

FAST FACTS

United Nations Development Programme



50
YEARS

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Women's equal political participation

Gender equality and women's empowerment are not only human rights, but are also imperative for achieving inclusive, equitable and sustainable development. Women's political participation is central to this goal. When political processes are more inclusive, democracy is strengthened.

As part of its mandate, UNDP promotes women's participation in political processes and institutions and strengthens women's agency, voice and participation in all aspects of the organization's work. UNDP also engages in advocacy and supports policy and legal reforms to accelerate the equal participation of women, including young women and minorities, in decision-making across all branches of the state. This work is integral to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 16, which aims to ensure peace, justice and strong institutions through inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

UNDP's work to advance women's equal participation and decision-making in political processes and institutions is reflected in its approach to parliamentary development, electoral cycle support, constitution-making processes and peacebuilding.



Women MPs from the Moldovan Parliament joined for a common purpose. (Photo – Parliament of Moldova)

MATTERS OF FACT

- Since the adoption of the **Beijing Platform for Action in 1995**, the global proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments has doubled from **11 percent to 22 percent in 2015**.
- In **conflict and post-conflict countries**, women comprise **18 percent of national parliamentarians in 2015**.
- **Women in senior-level positions** comprised **75 percent of participants in peace processes led or co-led by the UN in 2014**, up from **36% in 2011**.

Parliamentary development

Over the past two decades, the percentage of women in national parliaments has risen from 11.3 percent in 1995 to 22 percent globally today. To reach parity and ensure women's participation in decision-making, UNDP supports specific programming focused at increasing the numbers of women in parliaments and within political parties.

UNDP's projects include training and mentoring women candidates and parliamentarians and engaging women's groups in parliamentary processes, including law making and budgeting. UNDP also promotes gender-sensitive laws and raising awareness to counter gender stereotyping of candidates.

- In **Moldova**, UNDP supported a gender audit of Parliament, the development of a parliamentary Gender Action Plan to make the parliament more gender-sensitive, and the establishment of a cross party caucus, the Women MPs Platform.
- In **Uganda**, UNDP partnered with UN Women to create the 'Women Situation Room', a platform for tracking national gender issues and women candidates in the National Election Campaign. In addition, 120 women parliamentary candidates were engaged on issues including violence against

women and girls, women's health, education and access to micro-finance support.

the security of women candidates and voters in the electoral process, which was signed by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security in 2015. This policy serves as an advocacy tool to protect women from acts of violence during electoral processes."

Constitution-Making Processes

Constitutions are the framing legal documents which define the social contract between the state and the people. They can also be powerful tools for empowering women and securing their political, social, economic and cultural rights. To this end, UNDP provides support for constitution-making as part of its mandate to advance gender equality and promote inclusive democratic governance. UNDP supports women's participation in constitution making processes and helps empower women to promote issues of relevance to their lives in constitutional reform and adoption..

- In **Libya**, as part of its support to the constitution drafting assembly, UNDP together with UNSMIL and UN Women organized a four-day meeting in Cairo on "Libyan Women's Demands for the Constitution." Promoting women's participation in the constitution-making process in Libya, the meeting provided opportunities to develop the participants' knowledge on core issues and themes of the constitution-making process, as well as international good practices, and offered a platform for open discussion and technical assistance during the debates. Participants articulated specific demands of Libyan women into a "[Women's Demands Catalogue](#)" that was subsequently shared with the Constitution Drafting Assembly in early 2015.

Electoral Cycle Support

When women participate in elections – as voters, candidates, electoral administrators, or party supporters – they can express their own needs and interests and be sure that issues of relevance to women's lives get on the public agenda. While more women are seeking a voice in shaping government policy, more work needs to be done to ensure their full and equal participation in electoral processes.

- In **Haiti**, during the most recent electoral cycle, the project trained 272 members of women organisations on civic education issues in close cooperation with the Electoral Council. As a result, 106 women organisations were actively engaging in the civic education campaign throughout the country, aiming to include all parts of society in the electoral process. UNDP also supported the elaboration of a policy on

Promoting Women's Participation and Peacebuilding

Women's meaningful participation and representation in government institutions and decision-making processes is a predictor of peace. Where women are more empowered in multiple spheres of life, countries are less likely to go to war with their neighbors, to be in bad standing with the international community, or to be rife with crime and violence within their society. It is essential for women to be included in decision making on all aspects of peace building, even those that have traditionally been dominated by men, such as issues of security, defense, legal policy and justice.

UNDP works with partners to promote women lawmakers/parliamentarians as peacebuilders in their legislative, representative and oversight roles, including by:

- Enhancing the participation and leadership of women parliamentarians in key parliamentary decision making and oversight mechanisms and structures;
- Enhancing the capacities of women parliamentarians in mediation and negotiation;
- Strengthening parliamentary oversight mechanisms of National Action Plans on UN Security Council Resolution 1325;
- Raising awareness and understanding among parliamentarians of the Women, Peace and Security agenda; and,
- Ensuring that adequate funding is dedicated to gender-related issues such as protecting women and girls from violence.

For more information, please visit www.undp.org

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