

# Chair Report

**Assembly: General Assembly 4**

**Topic: the question of addressing women's involvement in global politics**

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## **Introduction:**

Women's involvement in global politics has been one of the key objectives that the UN has focused on since the creation of UN Women, a UN organization with a mission to empower women all around the world. The United Nations has also set a dedicated target within the sustainable development goals dealing specifically with women's access to leadership. Political and governmental participation is any activity that shapes, affects, or involves the political area. These actions can range from voting, to sending a letter to a representative or creating laws and being a political representative within the country. In many countries women still suffer from gender inequality and are thus unable to receive the education or support to be involved in the politics of their country.

Experts highly promote having fair representation of women in political life, as gender diversity in public institutions is particularly crucial, given that these people in authority create the laws that affect people's rights, behaviours and life choices. Worldwide, women are still under-represented in leadership positions, and making sure governments reflect the diversity of the societies they represent will ensure a balanced and equal perspective which enables an inclusive approach to policy making and authority.

## Definition of Key Terms:

### **Involvement:**

Women being taking part in or participating in any activity to do with the political field.

### **Government:**

The group of people with the authority to govern a country or state; a particular ministry in office.

### **Empowerment**

The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in encouraging women to participate in political action.

### **Parliament**

Parliament represents the interests of the people and ensures those interests are taken into account by the government. Government is unable to pass laws or raise taxes without the agreement of the Parliament. Parliament comprises the members of parties that the community has elected to represent them.

### **Gender Equality**

Gender equality is achieved when women and men enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision-making, and when the different behaviours, aspirations and needs of women and men are equally valued and favoured.

### **Gender Quota**

A requirement for political parties aimed at achieving gender-balanced participation by establishing a defined proportion (percentage) or number of places or seats to be allocated to women and/or men, generally under certain rules or criteria.

## Election

An election is a process in which people vote to choose a person or group of people to hold an official position.

## Background Information:

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights; they are also crucial for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Women's political participation is the key to these goals, and empowering and encouraging women to participate more fully in the public sphere is the first huge step towards having equal footing in all policy areas. As of February 2019, only 24.3 percent of all national parliamentarians were women, a disappointingly slow increase from 11.3 percent in 1995.

There are many challenges that women face when in the political field, especially the barriers they face in getting nominated for elected office and running successful campaigns. These obstacles include the lack of proportional representation in their electoral system; lack of access to financing; weaker professional networks; and outside responsibilities to do with family or 'traditional' roles that make it harder to take on more demanding work conditions. In many countries, the cost of campaigning is becoming too high, especially for women. In a 2008 survey of 292 parliamentarians around the world, the Inter-Parliamentary Union found that female MPs viewed lack of finance as a more significant obstacle than their male peers did. However, in order to address these problems, some countries like Georgia, for example, political parties that include at least 30% of each gender on their electoral lists receive a 30% supplement from the state budget.

However, beyond financial worries, women face high social and cultural barriers to political participation. Some countries do not protect equal rights for women under national legislation, and this becomes a huge barrier in levelling the playing field for women and men to share equal participation. In particular, greater care obligations, such as taking care of the family, are reinforced by public and traditional perceptions of a "woman's role," which prevent women's ability to run for public office.

## Countries and Organisations Involved:

### UN Women:

UN Women, among other issues, works for the elimination of discrimination against women and girls, empowerment of women and achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security.

### UNDP:

UNDP's work focuses on approaches that transform legal, policy and social norms to create a sustainable impact on women's economic empowerment.

### Political Institute For Women

A global education organization that offers non-partisan courses for political candidates, professionals, advocates and organizations. It offers professional opportunities for women and trains female advocates to engage with communities.

## Timeline of UN Treaties, Resolutions and Events:

Date	Description of the event
10 December 1948	The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. This helped gain rights for people of all nations and was a huge step forward into the advancements of gender equality.
31 March 1953	Convention on the Political Rights of Women was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 31 March 1953. This was to call for the establishment for a basic international standard for women, after World War 2, many countries had still not granted women political freedom.

- 27 July 1990 The UN Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 called on governments, political parties, trade unions, and other representative groups to adopt a 30 percent minimum proportion of women in leadership positions, with a view to achieving equal representation.
- 2003 The 2003 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation (A/RES/58/142) stipulates that Member States should take steps including to: monitor progress in the representation of women; ensure that measures to reconcile family and professional life apply equally to women and men; develop mechanisms and training programmes that encourage women to participate in the electoral process and improve women's capacity to cast informed votes in free and fair elections; promote the participation of young people, especially women, in civil society organizations; and develop programmes to educate and train women and girls in using the media and information and communication technologies.
- 2 October 2009 United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/311 — the first draft for UN Women as countries agreed to 'strengthen the institutional arrangements for support of gender equality and the empowerment of women', 'strengthen governance of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence' and 'improve the funding system of operational activities for development of the United Nations system for enhanced system-wide coherence'.
- 19 December 2011 The 2011 UN General Assembly resolution on women's political participation (A/RES/66/130) called for more inclusivity in the political sphere, including acknowledging the importance of female political representation, eliminating laws preventing women's participation in the public sphere, developing training to encourage participation, and sustaining an environment of zero tolerance for violence against female

official and candidates.

## Previous Attempts to Solve the Issue:

Globally, over 100 political parties in 53 countries have voluntary measures in place to increase the number of women candidates and party officials. These are called gender quotas, which are requirements for the number of women in political positions in order to ensure a somewhat fair and equal participation. The country with the most gender parity is Rwanda, where women make up 61.3% of the lower house and 38.5% of the upper house. In 2003, the country adopted a new constitution that reserves 30% of parliamentary seats for women and requires political parties to ensure that women hold at least 30% of elected internal positions.

There have been several UN conventions and resolutions made to directly address the topic of women's participation in politics, most notably the United Nations General Assembly resolution 63/311, which established a separate UN sector to solely focus on women's empowerment. This then opened many doorways to empowering and educating women through the organisation's efforts.

## Possible Solutions:

Although gender quotas have been a major part of improving female representation in politics, there has been a call to address the more important, underlying issues which prevent women from stepping up and into the playing field. **Preventing violence and harassment** against women in elections should be a priority. There should be more support and guidance given to women wanting to be involved in politics, and **targeted training** to train female leaders and boost women's skills to participate actively in elections as candidates and voters.

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