voters		**Article 9 :** 1.States Parties shall take specific positive action to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that: a) women participate without any discrim-ination in all elections;		**Article 7 :** States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right: (a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;	
Public awareness			**192:** e) Develop communications strategies to promote public debate on the new roles of men and women in society, and in the family as defined in paragraph 29 above;		
MONITORING AND EVALUATION					
Self monitoring			**G.1** **190:** e) Monitor and evaluate progress in the representation of women through the regular collection, analysis and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative data on women and men at all levels in various decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, and disseminate data on the number of women and men employed at various levels in Governments on a yearly basis; ensure that women and men have equal access to the full range of public appointments and set up mechanisms within governmental structures for monitoring progress in this field;		
Research by civil society			f) Support non-governmental organizations and research institutes that conduct studies on women's participation in and impact on decision-making and the decision-making environment;		



Q. How many feminists does it take to change a light bulb?

A. None. It's not the light bulb that needs to change.

gender links

GEMSA
Gender and Media Southern Africa

INTERNATIONAL IDEA
INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

WPSU
WOMEN in POLITICS SUPPORT UNIT

HIVOS