

Special Assembly 6: Gender Affairs

*Establishing regulations to increase
representation and opportunities for
women in politics*

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Forum: Gender Affairs (SA6)

Issue: Establishing regulations to increase representation and opportunities for women in politics

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Introduction

2015 was the year United Nations (UN) Member States embraced the urgent vision of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that aimed to set a deadline of 2030 for achieving lots of revolutionary ideas to save the planet. However, with only seven years remaining to achieve these ongoing objectives, the international community is off course. Progress on gender equality has not only stalled but is also starting to flip during and after the converging crises of COVID-19, the climate tragedy, and mounting economic and political instability. Even hard-earned liberties are in jeopardy due to an ever-increasing pushback against women's rights throughout the globe, regardless of continent, race, or political system. While the gender gap in areas such as education and health has been decreasing over the past year, consequential inequality endures in politics. Democracy can not be democratic without equality. With more egalitarian societies, “we the peoples of the United Nations” shall gain peaceful harmony in an ever-changing world.

Definition of Key Terms

Gender Inequality

Gender inequality can be defined as “disparities between women and men in the society in terms of their access and opportunities in the social, economic, and political spheres and their share in decision-making power at all social levels” (INEE).

Empowerment of Women

Women’s empowerment refers to the actions that aim to promote womens’ sense of self worth.

Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5)

SDG 5: Gender Equality is set up to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” The goal aims to ensure womens’ full participation and having equal opportunities in leadership.

General Overview

Evidence of gender prejudice is rooted in tradition, history, and culture. While the female sex constitutes slightly more than 50% of the population, according to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) since September 2022 women serve as the Heads of State and/or Government in 28 countries. The number may seem high at a first glance, but the number of UN

Member States is 193, meaning that only 14.5% of internationally recognized countries have a biologically non-male head decision-maker. According to UN Women, gender equality will not be sustained in high positions of power for 130 years.

Accomplishing gender equality in politics demands more than all genders having equal positions in parliaments and ministerial positions. The notion further requires that both genders participate in decision-making processes as well as having equal access to positions. Not only females with high socio-economic status but also those with low socio-economic status should be welcomed into political life.

There are three main issues restricting women's political participation. The first one is the pre-existing cultural and social views regarding women in politics resulting in their rejection from political parties. Although this tendency is slowly changing, men within political parties often overlook the potential of women politicians in favor of themselves. Many women underestimate their qualifications and feel gender biases among voters, which discourages them from running for office. With the slanders they face from their male equivalents in positions of power whose purpose is to discredit their opponents, only the most talented and ambitious women run for public office. Female political leadership has been demonstrated to reduce inequality, promote collaboration, and prioritize social problems such as health and parental leave. Thus, women's political participation has been found to have a particularly strong influence on women in their communities.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views

UN Women

The UN Women works for is an organization trying to ensure women have equal access as men in all areas. The leading UN organization for this agenda collaborates with Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and other organizations to achieve their goals. They also train female political candidates if requested.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The United Nations Development Programme is the foremost organization operating to achieve the SDGs by the year 2030. Due to the presence of the SDG 5, the UNDP is trying to encourage female participation in politics. They use social media to raise awareness on the topic.

Treaties and Events

A/RES/76/142 - Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and full implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome of the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly adopted by the General Assembly at its 76th Session, on 16 December 2021

A/RES/66/130 - Women and political participation adopted by the General Assembly at its 66th Session, on 19 December 2011

A/RES/S-23/2 - Political Declaration [advancement of women] adopted by the General Assembly at its 23rd Special Session, on 10 June 2000

A/CONF.177/RES/1 - The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women - Action for Equality, Development, and Peace at its 16th Plenary Meeting, on 15 September 1995

A/RES/640 (VII) - Convention on the Political Rights of Women adopted by the General Assembly at its 7th Session, on 20 December 1952

Evaluation of Previous Attempts to Resolve the Issue

Progress for women's representation in political life can't be accomplished overnight. It needs constant support for growth from all elements of the community and it is hard to get this assistance in an environment where some of the Member States didn't even sign, ratify, or implement the previously stated treaties of much significance. Even while the need for gender equality in all levels of decision-making bodies is widely acknowledged, there is still a discrepancy between de jure and de facto equality, and there are still some obstacles in the way.

Furthermore, the stark underrepresentation of women in decision-making bodies across all sectors restricts the inclusion of a gender viewpoint in these vital spheres of influence. Women continue to be underrepresented at the highest echelons of government, as well. Traditional gender roles force women to take on the responsibilities and restrict their alternatives in education and jobs. In addition to the absence of adequate collaboration with many NGOs the lack of financial and human resources training future political advocates attitudes towards women in society.

Possible Solutions

A first option to start things for delegates willing to contribute to female participation in government would be setting numerical targets and funding election parties. Expanding the number of qualified women who are able to run for election would certainly help in the long run. Since there are objections raised by some parts of society that claim although women politicians are inferior in terms of quality compared to their male peers, they have to be chosen just because of quotas set in place; it would be beneficial to have plenty of experienced female lawmakers. Mass media and social media campaigns that strive to combat gender stereotypic claims about women not having the physical or mental capacity to effectively run a nation must be utilized. The government elections can also boost the election campaigns through social media. Last but not the least, encouraging support for women politicians among governing institutions could be a course of action.

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