



**United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW)
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)**

**Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making Processes,
with Particular Emphasis on Political Participation and Leadership**

**Report of the Expert Group Meeting
Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia
24 – 27 October 2005**

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. In accordance with its multi-year programme of work for 2001-2006, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will consider “Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels” as one of two thematic issues during its fiftieth session in 2006. In order to contribute to a further understanding of this issue and to assist the Commission in its deliberations, the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) in the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), organized an Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership”. The EGM was hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 24 to 27 October 2005.

2. The findings and recommendations of the Expert Group Meeting will be presented at the panel discussion on equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes during the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

3. The expert group meeting analyzed the current situation of women in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on women’s political participation and leadership at the international, national, regional and local levels. It discussed the conditions that facilitate women’s representation in decision-making processes within the context of current socio-economic and political transformations, and examined the linkages between women’s presence in decision-making and their impact on the mainstreaming of a gender perspective into policies and programmes. The expert group meeting adopted policy recommendations to advance women’s participation and leadership through, *inter alia*, capacity-building, coalition-building and gender-sensitive institutional policies, programmes and mechanisms, based on the identification of the most promising practices and lessons learned to date. The report that follows is the outcome of deliberations of the independent experts.

II. ORGANIZATION OF WORK

A. Participation

4. The Expert Group Meeting (EGM) on “Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership” was attended by nine independent experts from different regions and six observers (three from the United Nations, two members of parliament (MPs) and one parliamentary staff person from Kenya), one consultant. Two representatives from the Division for Advancement of Women, four representatives from ECA and one representative from the IPU also attended the meeting (See annex I).

B. Documentation

5. The documentation of the meeting consisted of:

- a background paper prepared by a consultant on behalf of the Division for the Advancement of Women
- an overview paper prepared by IPU
- twelve papers prepared by experts
- two papers prepared by observers

6. This report and all documentation relating to the meeting are available online at the website of the Division for the Advancement of Women: <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw>.

C. Programme of work

7. At its opening session on 24 October 2005, the meeting adopted the following programme of work (see Annex III):

- Opening of the meeting
- Election of officers and adoption of the programme of work
- Presentation and discussion of the Division for the Advancement of Women's background paper and papers prepared by experts and observers
- Working groups on issues and recommendations
- Introduction of draft report
- Adoption of final report
- Closing session

D. Election of officers

8. The experts elected the following officers:

Chair: Ms. Leslye Amede Obiora (Nigeria) Rapporteur: Amy Mazur (USA)

E. Working groups

9. Two working groups were established:

- Working group I – “Increasing numbers”, rapporteur Teresa Sacchet (Brazil)
- Working group II - “Women making a difference”, rapporteur Fiona Macaulay (UK)

F. Opening statements

10. The meeting was opened by Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Officer in Charge, African Centre for Gender and Development, (ACGD), a division of the ECA. In her welcoming statement, Ms. Ruzvidzo noted the importance of the meeting on equal participation of women and men in decision-making. She emphasized that the issue of women's participation in decision-making in Africa continued to be of serious concern. However, due recognition needed to be given to the progress that has been made on the continent. The Africa Union Constitutive Act is a leading example, as it requires the African Union to have a 50 percent representation of women commissioners. Such an approach needs to be emulated in other institutions, including in the UN. She indicated the full

support of the African Centre for Gender and Development for the meeting and wished the experts a successful outcome.

11. Ms. Roselyn Odera, Chief of Gender Analysis Section at the Division for the Advancement of Women, presented a statement on behalf of Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of the Division. She thanked IPU and ECA for collaboration in the preparation of the meeting, and the ECA, in particular, for hosting the meeting. She welcomed the international experts, members of Parliament, United Nations system representatives and observers from governmental and non-governmental organizations. In her statement, Ms. Hannan identified major achievements and challenges in promoting women's equal participation in decision-making processes at all levels. She indicated that the expert group meeting had a special significance for the fiftieth session of the Commission on the Status of Women, and noted that the conclusions and recommendations of the meeting would assist the Commission in its deliberations on the thematic issue.

III. BACKGROUND

A. Plan of the report

12. This report maps out various facets of the complex issue of the equal participation of men and women in decision-making identified by the experts. The report begins with a section which presents the international policy framework, followed by the conceptual framework for the report. Experts' views in support of increasing numbers of women in decision-making, the status of women in positions of power, and the importance of going beyond numbers to assess the impact of women in top positions are then discussed. The issues of increasing the number of women and the quality of participation and representation are examined in sections IV and V of the report. The report concludes with the presentation of recommendations made by the experts in these two key areas.

B. International policy framework

13. The Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995, drew attention to the persisting inequality between men and women in decision-making. The Beijing Platform for Action reaffirmed that women's persistent exclusion from formal politics, in particular, raises a number of specific questions regarding the achievement of effective democratic transformations, in practice. It undermines the concept of democracy, which, by its nature, assumes that the right to vote and to be elected should be equally applied to all citizens, both women and men. The absence of women from political decision-making has a negative impact on the entire process of democratization. In addition, democratic institutions, including parliament, do not automatically achieve gender equality in terms of representation, or in terms of policy agenda setting and accountability.

14. The Beijing Platform for Action emphasized that "women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for justice or democracy, but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into account. Without the perspective of women at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved." (Para 181)

15. The Beijing Platform for Action defined two strategic objectives in its critical area of concern on women in power and decision-making:

- to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making;
- to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.

16. The following measures were recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action for the implementation of the first strategic objective: to achieve gender-balanced composition in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administration and in judiciary, including through setting specific targets and, if necessary, establishing a positive action policy; to integrate women into elective positions in political parties; to promote and protect women's political rights; and to reconcile work and family responsibilities for both men and women.

17. For the second strategic objective, the Platform for Action recommended the organization of leadership and gender awareness training; the development of transparent criteria for decision-making positions; and the creation of a system of mentoring.

18. To accelerate the implementation of action in these areas, the Commission on the Status of Women, at its forty-first session in 1997, adopted Agreed Conclusions (1997/2), which emphasized that attaining the goal of equal participation of men and women in decision-making was important for strengthening democracy and achieving the goals of sustainable development. The Commission reaffirmed the need to identify and implement measures that would redress the under-representation of women in decision-making, including through the elimination of discriminatory practices and the introduction of positive action programmes.

19. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, in its Article 7, called upon States parties "to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country". At its sixteenth session (1997), the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted general recommendation 23 regarding the participation of women in political and public life. It emphasized that States parties should ensure that their constitutions and legislation complied with the principles of the Convention and that they were under obligation to take all necessary measures, including temporary special measures, to achieve the equal representation of women in political and public life.

20. In its resolution 1325 (2000) on women, peace and security, the Security Council also reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressed the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, as well as the need to increase their role in decision-making.

21. Taking into account the importance of increasing women's participation in positions of power and decision-making, the General Assembly, at its fifty-eighth session in 2003, adopted resolution 58/142 on women and political participation which urged Governments, the UN system, NGOs and other actors to develop a comprehensive set of policies and programmes to increase women's participation in decision-making, including in conflict resolution and peace processes by addressing the existing obstacles facing women in their struggle for participation. The resolution also addressed the importance of supporting and generating political will, serious commitment to the promotion of the advancement of women and the goals of gender equality through the organization

of awareness raising campaigns. The resolution requested the Secretary-General to include information on the political participation of women in his report to the fiftieth session of the Commission in 2006, when the Commission will consider the theme on equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels.

22. The ten-year review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action culminated at the forty-ninth session of the Commission in March 2005. Member States reported on the introduction of measures aimed at increasing the participation of women in decision-making at different levels. The Declaration adopted during the ten-year review and appraisal, while recognizing progress made, noted remaining gaps and challenges and called for accelerated implementation.

23. The outcome of the September 2005 World Summit also reaffirmed commitment to the equal participation of women and men in decision-making. Member States resolved to promote the increased representation of women in Government decision-making bodies, including through ensuring their equal opportunity to participate fully in the political process.

C. Conceptual Framework

24. The experts discussed key issues arising from theoretical and empirical insights made by scholars and activists working on issues of women's empowerment, political participation and representation. To understand equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, the following four inter-related concepts were discussed:

- *Political participation*, which allows for political agendas to be developed by women 'taking part in politics' through a range of activities such as discussion and debate, lobbying and activism in formal and informal ways;
- *Political representation*, which consists of the articulation and presentation of political agendas of given groups by various actors in decision-making arenas and key social forums in democratic societies. A *range* of actors and agencies can speak for various interests and audiences, including political parties, members of parliament, social movements and groups, as well as specific statebased agencies promoting particular interests, such as national machineries for the advancement of women. Group representation can be based on a variety of dimensions; for example constituency interests, ascribed interests such as sex, ethnicity, religion, and ideological interests – conservative, liberal or socialist.
- *Political leadership*, which cuts across both political participation and political representation, by key individuals shaping political agendas, taking the lead in articulating these and participating in their translation into policy. The context in which these concepts are unfolding today also needs to be taken into account.
- *Political accountability*, which is the requirement for representatives and representative organizations to be responsible for their decisions and mandates as defined by their positions. It also includes representatives and leaders listening to and, when appropriate, acting upon criticisms, requirements and demands of their publics, constituencies or the electorate.

25. The experts agreed that women's participation and representation in decision-making bodies involves their enhanced presence as well as their empowerment through such participation. They emphasized that women's political leadership and accountability are key cross-cutting issues. On the one hand, women's political leadership allows them to set agendas and, on the other hand, it is in such roles that they are made responsive to constituencies and publics. This accountability becomes the cornerstone for not only numerical enhancement of women's presence but also their ability to transform outcomes, the content and the ways in which policy actors make public policy.

26. The expert group also emphasized the importance of studying these four concepts systematically at *all* levels of governance: local, sub-national, national, regional, sub-regional, transnational and international. In order to achieve women's full participation and representation at all levels, the establishment of mechanisms to promote women's presence in public office is of crucial importance. In addition, to fully achieve women's representation in political life, there must be gender equality across a full range of decision-making levels:

- the three branches of government – the legislature, executive and judiciary—at all territorial levels including women's policy machineries;
- non-state contexts such as trade unions, political parties, interest groups, professional associations, and businesses/private sector;
- Beyond national governance, women need to have a decision-making presence in regional, sub-regional and international organizations;
- trans-national social movements;
- forums for the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building.

27. The meeting considered the importance of gender equality not only in decision-making arenas, but also the interplay between the political and economic empowerment of women. That is, how more women in positions of power can influence policies and strategies for enhancing women's economic opportunities and how, in turn, the related enhancement of women's economic status can provide better conditions for accessing and ensuring effective participation in decision-making institutions.

D. Why more women: Rationale, numbers, and beyond numbers

28. *Rationale* -- Both practitioners and scholars agree that it is of utmost importance to have equal numbers of women and men in political office. The meeting considered the following arguments for this position:

- The justice argument – women account for approximately half the population and therefore have the right to be represented as such.
- The experience argument – women's experiences are different from men's and need to be represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation. These different experiences mean that women 'do politics' differently from men.

- The interest argument – the interests of men and women are different and even conflicting and therefore women are needed in representative institutions to articulate the interests of women.
- The critical mass argument – women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent women’s interests when they achieve certain levels of representation.
- The symbolic argument - women are attracted to political life if they have role models in the arena.
- The democracy argument – the equal representation of women and men enhances democratization of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies.

29. The experts’ analyses revealed that both the experience and the critical mass arguments were problematic. The experience argument tends to treat women as a homogenous group without acknowledging the economic, social and cultural diversity among them. The critical mass argument often views the 30 percent representation of women as a panacea and denies the evidence of contexts where women do achieve effective representation in smaller numbers. In practice, experts concurred that the critical mass of 30 percent is often used as a ceiling rather than a minimum.

30. *Numbers* – The experts noted that in the last ten years there has been progress towards the equal representation of men and women in decision-making. As of September 2005, the global average for women in parliaments stands at 16.0 percent. Additionally, women have achieved 30 percent representation or more in national parliaments in 19 countries. However, progress has been uneven and slow and in some cases there have been significant setbacks. Twenty-two countries out of 167 had reversals in women’s representation in parliaments, while ten remained static. Experts also discussed issues of longevity and sustainability of representation. They noted that in order for women and men to make effective interventions in policy, they should be in office for more than one term. Table 1 shows that the number of women heads of state also regressed.

Table 1: Women in Decision-making Bodies, 1995 and 2005

	1995			2005		
	No. of Women	Total No.	% Women	No. of Women	Total No.	% Women
Heads of State or Government	12	187	6.4	8	191	4.2
Presiding Officers of Parliament	24	228	10.5	21	254	8.3
Parliamentarians	-	-	11.3	-	-	15.7 (Jan) 16.0 (Sept)
Ministerial Positions	-	-	Data not available	-	-	14.3

Source: IPU, 2005. *Women in Politics: 1945-2005*. Information kit.

<http://www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#45-05>

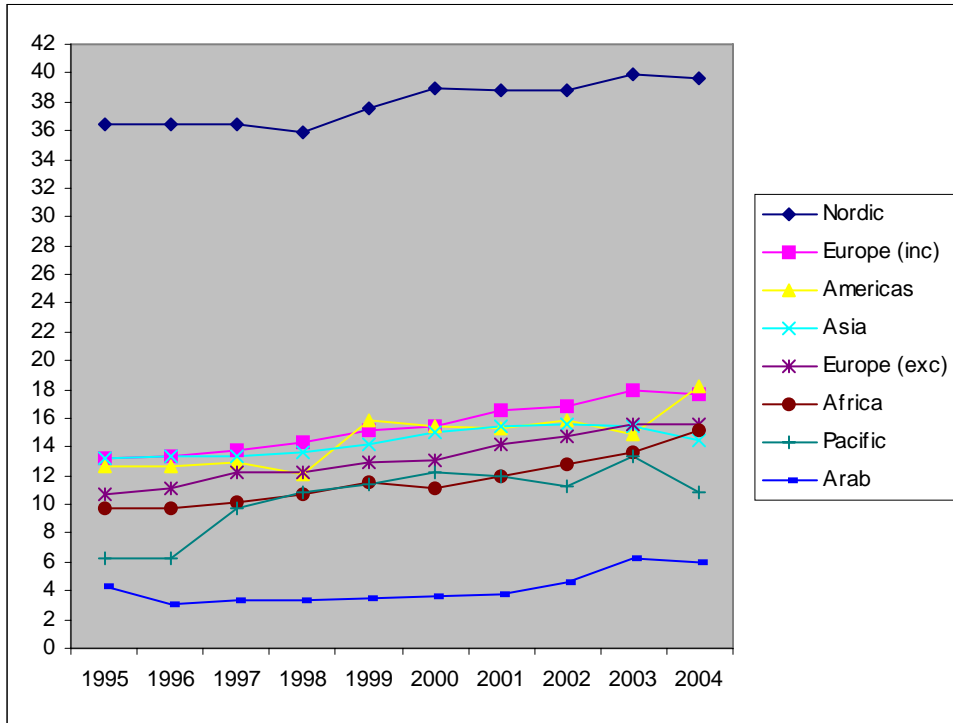
31. A more detailed breakdown of women's representation in some key decision-making areas, presented below in Tables 2, 3, and 4 further illustrates this mixed record.

Table 2: Women in Parliament, 1945-2005

	1945	1955	1965	1975	1985	1995	2000	2005
Number of parliaments	26.0	61.0	94.0	115.0	136.0	176.0	177.0	187.0
% of women representatives (lower house or unicameral)	3.0	7.5	8.1	10.9	12.0	11.6	13.4	16.2
% of women representatives (upper house)	2.2	7.7	9.3	10.5	12.7	9.4	10.7	14.8

Source: IPU, 2005. *Women in Politics: 1945-2005*. Information kit.
<http://www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#45-05>

Table 3: Women in Parliament by Region, 1995-2005



Source: IPU, 2005. *Women in Politics: 1945-2005*. Information kit.
<http://www.ipu.org/english/surveys.htm#45-05>

Table 4: Women in the Executive, 1995-2005

	1995	2005
Women Heads of State or Government (elected)	6.4 % (12 of 187)	4.2% (8 of 191)
Women Presiding Officers of a House of Parliament	10% (24 of 228)	8.3% (21 of 254)
Ministerial Portfolios held by Women	No data available	858 in 183 countries Sweden: 52.4% women ministers Spain: 50.0% women ministers

32. *Beyond Numbers* -- The experts agreed that the equal presence of women and men in decision-making institutions is important, but they noted that there is a need to assess the contexts and conditions in which their equal presence can become effective in empowering women and men, and thereby sustain democracy. In the words of International IDEA, it is important to look ‘Beyond

Numbers'. Reflecting a consensus in the scientific community, the experts at the meeting agreed that this issue can be discussed by distinguishing between descriptive or numerical representation on the one hand, and substantive representation on the other hand. This can be defined as:

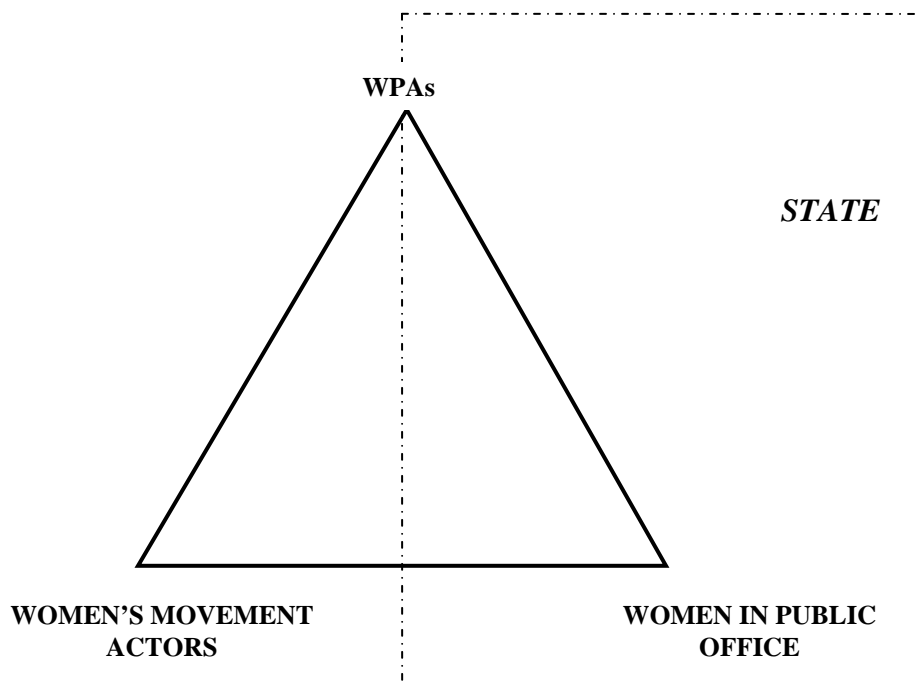
- *Descriptive (Numerical) Representation* – Where the individual represents a group by the virtue of sharing similar characteristics with the group such as race, sex, age, ethnicity or geographical area. Women representing women can be seen as a form of direct participation in decision-making bodies. Descriptive representation is based on the idea that the representative possesses a particular ascribed characteristic, for example sex, age or ethnicity, and by virtue of that identity will represent that group. The question of women achieving descriptive representation, therefore, is simply about counting the number of women in political office and not examining what women representatives are actually saying.
- *Substantive representation* –Where the individual seeks to advance a particular group's policy preferences and interests, without necessarily being a member of the group as defined by race, sex, ethnicity, etc. Instead the focus is on what the representative is saying/doing and whether he or she is actually speaking/acting for a particular group in terms of the content of their positions and statements in public debates and policy discussions. The substantive representation of women, therefore, goes "beyond numbers"; more than an increase in women representatives, it is important that representatives, both men and women, speak for women's interests. However, it is important to note that those interests are defined within specific political, cultural and social context.

33. As the numbers show, women's descriptive representation is on the rise, albeit all too slowly. With respect to substantive representation, experts noted that there is some evidence that women representatives do attempt to address women's basic needs, are approached by women's groups to address their concerns and that on the whole, women representatives are less corrupt and therefore bring some degree of credibility to governance in the eyes of the electorate. Experts expressed concerns about women being brought into governance machineries without being able to make any significant shifts in the status of women or policy frameworks to address women's rights, what is often seen as co-optation.

34. In more concrete terms, substantive representation is about the impact of women in decision-making positions on policy formulation and implementation. Policies can be aimed at gender mainstreaming or can explicitly advance agendas for gender equality in one area of policy. Women's presence has also proven to be important in the formulation of policies on development, sustainable peace, and good governance. Studies have shown that women in decision-making positions play a crucial role in developing meaningful gender mainstreaming strategies, which effectively and authoritatively ensure focus on gender equality in all policy areas. Studies of gender mainstreaming have shown that unless there are key decision-makers and policy actors ready and willing to define gender mainstreaming as a means to achieve gender equality, mainstreaming efforts will not necessarily enhance women's rights. Indeed, women's policy machineries, women's groups and individual actors work together in a wider range of national, international and transnational contexts to make gender mainstreaming and specific policies for gender equality more effective. In so doing, these women's policy actors develop alliances and hence bring women and women's interests into the affairs of government. Some analysts identify the potential of a Triangle

of Women's Empowerment (TOWE), in which women in political positions, both elected and appointed, work with national machineries for the advancement of women and the women's movement to ensure the formulation and implementation of meaningful policies on gender equality. This collaboration has the potential to contribute to the democratization process in struggling democracies and in making stable democracies even more democratic. The figure below shows how the TOWE operates within national contexts.

Diagram 1: Women's policy agencies (WPAs) and democratization: The triangle of women's empowerment (TOWE)



Source: Vargas and Wieringa (1998)

35. Experts pointed out the importance of noting that effective gender mainstreaming and gender equality policy depends in large part on national machineries having the ability to represent women and women's interests. These offices have the potential to be major conduits for women's descriptive and substantive representation and participation in three ways:

- They may represent women substantively by bringing the consideration of women's interests and gender equality issues into public policy discussion, formulation and implementation, often through gender mainstreaming;
- They can represent women descriptively and procedurally by helping the actual actors who speak for gender equality and for women to enter government policy-making arenas;

- Because women tend to work in and lead these agencies, although not in all cases, national machineries for the advancement of women may increase the participation of women at the national level.

The experts also pointed out that women's movements should also be seen as having a representational role to play; both in terms of substantive and descriptive representation.

36. More generally, therefore, mobilization of women in all parts of government and outside of the state in interest groups, social movements, political parties and other participatory processes allows for women's interests to be articulated. Broad-based women's mobilization can be oriented toward challenging and refashioning conventional approaches to policy problems that may close out considerations of gender equality, and toward making claims against the state and governance institutions that may threaten gender equality. The experts reviewed three basic ways in which women engage in public life:

- *Participation in political institutions* - women engage in political institutions by participating in bureaucracies, policy-making bodies and representative organizations;
- *Women organizing* in the informal and formal sectors and spaces of politics – women's movements (informal), human rights groups (formal), functional lobbying groups (formal) such as the Self-employed Women's Association (SEWA) in India, and the Harvard-based worldwide network Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO). Many of these groups lobby governance institutions at all levels from the outside;
- *Political and knowledge networks* - academic and research groups and bodies that feed into policy institutions as well as political debates. These are networks that have outlined and promoted equality discourses in different contexts and worked for these to be translated or gender mainstreamed into policy. An example would be economists' work on gender-sensitive budgeting.

The Role of Men

37. Feminist theories of patriarchy have identified men's presence and dominance of political institutions as a major obstacle to women's equality. Reflecting the emerging consensus in the gender and politics research community, the expert group emphasized that men have a crucial role to play in enhancing women's representation and participation.

38. Men themselves can play a significant role in promoting gender equality policy development. As allies, they can support women's initiatives and movements in their efforts towards equality. As major 'gatekeepers' of policy-making institutions, men can leverage women into positions of power either through direct selection and appointment or through putting pressure on other men. The expert group agreed that the emphasis on men should be seen as a paradigm shift that allows political actors to focus on gender equality training for men in representative and participative arenas.

39. Having reviewed the arguments and evidence at different levels and regions, the experts noted that equal participation of women and men in decision-making institutions was a key element in the democratization of governance. By effectively increasing the descriptive and substantive representation of women in political life at all levels, the potential for change in political practices—and therefore in outcomes—towards the empowerment of women can be better realized; thereby promoting a more democratic and just society.

IV. Increasing the number of women in decision-making: A focus on national legislatures

40. The first step in assessing the equal participation of women and men in political life is to focus on the issue of increasing the number of women in decision-making positions. Given the importance of national legislatures, the expert group focused on the processes, factors and mechanisms by which women gain entry into elected offices in legislative bodies. The experts first discussed the factors which hinder or facilitate women's access to elected legislatures. They then assessed the mechanisms that operate to enable women to achieve increased levels of representation.

A. Factors that enhance or hinder women's representation

41. Women make up 16 percent of representatives in both houses of parliament at the global level, which is consistent with trends at the sub-national and local levels. They are more under-represented in high-level decision-making positions, including as heads of state and government, presiding officers of parliaments and in cabinet positions. Furthermore, women continue to struggle to obtain decision-making positions within political parties. The experts noted that there are a number of factors that can impede, or support, women's participation in decision-making.

42. The experts agreed that *electoral systems* had a direct impact on women's participation in decision-making bodies. Research consistently shows that women's representation is highest in countries using proportional representation (PR) systems. PR systems lead parties to balance their electoral tickets which often results in women's demands for greater equality in decision-making being heard. Most majoritarian systems allow for the nomination of only one candidate per district, and parties overwhelmingly in this situation choose a male candidate. There are many other aspects of electoral system design that can affect women's representation and should be carefully considered, such as electoral thresholds (the minimum percent of the vote required to obtain a seat in parliament), district magnitude (number of seats divided by the number of districts), and open versus closed lists in PR systems (the ability of voters to influence the election of candidates within a party list).

43. The experts noted that the structure and organization of *political parties* can be an obstacle to the participation of women. The impact of different types of party organizations and their internal culture, including clientelist parties, patronage-based parties and programmatic based parties, affect the influence of women within the party. Clientelist and patronage parties tend to have internal procedures that are poorly defined with rules that are likely to be ignored, and decision-making is dominated by a cadre of party elites who are, for the most part, men. Clientelism and patronage politics, therefore, make it difficult for women members to influence

party policies. In addition, rather than seeing women as decision makers and leaders, party leaders tend to treat their female members instrumentally, to secure women's votes and to involve them in the party's lobbying and organizational activities.

44. Political parties are the major 'gatekeepers' in determining who will be candidates in elected office. They play a critical role in advancing or impeding women's participation in decision-making bodies. Through the process of candidate selection (where candidates are taken on by the party for election), women face a number of obstacles. Men are often viewed as more viable and better candidates and are given preference to female candidates. Additionally, the pool from which political parties search for candidates tend to be dominated by men, such as trade union officials and local councilors. In PR systems, the position of women on the party list is crucial: if they are not placed in winnable positions they will not be elected.

45. Even when women possess the characteristics that make for good candidates, they often are not encouraged to step forward to become candidates. Women are also less likely to present themselves as candidates, often seeing themselves as lacking the skills necessary to perform well in politics. Sometimes women hesitate to become involved in party politics and show preference for participating in social movements which are less structured and more goal-oriented.

46. Even after selection as candidates, women seeking decision-making positions can be constrained by different factors. This can include a lack of financial support and time for campaigning because of difficulties in balancing family and public life, of confidence about relevant skills, of fewer connections to politically relevant networks. Additionally, the environment of political institutions is not 'gender-friendly' and deters some women from considering entering political life, for example, sitting times in parliaments, meeting schedules of political parties and lack of childcare facilities.

47. The group discussed in detail the application of *quotas* and the conditions under which they lead to the increased representation of women as a key factor in increasing women's representation in decision-making. It was noted that quotas have been an effective tool to increase women's access to decision-making. Sixteen of the twenty countries that have reached the target of 30 percent women in national legislatures use some type of quota. It was also noted that political parties in more than 80 countries around the world have currently implemented either reserved seats, legislated candidate quotas or have adopted voluntary quotas. Marked progress was noted in countries undergoing political transitions such as South Africa and Latin American states, and in post-conflict countries, such as Rwanda, Iraq and Afghanistan. Quotas were also considered in detail as an important mechanism to increase the number of women in national legislatures. They are examined in this context in the next section.

48. Women's movements were also seen by the experts as being important in the process of increasing the numbers of women in legislatures. Women's movements and groups lobby for equal representation, support women's candidacies and special measures for recruitment and selection. Inside the party, activists with links with women's movements place pressure on party leadership to pursue all possible measures toward women's equality in political representation.

49. The socio-economic position of women in societies negatively affects their participation. Typically, women earn less than men, and the sexual division of labor in society also imposes burdens on women that are not normally faced by men. Women often face a triple burden when participating in politics. They have a responsibility to their work or profession, to their family, and if they become involved in politics they are effectively taking on a third full-time job. Most societies fail to organize in a manner that enables both men and women with families to share these responsibilities, particularly considering that child-rearing responsibilities tend to fall disproportionately on women.

B. Mechanisms for increasing women's participation, representation and leadership

50. Experts considered the various mechanisms to increase women's presence in legislatures, and discussed the impact of electoral quotas. They noted that in general, *political parties* may develop incentives to attract women to the party such as providing funding to run an election campaign, providing access to networks, training and skills development for women candidates to stand for election, or setting targets within the party for a certain number of executive positions to be held by women.

51. The most common mechanism for increasing women's participation in politics is an *electoral quota*, which is defined as a mandatory percentage of women candidates for public elections. While in a few countries reserved seats for women existed as far back as the 1950s, the real push for quotas came in the 1990s with the introduction of quotas in Argentina in 1991 and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. While quotas were met with great hope by women throughout the world, their history is decidedly mixed. In mapping the implementation of quotas, International IDEA found nearly 100 countries that had either implemented quotas, previously used quotas or were considering implementing quotas. Of these, 10 countries had adopted reserved seat guarantees and 30 countries had adopted legislation mandating quotas. In addition, 130 political parties in 61 countries had voluntarily adopted quotas. The most up to date information is made widely accessible through International IDEA/Stockholm University Global Database on Electoral Quotas for Women website (www.quotaproject.org).

52. *Quotas can be effective.* Evidence from around the world provides examples of where quotas have had immediate and direct effect on women's participation. In Argentina, women's participation increased from 5 to 25 and then to 30 percent in the space of two elections. Rwanda is now the world leader in women's representation, with 48.8 percent of women in the Parliament. The increase in women's representation in Rwanda is in part due to the adoption of quotas.

53. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' model. *The type of quotas adopted* varies from country to country depending upon the country's electoral system and other contexts. In proportional representation electoral systems quotas are most effective when there is a high district/party magnitude, where there is a placement mandate specifying which positions women must hold on a party list (i.e. rather than a requirement that women hold 1/3 of the positions on the list, a requirement that specifies women are to hold 1 of the first three positions, 2 of the first six positions, etc. tends to be more effective). In addition, there must be an effective sanction mechanism built into the proposal. In the Argentinean case when parties initially challenged the

quota law, the Electoral Tribunal ruled that any party that failed to uphold the requirements of the law would have their party removed from ballots. This was a very effective sanction that quickly led all parties to comply with the law. Quotas are also likely to be more effective with closed list proportional systems than open list proportional systems.

54. *Quotas in majoritarian systems.* The most common type of quotas in electoral systems based on single member constituencies, where a party presents one candidate, are reserved seats, where a certain number of seats are reserved for women. Among reserved seat systems, those in which the representative is directly elected rather than appointed provide the individual MP with greater legitimacy and with greater independence.

55. *Timing* is an important consideration: there are certain times in the political process when opportunities to introduce quotas are increased. In countries undergoing transition and constitutional and legal reform, such windows of opportunity often exist.

56. *A post-conflict norm?* It is now common for quotas to be considered as a means for securing women's representation in post-conflict states. These quotas have taken varying forms, ranging from voluntary party quotas adopted by the ruling (liberation) parties in Mozambique, to reserved seats and constitutional quotas, most recently introduced in Rwanda, Afghanistan, Iraq and Burundi.

57. *A positive effect, not a panacea.* In the short term, quotas may dramatically increase the representation of women, but they allow parties to make concessions to women without necessarily addressing critical gender equality issues. The attainment of gender justice in post-conflict states and in the consolidation of democracy in the long term depends on a host of factors, including the development of a democratic political culture, the level of mobilization of women in civil society, and the transparency and accountability of democratic institutions. Most importantly, the attainment of gender justice depends on the political will of party leadership.

58. *Training and skills development.* In order for quotas to be effective, both women and men need access to training and skills development. Given that many women have had little experience with running for political office, it is of utmost importance that training be made readily available to allow women to develop and fine-tune their political skills. Once in office, women may also benefit from leadership training and mentoring to increase efficiency and ensure sustainability. Training programs should also target men, to expose them to the complexities of gender discrimination and the necessity of and mechanisms for promoting women in public office.

V. Beyond numbers: The impact of women's political participation and representation

59. Examination of methods and conditions for enhancing women's presence in elected office is not enough. The experts emphasized that it is necessary to go "beyond numbers" and assess to what degree and under what conditions elected women actually do represent women and contribute to democracy and gender equality. In other words, how are women making a difference?

A. Conditions that enable women to be effective in decision-making processes

60. The experts identified three important conditions that contribute to the ability of women to effectively promote gender equality, including through gender mainstreaming efforts:

- the presence of individual women, and in some cases men, who as **critical actors** play key roles in the political process;
- the way in which certain political processes and institutions enhance women's political influence – **critical structures**;
- the unfolding of certain periods or moments when forces combine to provide unprecedented opportunities for women to have influence in the policy-making process – **critical junctures**.

The sections below present the experts' views on how these conditions operate to contribute to enhancing the impact of women's representation and participation in political processes in a wide variety of contexts.

1. Critical actors

61. Although many advocates of women's empowerment have identified a critical mass of women in elected office as being a crucial factor in their ability to influence policy processes and outcomes, the experts observed that this is not always the case. Recent research suggests that a simple rise in numbers does not necessarily add up to a more effective female presence in parliament. For example, the increase in the number of women in parliaments can lead to more bills on women's issues, but does not necessarily strengthen the political alliances necessary to get the bills passed. Women elected due to the introduction of quotas will not automatically become strategic allies in promoting policies that favour gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

62. The way in which women enter positions of power can determine whether they will be politically marginalized or become key players in their political organizations and in the decision-making positions in public office that they assume. Some women work their way up from the grassroots and through the party structures, which gives them both experience and legitimacy. Others enter politics as proxies for male relatives who are unable to run for office due to prohibitions on re-election or – ironically – the presence of gender quotas. While many of these 'proxy women representatives' remain politically marginalized with little impact on gender equality issues, others become competent political agents in their own right through the process of political socialization that begins as soon as they enter the political arena, gain experience and, in many cases, face gender discrimination.

63. The formulation of women's interests is highly context-specific. The ease with which women legislators act individually and collectively on gender equality issues does not depend on their sex *per se* nor on their strength in terms of numbers. The different life experiences, multiple social identities, and adherence to various political or religious doctrines all shape how women – as much as men – come to define what they believe is in their best interest.

64. Studies have shown that the ability of women elected to parliament to act as catalysts of change both among their peers and within their parties depends on other personal characteristics, such as their political career paths (through party and grassroots activism or family ties), their personal ideological and moral preferences, and their degree of loyalty and attachment to the party or constituencies they technically represent. They bring with them many important resources, such as the programmatic backing of their party for gender equality issues, positions of influence within their party, their personal prestige or family reputation, or strong connections to the local women's movement or to international gender equality institutions.

65. The experts discussed issues of access at different levels of governance. They noted that while local political arenas are more accessible to women, there are also in some cases high security costs for women who challenge local hierarchies. The expert group agreed that the conventional wisdom that the local is always good for women does not play out in reality. For instance, political parties use women's abilities (organizational, communicative etc.) at the local level, especially during election campaigns, without giving them the opportunity to be promoted in decision making bodies at local level and to participate in decision making process at national levels.

66. The experts also agreed that it is important to understand that resources are not just financial. Women politicians, like men, also need to have the support of powerful individuals, groups and networks to forward their political careers and to establish and widen their power bases once in positions of power. Without both financial and socio-political capital, women will not be able to achieve real political power. Thus, together with the understanding of the structural impediments to their participation in decision-making, the emphasis should be on how women strategize, struggle for and succeed in mobilizing these assets to access and function in political arenas effectively. Such an approach would allow women to focus on the challenge of creatively building their asset base by harnessing and leveraging non-financial forms of resources.

2. Critical Structures

67. The experts noted that structural elements of each country's political system and environment exert a strong influence on women's effective participation in policy-making. Some particularly important aspects of the political environment were identified as:-

- the intensity of ideological conflicts and their impact on society, for instance through profound violence and disruption;
- whether gender equality issues are regarded as politically salient;
- the degree to which parties are open to dialogue with social movement actors, particularly the women's movement;
- extreme poverty and human suffering and resulting economic and social dislocation.

68. The most critical determinant of women's ability to make a difference is the nature of

governance and of the political mainstream. The degree of *accountability* varies among countries. In patronage-oriented systems, accountability will tend to be defined by narrower personal, family or clan interests as well as those of political groups and patrons. More democratic governance is accompanied by more developed mechanisms for public accountability. There is a notion of public good; decision-making posts are viewed as positions of public trust; and citizens are more politically mature, aware of their rights and likely to demand accountability from public officials. The experts identified three key areas where issues of accountability are important: political parties, parliaments, and the executive branch of government.

69. *Political parties.* The degree and type of accountability is linked to the party system. Parties are key 'gatekeepers' to women's political representation and participation. In some cases parties may restrict women's influence and use them instrumentally to mobilize women voters for the party, rather than to integrate a gender perspective into the parties' policies. Parties without a quota system or reserved seats for women in their leadership structures tend to have very few women leaders. Parties that are not required by their own internal rules or by a national statutory quota to place women candidates on their lists or in winnable positions also tend to have a low level of women's participation in legislatures. There is a strong linkage between the presence of women in party leadership positions and their numerical presence both in elected and appointed office (parties also tend to nominate from among their leadership circles). Political parties that seek to mobilize voters around a set of positions on policy issues may be pressured by women's groups, party members, and representatives to include gender equality policies into their political programmes. There may even be a 'contagion effect' as rival parties take on similar commitments to gender equality in a bid for women's votes. This strengthens the culture of accountability to the electorate. The experts noted that parties based on individual self-interest and fueled by patronage and corruption were less susceptible to external influences that would promote either women or a gender equality agenda.

70. *Parliaments.* In party systems comprising one or two dominant parties, party loyalty and identification is often very strong in parliaments and discourages representatives from forming cross-party alliances. Ultimately, women MPs are accountable to their parties first and to women in their constituencies only after they have fulfilled their party's expectations. Women parliamentarians often face the dilemma of having to follow their party's directive, which may not correspond with their wish to articulate demands for women and gender equality. In a multi-party system, the potential for alliances increases. However, on the other hand, in very unstable and fragmented party systems, with many parties often appearing and disappearing with each election, it is very difficult for female representatives to find common causes and to influence the voting patterns of their constituencies.

71. *Executive branch of government.* Women's presence within the executive branch is also politically important. The chief executive and the cabinet set the policy agenda of a nation, determine the content of many policies and oversee and guide policy implementation and administration, including any policies to advance women. In undemocratic countries, the role of the executive is decisive. The majority of gender equality and mainstreaming policies recommended by the CEDAW, by the Beijing Platform for Action and by national legislation and equal opportunities programmes demands inter-ministerial action. Studies have shown and the experts agreed that women in executive posts, acting both individually and collectively, are key to

the implementation of the laws promoted by female legislators, and the policies devised by national women's/gender equality mechanisms. However, women are severely under-represented in this branch of government; female ministers are typically given 'feminine' portfolios, such as education, health, social welfare or environment. Moreover, governments do not consider gender equality as a priority, gender equality issues are missing from the budgeting process, and women are not present in the financial, peace, and international negotiations, structures and delegations.

72. *Civil society institutions* and structures play an important role in placing pressure on politicians and institutions to support women's entry into decision-making positions and, once in office supporting their advancement of a gender equality agenda in policy making arenas. Civil society also contributes greatly to developing a cultural environment that is favorable to gender equality. The possibilities for women to participate in this way increase when there is executive support for civil society involvement in politics. One good example is participatory budgeting processes, where the local population participates in deciding how the municipal budget should be spent. A parallel process has been the institution of gender-sensitive budgeting, which aim to ensure that policy commitments are matched by resource allocations.

73. The experts agreed that decision-makers are more likely to adopt gender equality agendas in situations when, on the one hand, political elites are held responsible for their actions and, on the other hand, women are able and encouraged to participate in civic debates. This dual strategy is needed, because both political elites and civil society need to mobilize around gender equality agendas in order to create sufficient political will to support the equal inclusion of women and men in political decision-making.

3. Critical junctures

74. Experts noted that critical junctures such as peace processes, transitions to democracy, and the drafting of new constitutions, provide opportunities for women's participation. During such periods of change and transition, the monopoly of political parties over policy decisions and the policy formation process in general is relaxed and access expands to non-traditional political actors. These are key moments for the representation of the interests of many different social groups. Such political opportunities are not gender-neutral and women's movements and agencies involved in such processes need to seize these opportunities to push for gender-sensitive reforms.

75. Such moments also allow temporary coalitions to form between women legislators around very specific issues on which there are no major divergences, for example on a package of reforms. In Central America, for example, women's cross-party coalitions managed to overcome the bitter ideological divisions of the civil wars. During the peace process in El Salvador, women came together to adopt reforms on several issues such as gender quotas, responsible paternity and domestic violence. During the transition to democracy in Uruguay in the mid 1980s the all-party Working Group on Women's Status, which had struggled to be included within the National Consensus-Building Forum, managed to draw up a set of recommendations on domestic violence, overcoming traditional rivalries between the two historically dominant parties. By contrast, the post-Communist constitutions drafted in Eastern Europe were only marginally influenced by women legislators, whose numbers dropped dramatically, as a result of the transition from one-party rule and the weakness of civil society.

B. The impact of women's equal participation in decision-making processes

76. The experts emphasized the importance of two normative premises for women to make a difference in all areas of policy: that women should be brought in on an equal footing with men in decision-making and that citizens need to be educated about good governance in order to make their governments accountable.

77. With these premises in mind, the experts assessed the impact of women's participation in decision-making in gender equality policy, peace-building, and socio-economic development.

78. *Impact on Gender Equality Policy.* Experts agreed that women's participation in decision-making has implications for promoting gender equality:

- Women have played an important role in writing and amending constitutions that address the issues of gender equality. Two notable examples include the French parity constitutional amendment on equal representation of men and women, and the post-apartheid constitutional drafting process in South Africa;
- Most countries have established national machineries for the advancement of women aimed, *inter alia* at promoting, supporting and monitoring gender mainstreaming, that is, a cross-sectoral approach to integrating gender equality concerns into all areas of public policy. These national machineries, in alliance with women legislators and local and regional women's movements have made important gains in terms of removing anachronistic and discriminatory provisions from legal codes and promoting women's rights.
- Thanks in part to some women leaders taking up this issue, the eradication of violence against women in both the domestic and the public sphere has gained momentum as a global movement.

79. The experts noted that women play a key role in formulating and implementing gender equality policies and mainstreaming gender perspectives, particularly through alliances between national policy machineries, women's movement groups and women in public office or through the triangle of empowerment (see page 13).

80. *Impact on peace-building.* Women and men experience conflict and its aftermath differently. The economic and physical vulnerability of women is compounded by sexual violence, terrorism, counter-terrorism, and insurgency. Women are expected to hold together their fractured families, rebuild shattered infrastructure, and divided communities. Unequal distribution of resources has been identified as one of the primary causes of conflicts; however, although women are on average more economically disadvantaged than men, they have consistently been on the vanguard of the movement for peaceful resolution.

81. Experts noted that women are typically excluded from formal peace processes and that too often the claims of warlords and a cohort of men with guns become the focus of demobilization efforts to the detriment of women's claims for resources for their functional roles as the principal agents of peace-building. Women's role in post-conflict reconstruction has been increasingly recognized. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 offers a comprehensive set of recommendations in this regard. For example, through the vigorous advocacy of the United Nations and some donor countries, women representatives were given training and an opportunity to participate in peace-building and nation-building in Timor-Leste. Women's participation also provided a critical opportunity for a powerful advocacy on the detrimental effects of violent conflicts, and contributed towards building a culture of peace.

82. *Impact on socio-economic development.* Study of the impact of globalization on societies has been paying increasing attention to differences among women and men at the supra-state level. Despite skeptical voices, the globalization of participation through social movements is regarded by many as a dynamic, creative response to the forces of economic convergence that create both possibilities and constraints. Three areas are important in this respect: social movements, state institutions and international organizations.

83. The experts acknowledged some progress in the equal participation of women and men in political processes and institutions, but noted that the inequalities between women and men, among women and between North and South, have an impact on how far women can be effective in changing policies and policy frameworks. Political participation in women's movements, political representation in decision-making bodies, and political leadership in both these arenas of politics are required to ensure that women and men have equal access to both the processes of decision-making and benefits from the outcomes of those processes. In the context of globalization, these inequalities can only be addressed at multiple levels, which require coordination of the efforts of the United Nations and other international organizations, of social movements and political institutions at the state level.

84. The experts agreed that despite some important areas of progress in women's impact on policy and decision-making at multiple levels and across multiple arenas, there is still much progress to be made. Profound obstacles remain that impede women's effective representation and participation. The following factors were identified as some of the prevalent road blocks:

- women's exclusion from male-dominated policy domains, such as the military, macroeconomic policy and foreign affairs;
- the absence of women-friendly environments in political institutions such as parliaments and legislatures;
- regime instability and political violence;
- poverty and social marginalization.

VI. Recommendations

A. Recommendations for increasing the number of women in decision-making

The EGM recommends that government actors should:

1. Ensure that in addition to national laws, relevant international instruments relating to full political rights for women, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, are ratified, integrated into national law and implemented, especially in those countries where women are still denied the right to vote and stand for election.
2. Review the existing constitutional, political, legislative, and regulatory frameworks, particularly in countries in transition and post-conflict states, for provisions that may hinder women's equal participation, such as rules requiring high numbers of signatures to register as a candidate or high monetary deposits that can be discriminatory against women candidates.
3. Seek to achieve gender parity in all decision-making bodies, by establishing incremental time-bound targets for increasing women's representation.
4. Include women in discussions on electoral system reform, such as the impact of proposed electoral systems, proportional representation or majoritarian, district magnitude and expected party magnitude, electoral thresholds, boundary delimitation, and closed versus open lists, and analyze the impact of the proposed changes on gender equality.
5. Enact special measures to guarantee women access to the legislature and decision-making positions, including through legislated quotas within a proportional representation system or reserved seats within majoritarian systems with specific and effective sanctions for non-compliance. In majoritarian or plurality systems, the reserved seats should be directly elected.
6. Ensure that women and men have equal opportunities during election campaigns, such as providing public funding, access to the state media, setting campaign spending limits, and ensuring that campaign finances and expenditures are disclosed.
7. Develop and promote gender-sensitive curriculum and teacher training on civic education for men and women.
8. Use ICT training as a tool in education and training efforts, in particular to overcome the digital divide between men and women in the use of new technologies and to provide women with equal access to information.

9. Design appropriate programmes and mechanisms to develop and strengthen a culture of ethics in public service.

The EGM recommends that political parties should:

1. Adopt clear and transparent rules to ensure internal democracy, with specific attention to gender equality.
2. Consider special measures to ensure women's participation in decision-making positions within political parties with the aim of achieving parity at all levels.
3. Adopt clear rules for candidate selection that would allow party members to provide meaningful input into the process of selecting candidates.
4. Implement effective gender quotas with the aim of achieving equitable representation of women candidates in elected positions, including party placement mandates in winnable positions.
5. Promote women's candidacies through the adoption of special training programmes, recruitment drives and financial incentives, especially in majoritarian electoral systems where women may face greater challenges in getting nominated.
6. Provide statistical data disaggregated by sex, such as the number of women and men among candidates, elected representatives, party members and in governance and leadership structures.
7. Provide women's branches in political parties, where they exist, with the necessary resources for effective functioning, influence on decision-making, visibility within the party structures and means to support women's candidacies and influence the selection process.
8. Allocate a percentage of public 'non-campaign related' funding to activities related to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, including training and research.

The EGM recommends that electoral management bodies should:

1. Ensure that women are included in key decision-making positions within electoral management bodies and that in electoral processes and administration due consideration is given to issues of gender equality and empowerment of women, including the provision of opportunities for illiterate voters, the majority of whom are women, to fully participate in elections. Additionally, polling places should be easily accessible to both men and women.

2. Collect and provide sex-disaggregated data on: levels of registration, voter turnout, the number of male and female candidates and those elected, by party and by constituency (where applicable).
3. Ensure that public service information and voter education campaigns use gender-sensitive language and avoid negative portrayals of women.

The EGM recommends that international actors should:

1. Provide resources for training of potential women candidates across party lines in the skills necessary to engage in political campaigning and interact effectively with the media.
2. Support and promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotypes, emphasize the legitimate role of women in decision-making processes at all levels, and encourage women's participation in decision-making.
3. Facilitate research about the conditions under which women's participation and representation is increased and enhanced in political parties, government and parliaments, including through the adoption of different political reforms, and disseminate the examples of "good practices".

The EGM recommends that civil society actors should:

1. Hold government, legislatures and political parties accountable for progress in increasing women's participation and representation.
2. Facilitate linkages between women in decision-making positions and those working for the empowerment of women at the grassroots, in the academic community and in civil society organizations.
3. Monitor the media's coverage of women and gender equality issues, and identify and report on gender bias particularly with respect to women in decision-making.
4. Strengthen civic and citizenship training in schools and continuing adult education and ensure its gender responsiveness.
5. Strengthen advocacy on the issues of gender equality and empowerment of women among the general public with special emphasis on parents and teachers.

B. Recommendations for enhancing the impact of increased presence of women in decision-making

The EGM recommends that government actors at all levels (national, provincial and municipal/district) should:

1. Support the work of national mechanisms on gender equality and empowerment of women on gender mainstreaming, including through establishing and properly supporting inter-ministerial committees.
2. Ensure that women are equally represented in all government policy making bodies covering all areas, especially those that have remained the domains of men, for example the areas of macroeconomic policy, budgets and defense.
3. Generate and disseminate sex-disaggregated statistics and indicators on all aspects of government activity, including policy development and budget allocations and expenditure.
4. Develop and implement training programmes on gender mainstreaming in governmental bodies in order to undertake gender analysis in all legislative and policy areas, including budget allocations.
5. Ensure that national and subnational mechanisms on gender equality and empowerment of women are provided with all the necessary resources for implementing their mandates.
6. Ensure efficient collaboration and consultation among national mechanisms NGOs and women's groups in the process of the formulation and implementation of policies.
7. Disseminate national periodic CEDAW reports to the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination for discussion by parliament and civil society prior to their official submission to the Committee.
8. Promote decentralization that is conducive to women's equal participation in decision-making processes at the local level and empower local bodies to implement effective gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive budgeting.
9. Promote additional spaces for civil society participation in effective governance and policy formulation, for example participatory budgeting.
10. Encourage men in decision-making positions to support women to enter arenas of power, and encourage and support alliances between women and men to pursue a gender equality agenda.
11. Promote gender mainstreaming as the main strategy recommended by the Beijing Platform of Action for achieving the goal of gender equality and empowerment of women and consistently link this with the implementation of CEDAW, focusing, in particular, on monitoring of the impact of gender mainstreaming.

The EGM recommends that parliaments should

1. Establish standing or ad hoc committees and other statutory bodies on gender equality and empowerment of women, with cross-party representation, to monitor the review and the implementation of existing laws and constitutional provisions, budgets and policies from a gender perspective, as well as recommendations from CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant documents.
2. Ensure that parliamentary bodies provide institutional support to the established or existing women's cross-party alliances and caucuses, including infrastructure, budget and institutional recognition.
3. Ensure efficient collaboration between parliamentary bodies on gender equality, including standing committees and women's caucuses, and national mechanisms on gender equality and the empowerment of women.
4. Ensure that all parliamentary bodies draw on the knowledge and resources provided by NGOs and gender experts.
5. Ensure that all standing and ad hoc committees in legislatures at all levels guarantee the adequate representation of women as members and leaders.
6. Ensure that all presiding bodies in legislatures at all levels guarantee the adequate representation of women as members and leaders.
7. Ensure that women are equally represented in all constitutional drafting or reform bodies, including those that are involved in revising legal codes, and that all those bodies maintain efficient and comprehensive consultations with civil society.
8. Ensure that women in elected office/decision-making bodies receive sufficient administrative support, guidance, and adequate financial resources to do their job effectively, and ensure that there is no gender bias in allocation of these resources
9. Ensure that the institutions and practices of parliament are gender-sensitive, and take due consideration of gender issues, such as domestic and family responsibilities, including through measures aimed at reconciliation of family and professional responsibilities.

The EGM recommends that international actors should

1. Fully implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in order to integrate women into all conflict resolution activities, such as peace negotiating teams, transitional authorities, and peace-keeping forces.
2. Support and promote close and efficient collaboration among women parliamentarians, statutory bodies and national mechanisms on gender equality,

especially in the process of formulation and implementation of gender equality agenda

The EGM recommends that United Nations/ Department for Economic and Social Affairs/ Division for Advancement of Women should

1. Broadly disseminate this EGM report to all national mechanism on gender equality and empowerment of women, including to United Nations/ Department for Economic and Social Affairs/ Division for Advancement of Women, and publish a book based on the report.
2. Establish and sustain a knowledge network that serves as a clearing house of information and expertise for scholars, practitioners and activists on women's political empowerment, with a particular focus on gender equality policy formulation.

The EGM recommends that civil society actors should

- Collaborate with women parliamentarians, statutory bodies on gender equality and national mechanisms in the process of articulation and implementation of common gender equality agendas.

The EGM recommends that all actors should

- Encourage women to seek greater involvement in the decision-making processes at all levels and to provide a systematic significant influence on decision-making processes and policy outcomes.

ANNEX I

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ANNEX II

LIST OF DOCUMENTS

A. PAPERS BY EXPERTS

- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.2 *“Conditions determining the level of representation of women: The experience of quota system in Latin America”*, prepared by Ana Isabel Garcia Quesada (Costa Rica)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP. 3 *“From Representation to Participation: Women in Local Government”*, prepared by Niraja Gopal Jayal (India)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.4 *“Explaining Women’s Representation: The Role of Legislative Recruitment & Electoral Systems”*, prepared by Richard Matland (USA)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.5 *“The impact of Women’s Participation and Leadership on Policy Outcomes: A focus on Women’s Policy machineries”*, prepared by Amy Mazur (USA)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP. 6 *“Women’s participation in democratic transition”*, prepared by Ala Mindicanu (Republic of Moldova)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.7 *“Impact of women’s participation and leadership on outcomes”*, prepared by Rosa Linda T. Miranda (Philippines)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.8 *“Indian Experience of Women’s Quota in Local Government: Implications for future strategies”*, prepared by Medha Nanivadekar (India)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.9 *“Nigeria: Political Transition and the Complexities of Gender Empowerment”*, prepared by Leslye Amede Obiora (Nigeria)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.10 *“Political Parties: When do they work for Women?”*, prepared by Teresa Sacchet (Brazil/Italy)
- EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.11 *“Thai-Buddhist Leadership and Muslim Grassroots*

Women in the Game of 'Terrorism' War: The Unrest Southern Thailand Crisis", prepared by Cholthira Satyawadhna (Thailand)

EGM/EPWD/2005/EP.12

"Cross-party alliances around gender agendas: critical mass, critical actors, critical structures, or critical junctures", prepared by Fiona J. Macaulay (United Kingdom)

B. PAPERS BY OBSERVERS

EGM/EPWD/2005/OP.1

"Women in Decision-Making in the Arab Region", prepared by The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

EGM/EPWD/2005/OP.2

"Creating an Outer Circle in the Digital World: participation of women in the e-government", prepared by Baharul Islam, ECA

C. BACKGROUND PAPER

EGM/EPWD/2005/BP.1

"Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership", prepared by Shirin Rai (India)

EGM/EPWD/2005/BP.2

"The Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making: The Parliamentary Dimension", prepared by Julie Ballington, IPU

ANNEX III

PROGRAMME OF WORK

Monday, 24 October 2005

8.30 a.m. – 10.00 a.m.	Registration
10.00 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.	Official opening of the meeting Welcome by host <i>Ms. Thokozile Ruzvidzo, Director, African Centre for Gender and Development, Economic Commission for Africa</i>
	Opening statement <i>Message from Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director UN Division for the Advancement of Women</i>
10.30 a.m. - 11.00 a.m.	Election of Officers: Adoption of programme of work
11.00 a.m. - 11.30 a.m.	Coffee break
11.30 p.m. - 1.00 p.m.	Overviews of the situation of women in decision-making (30 min.) <i>Ms. Julie Ballington, IPU</i> <i>Ms. Shirin Rai, Consultant</i>
	General Debate:
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.	Lunch
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	Presentations on "Conditions determining level of representation of women" (each presentation 7-10 min) <i>Mr. Richard Matland (US)</i>
	Debate
4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.	Coffee break
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.	Presentations on: "Women's participation in democratic transitions" (each presentation 7-10 min)

Ms. Ala Mindicanu (Moldova)
Ms. Leslye Obiora (Nigeria)

Debate

7:30 p.m.

Reception organized by ECA

Tuesday, 25 October 2005

9:00 a.m. -11:00 a.m.

Presentations on: “Conditions under which political bodies commit to gender balance and gender mainstreaming in processes and outcome” (each presentation 7-10 min).

Ms. Teresa Sacchet (Brazil)
Ms. Cholthira Satyawadhna (Thailand)

Debate

Presentation on: “Conditions under which women work across party lines, including with male allies”

Ms. Fiona Macaulay (UK)

Debate

11:00a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Coffee break

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m.

Presentation on: “Women’s participation in local government” (each presentation 7-10 min).

Ms. Medha Nanivadekar (IN)

Debate

Presentation on: “Creating an outer circle in the digital worlds :participation of women in e-government system”

Mr. Baharul Islam (ECA)

1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Lunch

2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Presentations on “Impact of women’s participation on outcomes” (each presentation 7-10 min)

Ms. Amy Mazur (US)

Ms. Rosa Linda Miranda (Philippines)

Debate

4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Coffee break
4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. General Discussion

Wednesday, 26 October 2005

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. Working groups: discussion and drafting
11:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. Coffee break
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Working groups: discussion and drafting
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lunch
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Working groups: drafting
4:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. Coffee break
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Reports from working groups: general discussion

Thursday, 27 October 2005

9:00 a.m. -11:00 p.m. Drafting group
11:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. Coffee break
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Final discussion of the report
1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. Lunch
2:30 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Discussion of the final draft report and policy recommendations
4:00 p.m. – 4:30p.m. Coffee break
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m. Adoption of the report
Closing statements
Closing the meeting