

# Women Electoral Quotas: Global Trend and Comparison with Pakistan





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## Background

Women's empowerment is a complex and evolving concept that is constantly being defined, and re-defined.<sup>1</sup> Empowerment is simply a political process of granting human rights and social justice to disadvantaged groups of people. Women's empowerment is said to be women's increased access to material resources such as land, income, availability of decent employment opportunities with good working conditions, access to power through representation in political and decision-making bodies, the freedom to make choices in life, enjoyment of basic rights granted in the constitution and international agreements, equal access to quality education and health facilities, mobility to be able to access various facilities, and control over one's body, sexuality and reproductive choices.<sup>2</sup>

The empowerment of women is a critical aspect of sustainable and impartial development because it is believed to contribute to economic growth, alleviation of poverty and the well-being of society as a whole. Political empowerment of women is considered a prior condition for social, economic, and legal rights of women. Women and men equally shares in the power distribution, they have equal opportunities for financial independence, and they enjoy equal access to education and the opportunities. A crucial component of advancing gender equality is the empowerment of women, through redressing power imbalances and giving women more independence to deal with their own lives. Globally, initiatives have been taken contingent with human rights programs to empower women politically. However, studies have shown that gender inequality is global and women are underrepresented relative to their population in political leadership positions. Currently, women constituted only 21.9% of all parliament members in the world.<sup>3</sup> There are several social, cultural, economic, and political hindrances behind women underrepresentation in national parliaments. In national parliaments across the world, women are either directly elected or the constitutions of the countries provide for indirect selection of the women parliamentarians to ensure their participation. This document provides the initiatives taken for women empowerment globally, regionally and nationally in Pakistan.

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<sup>1</sup> AF and USAID. Women Empowerment in Pakistan; a Scoping study.

At [http://www.af.org.pk/gep/deskStudies/Women\\_s%20Empowerment.pdf](http://www.af.org.pk/gep/deskStudies/Women_s%20Empowerment.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> AF and USAID. Opp cit

<sup>3</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in National Parliaments. At <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>. Accessed May 27, 2014

## International Commitments, Treaties, and Protocols for women Empowerment

The empowerment of women has been a prominent goal in international development and there were several serious measures taken by international community, institutions, and organizations, but feminists, human rights activists, development professionals, and scholars remain profoundly dissatisfied with the limited extent to which women's empowerment is actually achieved. For social, economic, legal, and political empowerment of women, international communities have been drawing attention to gender rights issues and applied variety of instruments to deal with this subject. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights(1948) and the Covenants on Civil and Political and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) passed by the General Assembly of the United Nations are referred to as a basic cornerstones for the clear inclusion of women's rights in general and their economic empowerment in particular. Here are key international commitments to ensure empowerment of women in all spheres of human life inclusive of women political rights:

### Equal Remuneration Convention (1951)

The economic achievements of women were recognized as essential contingents with their empowerment. In this background, 'Equal Remuneration Convention of 1951' concerned with equal payment for work of both sexes males and female, was significant development for empowering women. Equal Remuneration Convention is the 100<sup>th</sup>International Labour Organization Convention. This convention advocates and urges countries to achieve this equality status through legislation, introduction of a system for wage determination and/or collective bargaining agreements. This convention had been ratified by 172 countries out of total 185 ILO members.<sup>4</sup> However, the achievements in this goal are significantly too low.

### Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952)

For addressing the political rights of women, the 'Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952)' is considered as the opening international door for legislation and advocacy to ensure women's rights. The legislation entered into force in 1954 and today it has 122 state parties.<sup>5</sup>

The Convention restates the principles set out in article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which declares that everyone has the right to participate in the government of his country, and to access public services. The Convention on the

<sup>4</sup>C100 - *Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951*, <http://www.ilo.org/ilolex/cgi-lex/convde>

<sup>5</sup>*Convention on the Political Rights of Women*. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

Political Rights of Women specifically protects this right of women. This convention further stipulates that women shall be given the right to vote or hold office, as established by national law, on equal terms with men and without discrimination based on sex.

### **Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967)**

The studies have shown that discriminatory laws against women persisted across the world and everyday new discriminatory legislation is done to institutionalize the second-class citizens status for women with regard health & education, nationality and citizenship, employment opportunities, marital and parental rights, property and inheritance rights.<sup>6</sup> In this background, the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women specifically recognized the rights for women.

This declaration does not constitute any legal commitment, but it is of great importance as it constitutes a precedent and represents a moral commitment. In Article 1, the Declaration establishes in a generic form the principle of non-discrimination: "discrimination against women, as a negation or limitation of their equal right with men, is fundamentally unjust and constitutes an offense to human dignity."<sup>7</sup> The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is ratified by 180 states.

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### **CEDAW: The International Bill of Rights for Women (1979)**

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women describes the right of women to be free from discrimination and sets the core principles to protect this right. This convention provides the basis for achieving equality between men and women through ensuring women's equal opportunities in political and public life as well as education, health and employment. Article 15 of this convention clearly states that state parties shall accord to women equality with men before law.

Similarly, according to Article 16 of convention, State parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating with marriage

<sup>6</sup> UNHR. Combating discrimination against women. At [http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination\\_women.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Discrimination/Pages/discrimination_women.aspx)

<sup>7</sup>Convention on the Political Rights of Women. At <http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

and family relations and shall ensure on a basis of equality of men and women.<sup>8</sup> According to this article, women have the same right to enter into marriage with their free and full consent. Therefore, CEDAW is the only human rights treaty that affirms the reproductive rights of women. The Convention is one of the most ratified international treaties that have been ratified by 180 states.<sup>9</sup>

### **First World Conference on Women Mexico (1975)**

The first world conference on the status of women was convened to coincide with the 1975 International Women's Year. The Conference promoted the advancement of women by opening a worldwide dialogue on gender equality. This Conference was called for by the United Nations General Assembly to focus international attention on the need to develop prospect objectives and goals, efficient strategies, and action plans for the advancement of women. The General Assembly identified three key objectives that would become the basis for the work of the United Nations on behalf of women:

- Full gender equality and the elimination of gender discrimination;
- The integration and full participation of women in development;
- An increased contribution by women in the strengthening of world peace.

### **Second World Conference on Women Copenhagen (1980)**

For reviewing and assessing the Action Plan of 1975 women conference held at Mexico, the second world conference on women was conducted in 1980 in Copenhagen. This Conference found that there were some signs of difference visible between rights secured for women and women's capability to exercise such rights. The participants of the conference identified three areas for immediate, specific and focused action essential to meet the goals of peace, equality, and development, which were identified in first conference. These three areas were the equal access to education, opportunities of employment, and provision of adequate health care services.

In addition, second World Conference also formulated a Women Program of Action to advocate stronger national policies to guarantee women's ownership, inheritance, and control of property and children, and loss of nationality. Delegates at the Conference also advocated an end to all types of stereotype attitudes towards women.

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<sup>8</sup> Guidelines on Women's Empowerment. At <http://www.un.org/popin/unfpa/taskforce/guide/iatfwemp.gdl.html>

<sup>9</sup> - *The Human Rights of Women*. At <http://www.unfpa.org>. Accessed on May 21, 2014



### **Third World Conference on Women Nairobi (1985)**

World Conference on Women was held third time in 1985 at Nairobi. This World Conference on Women was aimed to signify the results of ten years of work on women empowerment by United Nations. The conference also appraised the progress made during UN's celebrating the 'Decade for Women'. Further, the conference also devised a new course of action for the advancement of women. In the conference, different areas of violence against women were given special focus. The greatest achievement of the Nairobi conference is that, despite the acute differences dividing the 157 member states, representatives were able to find a common ground on all the issues addressed and unanimously adopted the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies.<sup>10</sup>

### **International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (1994)**

In 1994, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo and the conference stipulated and asserted the relationship between progress and accomplishment of rights, gender equality, and gender equity. The conference also upheld the concepts of women's empowerment, and notions of gender equity, reproductive health, and women's rights. The conference recommended plan of Action of ICPD that provided the social, political, and economic empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement in their health status was a highly important end in itself as well as essential for the achievement of sustainable development.

### **Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing (1995)**

The Fourth World Conference on Women produced international obligations toward women's rights at wider range. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was adopted by representatives from 189 states. The Platform reflects a new international commitment to the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women. It builds on commitments made during the United Nations Decade for Women (1976-1985) and on related commitments made in the cycle of United Nations global conferences held in the 1990s.<sup>11</sup>

### **Beijing + 5 (2000)**

Beijing + 5 was a special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women: 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century". This session took place in June 2000 at United Nations Headquarters. At that session, governments

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<sup>10</sup> UN. Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies.  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/confer/nfls/Nairobi1985report.txt>

<sup>11</sup>- [http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/instruments\\_treaties](http://www.un.org/womenwatch/directory/instruments_treaties)

reaffirmed their commitment to the goals of the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and also adopted future actions and initiatives for the year 2000 and beyond.

## Millennium Development Goals (2000)

The gender equality and women's empowerment was included in eight objectives of the Millennium Development Goals in 2000 to be achieved until 2015. The United Nations Millennium Declaration was unanimously adopted at the conclusion of the Millennium Summit in 2000. It contains a statement of values, principles and eight specific goals with related targets that constitute an international agenda for the twenty-first century. Goal 3 is "to promote gender equality and empower women."<sup>12</sup> However, gender equality and women's empowerment are widely recognized as being essential to achieving the other seven Millennium Development Goals as well. Due to several initiatives taken by world community for ensuring MDGs, "Women are assuming more power in the world's parliaments, boosted by quota systems."<sup>13</sup>

Goal 3 of Millennium Development Goals is "to promote gender equality and empower women"

Nevertheless, ensuring quota for women in parliament is not enough for women empowerment. There is need to focus on the new challenges for women's empowerment and gender equality that have emerged over the past decade. These are constituted of the feminization of the AIDS epidemic, feminization of migration, and the need to make role of women in parliament more effective and relevant to achieve the social, economic, and

legal empowerment of women.

## Women Rights Initiatives: Especially Women's Right to Vote

Generally, women's rights can be classified into several general categories, with some specific rights applying to several categories. These rights are fundamental human rights such as social, economic, civil, cultural, legal, and political rights.

- ✚ Women's economic rights included their right to own and dispose of property, right to inherit property in her own name and control it; right to designate who will

<sup>12</sup>International Treaties and Agreements. <http://www.gender.no/Legislation> Accessed on May 17, 2014.

<sup>13</sup> UNDP. Millennium Development Goals: Promoting Gender Equality And Empower Women, Where Do We Stand. At [http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg\\_goals/mdg3/](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/mdgoverview/mdg_goals/mdg3/). Accessed May 27, 2014.

inherit her property, right to her own wages and income, and equality of survivor's rights upon death of a spouse. It also includes women access to jobs, trades, professions, equality of treatment within jobs, trades and professions including promotions, equal pay for equal work, access to credit in her own name, equal participation in labor unions and right to job protection when taking maternity leave.

- ✚ Women's Civil rights includes legal and contract rights such as equality of citizenship; general equality of rights under the law, be a witness in court, marriage, divorce and parenthood rights and basic civil freedoms such as free speech, freedom of religion and freedom to change nationality.

- ✚ Women's social and cultural rights includes the control over their bodies and persona, their rights of education (basic and higher); professions open to women, roles in religious institutions, treatment within the military, and moral codes. It also includes the choices regarding roles and responsibilities within the home, choices regarding roles and responsibilities regarding children, sexual choices, including sex outside of marriage, choice regarding family size and reproduction; and safety from sexual mistreatment, including rape, traffic in women, and exploitation of prostitutes and choice of dress.

Women's Political rights, include participation in the political field, including having a voice and influence, voting, running for, and serving in political offices, inheriting titles, and ruler ship in her own name.

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Several initiatives have been taken by the international community to deal with the women rights subject, specifically the women's right to vote such as:

- ✚ The First World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women urged Governments to formulate national strategies, targets, and priorities. It led to the establishment of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), which serve as an institutional framework for research, training and operational activities in the area of women and development.

- ✚ The legislative measures section of the Report of the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Copenhagen, July 1980, U.N. Doc A/CONF.94/35 (80.IV.30), insisted on:
  - Ratification and implementation of CEDAW;
  - Enact legislation to guarantee women the right to vote, right to be elected or appointed to political office, and to exercise public functions on equal terms with men;
  - Legislation to accelerate full and equal participation of women and to eliminate existing inequalities between women and men;
  - Provision of counseling and legal aid for women for effective legal protection
  - In addition, rejecting all those policies as being inhuman, that could perpetuate apartheid, racial discrimination, or any other ideologies based on theories of racial superiority or inferiority.<sup>14</sup>
  
- ✚ The Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies, adopted by third world conference on women urges member states to take constitutional and legal steps to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and tailor national strategies to facilitate the participation of women in efforts to promote peace and development. In December 1985, the UN General Assembly released a document on the Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The strategies recommended, amongst other things, to create a greater awareness of the Forward-looking Strategies and the role of women in Peace and Development. Consequently, in 1986, the First World Survey on the Role of Women in Development was published followed by The World's Women: Trends and Statistics in 1991.
  
- ✚ At the September 1994 International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (ICPD), many important recommendations were made for the advancement of women. These recommended actions included the establishment of mechanisms for women's equal participation and equitable representation at all levels of the political process and public life.
  
- ✚ Article 3 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that "The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to ensure the equal right of men and women to the enjoyment of all civil and political rights set forth in the present Covenant."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> *International Treaties and Agreements*. <http://www.gender.no/Legislation>

<sup>15</sup> *Convention on the Political Rights of Women*. <http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

✚ Article 7 of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women affirmed that “States parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right”:

- To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;
- To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;
- To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.<sup>16</sup>

Article 1 of The Convention on the Political Rights of Women affirmed that women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

✚ Article 3 of Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women states that “Women are entitled to the equal enjoyment and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil, or any other field.”<sup>17</sup>

✚ Article 1 of The Convention on the Political Rights of Women affirmed that women shall be entitled to vote in all elections on equal terms with men, without any discrimination.

Large number of states adopts the initiatives taken by international forums. For many countries, women right to vote marks a watershed moment in the fight for gender equality. However, the formal right to vote has not always meant that the women have freedom to vote and participate in political life. In some countries, women got right to vote in local elections before obtaining this right for national elections.

<sup>16</sup>International Treaties and Agreements. <http://www.gender.no/Legislation>.

<sup>17</sup><http://www.un.org/womenwatch>

The first country to award voting rights to women at national level was New Zealand in September 1893. The British colony of South Australia granted the right of full suffrage in 1894. Australia federated in 1901 and nation-wide women's suffrage followed promptly in 1902. Women of Australia's native people were excluded until 1949, when the right to vote in federal elections was granted to all indigenous people. Remaining restrictions were abolished in 1962.

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Other countries followed soon after New Zealand, with limited rights granted to women, were Sweden, Britain, Finland, and some U.S. states by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In November 1918, Britain's Parliament passed the Eligibility of Women Act, which allowed women to be elected to Parliament. Ten years later, the Representation of the People Act granted women the right to vote. Countries including Denmark, Iceland, the USSR, the Netherlands, Canada, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Sweden, Germany, and Luxembourg had granted the vote to women by 1920. The 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in 1919 guaranteed women the right to vote. The amendment was the culmination of more than 70 years of struggle by woman suffragists. By 1945, 46% of the world's countries allowed women to vote. In Pakistan, women have voting right since 1947.<sup>18</sup> More recently, Qatar in 2003, Kuwait in 2005, and U.A.E in 2006 also granted women right to vote. Today only Saudi Arabia, allows men to vote but not women.<sup>19</sup>

## Women Becoming Part of Parliament

Women participation in politics starts with obtaining of right to vote. Nevertheless, having achieved equal suffrage rights with the passage of time, women all around the world (21.9%) are still underrepresented in political process. Although about half of the population of every state is comprised of women but the average percentage of women in national parliaments is only 16% at global level. There are only seven woman head of the governments of around 190 countries in the world and only 7% of the world's cabinet ministers are women.<sup>20</sup> Currently almost all states provide the legal right for women to participate in politics. However, the lack of visible women representation showed that discrimination against women remains in societies. Some cultures,

<sup>18</sup> Inter-parliamentary Union. At <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm>. Accessed on May 201, 2014

<sup>19</sup> Inter-parliamentary Union. At <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/suffrage.htm> . Accessed on May 201, 2014

<sup>20</sup> Julli Ballington and Azza Karam. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, revised ed.* (Stockholm: Trydells Tryckeri AB, 2005), 25.

religions, and governments remain openly unreceptive to the concept of women in politics.

Currently, there is only one African and one European country namely Rwanda and Andorra respectively where women make up 50% of the national legislature. For years, Sweden has the highest percentage of women in its parliament. In 2003, however, Sweden was overpowered by Rwanda. There is considerable difference with regard to women representation in the national parliaments across regions of the world. Many highly developed Western countries fall far behind developing countries in their representation of women as political leaders. For instance, the United States ranked 83<sup>rd</sup> of 189 countries in percentage of women representatives. United States never had a female president.<sup>21</sup>

**Table 1: Top Ten States with Highest Number of Women Representation in Parliament**

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	2013	80	51	63.8%	2011	26	10	38.5%
2	Andorra	2011	28	14	50.0%	---	---	---	---
3	Cuba	2013	612	299	48.9%	---	---	---	---
4	Sweden	2010	349	157	45.0%	---	---	---	---
5	South Africa <sup>1</sup>	2009	400	179	44.8%	2009	53	18	34.0%
6	Seychelles	2011	32	14	43.8%	---	---	---	---
7	Senegal	2012	150	65	43.3%	---	---	---	---
8	Finland	2011	200	85	42.5%	---	---	---	---
9	Ecuador	2013	137	57	41.6%	---	---	---	---
10	Belgium	2010	150	62	41.3%	2010	71	28	39.4%

<sup>21</sup>- ibid pg 26

\* Figures correspond to the number of seats currently filled in Parliament

1 - South Africa: The figures on the distribution of seats do not include the 36 special rotating delegates appointed on an ad hoc basis, and all percentages given are therefore calculated based on the 54 permanent seats.

The data in the table above has been collected by the information compiled by the Union based on information provided by National Parliaments by January 1, 2014. The data in the table shows the top 10 countries in having maximum percentage of women in parliament.<sup>22</sup>

Rwanda led the list of 189 countries in women representation. Of the top 10 countries globally having maximum women representation, four countries are from African continent, four countries are from European continent, one each from South and North America. No country in Asia and Oceania (Australian) continents is included in top 10 countries having maximum women representation.

When compared on regional level, the Nordic countries (Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Greenland, Aland, and Norway etc) have maximum (42.1%) women representation in parliament followed by Americas (25.2 %), Europe-excluding Nordic (23.3 %), Sub-Saharan Africa (22.5%), Asia (18.4%), Pacific countries (16.2%), and Arab States (15.9%), shown in table 2 below:

Currently, there is only one African and one European country namely Rwanda and Andorra respectively where women make up 50% of the national legislature.

**Table 2: Highest number of women representation in parliaments at regional level**

Region	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both combined Houses
Nordic countries	42.1%	---	---
Americas	25.2%	25.3%	25.2%
Europe-OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	25.1%	22.8%	24.6%
Europe - OSCE member countries	23.5%	22.8%	23.3%

<sup>22</sup>Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in National Parliaments. <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>. Accessed May 27, 2014



excluding Nordic countries			
Sub-Saharan Africa	22.9%	19.8%	22.5%
Asia	18.9%	13.9%	18.4%
Pacific	13.4%	38.6%	16.2%
Arab States	17.8%	7.7%	15.9%
<i>Regions are classified by descending order of the percentage of women in the lower or single House</i>			

Source: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

Similarly, at the regional level in South Asia, virtually no progress was reported. Nepal, with the highest percentage of women parliamentarians (29.9%) in South Asia came in at just under 30 percent. Afghanistan comes the second with approximately 27% of women representation in parliament followed by Pakistan (20.7 % in lower house, 16.3 % in upper house), Bangladesh (20 %), India (11.4 %), Bhutan (8.5%), Maldives (6.8%), and Sri Lanka (5.8 %) shown in table 3 below:

**Table 3: Highest number of women representation in parliaments in South Asia**

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Nepal	2013	575	172	29.9%	---	---	---	---
2	Afghanistan	2010	249	69	27.7%	2011	102	28	27.5%
3	Pakistan	2013	323	67	20.7%	2012	104	17	16.3%
4	Bangladesh	2008	350	70	20.0%	---	---	---	---
5	India	2009	545	62	11.4%	2012	245	28	11.4%
6	Bhutan	2013	47	4	8.5%	2013	25	2	8.0%
7	Maldives	2009	74	5	6.8%	---	---	---	---
8	Sri Lanka	2010	225	13	5.8%	---	---	---	---

As compared to the previous records, more women than ever before are being elected to Parliaments around the world. If the current trend continues, gender parity is likely to achieve soon. According to the most recent annual review of Women in Parliament

released at UN headquarters in Geneva by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), an international organization of parliamentarians declared:

*We actually saw a 1.5 percentage increase globally in Parliaments as a result of elections that took place in 2013. That doesn't sound like a lot, but if you consider that we are now at almost 22 per cent of women in parliaments, if we were to continue with this rate of increase of 1.5 it means that within a generation, actually within 20 years, we should be able to reach globally gender parity in Parliament," IPU Secretary-General Anders B. Johnsson said. "That is something we never imagined."<sup>23</sup>*

Although there is visible improvement in number of women in parliaments yet studies suggest that overall, the proportion of women in legislatures is exceptionally low. The hindrances and common problems that women face in the way of parliamentary representation and effectiveness are generally:

- ✓ Exclusionary trade policies and processes;
- ✓ Lack of women's voices in development funding decisions;
- ✓ Heightened security regimes and gender-based violence;
- ✓ The feminization of poverty;
- ✓ Women's 'double burden';
- ✓ Traditional gender norms and values.

Indeed increasing women's meaningful participation in politics requires efforts to address the social, political, economic, cultural, religious barriers that constrain women to involve in politics.

## **Electoral Quotas in Global, Asian, and Regional Level**

For ensuring enhanced participation of women in politics and further to increase their representation in national parliaments there have been taken initiatives to identify more efficient mechanisms to reach a gender balance in political institutions. Electoral gender quotas are regarded to be an effective tool for enhanced women's representation in parliaments. Article 4 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) identifies that special actions such as quotas are needed to start the process of women's political representation. The convention notes that such

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<sup>23</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. Annual Review of Women in Parliament. At <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e> . Accessed May 5, 2014

measures are intended to be temporary, and ending 'when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved'.<sup>24</sup>

The central idea behind quota systems is to engage women into political positions. Quota systems aim at ensuring that women constitute at least a critical minority of 30 or 40%, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or a government.<sup>25</sup>

The greatest increases in women's parliamentary representation have occurred in those

Quota systems aim at ensuring that women constitute at least a critical minority of 30 or 40%, whether it is a candidate list, a parliamentary assembly, a committee, or a government.

countries where quotas are in use. Among the top 10 countries (table 1) with maximum number of parliamentarians (in lower houses), nine countries had adopted an electoral quota system for women. Electoral quotas have been used in 22 countries holding elections in 2012. Where there were introduced legislated quotas, women took 24 % of seats and where there were voluntary quotas, women

obtained 22 % of the seats. Women achieved only 12 % of the seats where no quotas were used.<sup>26</sup>

Generally, there are three different types of quotas in electoral systems existing today. Each system is implemented through variety of mechanisms.

### Reserved Seats (Constitutional and/or Legislative)

The legal quotas are part of country's constitution that set a definite number or percentage of parliamentary seats for which other groups are ineligible to contest.

These are called as reserved seats and may involve appointment or election, and may be implemented according to a given process or formula. Samoa is a recent example of a country that has passed legislation establishing a gender quota system by introducing reserved seats for women.<sup>27</sup> Reserved seats regulate the number of women elected

<sup>24</sup> United Nations, *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women*, adopted 18 December 1979, accessed 6 March 2014

<sup>25</sup> Quota Project. Global Database of Quotas of Women.

At <http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutquotas.cfm> accessed 11 April 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in parliament in 2012: The Year in Perspective. At <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2012e.pdf>. Accessed at May 13, 2014

<sup>27</sup> PoA. Electoral Quotas for Women: an international Overreview.

[http://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_Departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/pubs/rp/rp1314/ElectoralQuotas](http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1314/ElectoralQuotas)

through party lists of nominations or direct constituency-based elections. Constitutional or legislative quotas normally try to reserve a number of places on electoral lists for female candidates or reserve a number of seats in an assembly for women. It is done through a clause in the constitution or by legislation that stipulates that a certain percentage or number among those elected representatives must be women. Increasingly gender quotas are being introduced using reserved seat systems. There are many countries where a quota has been imposed through the constitution. These include Pakistan, Bangladesh, Rwanda, Uganda, and Afghanistan where seats are reserved for women in legislatures.

**Table 4: Countries with Reserved Seats Quota System**

Sr#	Country	Total Seats	Women in Parliament	Reserved seats for women in National Assembly	Details
1	Afghanistan	249	69	68 (27%)	
2	Bangladesh	350	69	50 (13%)	
3	Burundi	105	34	30%	The National Assembly is composed of 60% Hutu and 40% Tutsi, including at least 30% women, as well as three deputies from the Twa ethnicity (Article 164 (1) of the 2005 Constitution).
4	China	2987	699	23.4%	
5	Djibouti	57	7	10%	Each party must ensure that candidates of either sex form at least 10% of elected members of the national assembly (Decree 2002-0253, Article 2).
6	Eretria	105	22	30%	
7	Jordan	148	18	15 seats	
8	Kenya	350	65	47	
9	Kyrgyzstan	120	28	30%	As amended in 2011, the Electoral Law specifies a 30% quota for either sex on electoral lists (Code on Elections, Article 60 (3)).
10	Niger	113	15	10%	At the announcement of final results, the proportion of elected candidates of either sex should not be less than 10%' (Article 3 of Law 2000/08 establishing a quota system for elected offices).

11	Pakistan	342	66	60 (17%)	
12	Rwanda	80	51	30%	
13	Saudi Arabia	151	30	20%	
14	Samoa	49	2	10%	
15	Somalia	275	38	30%	
16	South Sudan	332	88	25%	
17	Tanzania	350	126	30%	
18	Uganda	375	131	121	Article 78(1) of the Constitution states that the parliament shall consist of one woman representative for every district. There are 112 districts in Uganda.
19	Zimbabwe	270	85		The new constitution of Zimbabwe adopted in May 2013 provides the following system of reserved seats for women: "for the life of the first two Parliaments after the effective date, additional sixty women members, six from each of the provinces into which Zimbabwe is divided, elected through a system of proportional representation based on the votes cast for candidates representing political parties in a general election for constituency members in the provinces" (Constitution, 2013, Part 4, Article 124).

Usually types of quota systems are associated with specific regions. Reserved seats, for example, are the most common gender quota system used in South Asia and in the Arab region, where this type of quota system has been adopted for other under-represented groups. Reserved seats have also been adopted in a number of Sub-Saharan countries, as well as in some countries of Asia and the Pacific.

### Legislative Candidate Quotas

The legislative quota is provided in the constitution or in law of the state for setting a minimum part of women on candidate lists. Such quota is incorporated in the national or electoral law of a state and implemented through an article in the electoral law affirming that a specific number among those elected must be women. These types of quota

require political parties to include certain proportion of women in candidates list and further support them through incentives and legal sanctions. During the country's transition to democracy Timor Leste, United Nations provided special funds to support the training of women candidates and also awarded extra time to parties with a minimum of 30 per cent women on their candidate lists on radio and television.<sup>28</sup>

More or less 33 countries all around the globe are using legislative candidate quotas. These include Angola, Argentina, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Brazil, France, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Spain, and Uzbekistan. In addition, some countries entail legal sanctions on political parties if they fail to adhere to gender-based quota obligations. More recently, the Republic of Ireland has enacted law making it mandatory for the country's political parties to nominate at least 30 per cent of political candidates from both genders, or chose to lose half of the funding of political campaign. Similarly, South Africa is also considering amendments to its Electoral Act to make it mandatory for all political parties to have at least 50 per cent representation of women in the lead-up to the 2014 elections.

### Political Party Quotas (Voluntary)

Political Party Quotas are in fact voluntary regulations imposed by political parties to include a certain percentage or a number of women as electoral candidates. This type of quota is often written into the statutes of political parties. The political party quota system prevails in all continents including Europe, Africa, Latin America, and Nordic States but very few states of Asia have adopted this model. Such quotas have contributed greatly to increasing women representation in national parliaments across the world. However, in some countries, political parties do provide for women quota but these do not necessarily adhere to their commitments.

Some countries entail legal sanctions on political parties if they fail to adhere to gender-based quota

Nearly 54 countries have adopted voluntary political party quotas system. These includes Australia, Austria, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kenya, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Niger, Romania, Spain, Sweden, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, and United Kingdom.

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<sup>28</sup>S Sunn Bush. *International politics and the spread of quotas for women in legislatures*, *International Organization*, 65(1), pp. 103 37

According to the information compiled by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, among the top 30 ranked countries with over of 30% of women representation in lower house of parliament across the world, 23 countries are complying to any one type of quota system. Essentially, most of these countries have political party quotas. Voluntarily adoption of quotas for women by political parties shows there acceptance of idea of gender equality as party policy and not merely as official compulsion.

**Table 5: Type of quota system adopted by top 50 IPU-ranked countries for women**

Chamber	Reserved seats	Legislated candidate quotas	Voluntary party quotas
Lower or single House	9	21	-
Upper House	4	7	-
-			26

Sources: IPU [Women in national parliaments](#) and IDEA [Quota Projectdatabase \[45\]](#)

It is important to note that one country may have adopted single quota or it has several quota types at the same time. Electoral quotas proved to be very efficient tool to start a process of inclusion of women in male-dominated political world, at least in term of numbers. It has already been evident from the comparison between countries with and without quotas that the representation of women in parliaments is higher in countries with quotas. Nevertheless, if the quota models are unclear, incompatible with the electoral system of country, there are no sanctions for non-compliance of quota, no rules about the ranking on the list, quotas may prove to be an inefficient measure to increase political representation of women.

Among the top 30 ranked countries with over of 30% of women representation in lower house of parliament across the world, 23 countries are complying with any one type of quota system

### Electoral Quota of Women in Pakistan: Historical Perspective

The women reservation in politics in the subcontinents is dated back from the Nationalist Movements in 1920s. The leading organizations of the time like Women's Indian Association, All India Women Conference, and other organizations like The Indian National Congress and All India Muslim League, all supported this idea of

separate allocation for women in political arena.<sup>29</sup> However, British rulers did not accept the suggestion. The principal of women representation through reserved seats were for the first time accepted in the Government of India Act, 1935. According to this Act, women were awarded with 3 % of quota.

Since the creation of Pakistan in 1947, the representation of women in the National Assembly has been varying. Throughout electoral history of Pakistan, women were mostly granted reserved seats through indirect election to increase their representation in parliament. In the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, there were two women members one from West Pakistan and one from East Pakistan.<sup>30</sup> Under the first constitution (1956) of Pakistan, women were provided 10 seats in Parliament and women were allowed to vote based on dual suffrage, i.e. voting for general seats and voting for women reserved seats at the same time. Unfortunately, no elections held under this constitution as military toppled the existing civilian government and abrogated this constitution in 1958.

The second constitution of 1962 provided 6 seats for women, 3 from East Wing and 3 from West Wing. According to this constitution, women were to be elected by the assemblies through indirect elections. In 1969, General Ayub Khan announced Legal Framework Order (LFO), which provided for 6 reserved seats from West Pakistan and 7 from East Pakistan. After the separation of East Wing, the then National Assembly adopted the constitution of 1973, which established the bicameral system of parliament under which 10 seats were fixed for women in lower house and no seat was reserved in upper house of the parliament, and this allocation was made at least for two General Elections or ten years, which was to come later.<sup>31</sup>

The quota for women reserved seats was revised again during the decade of 1970s - 1980s when international community stressed the need of empowerment of women. United Nations highlighted the significance of gender equality through several initiatives like the first UN Conference on Women held in Mexico in 1975 followed by celebrations of UN Decade for Women. Women's groups as well as the states in South Asia were highly affected by these moves.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Raman, Vasanthi. *The Implementation of Quotas for Women: The Indian Experience*, International IDEA, Stockholm, 2003

<sup>30</sup> Aurat Foundation. *Legislative Quotas for Women: A Global and South Asian Overview of Types & Numbers*. Published by Legislative Watch Program for Women Empowerment.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*: pg 30

<sup>32</sup> Ali, Shaheen. *Law, Islam and the Women's Movement in Pakistan*, in Shirin M. Rai (ed.). *International Perspectives on Gender and Democratization*. (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 24.



In 1985 under the Revival of Constitution Order (President Order 14 of 1985), the quota for reserved seats for women was increased from 10 seats to 20 seats. Subsequently, the period of extension was also extended to 3 General Elections or for the period of 10 years. Nevertheless, in 1990 provision of reserved seats lapsed and there were no reserved seats fixed for women in next elections held in 1990, 1993 and 1997. Female representation in assemblies had become low during this period. The Report of the Commission of Inquiry for Women (August, 1997), the National Plan for Action (NPA) (September, 1998) and the National Policy for Development and Empowerment of Women (March, 2002) attempted to respond to Pakistan's treaty commitments to promote women's free, equal and full political participation. In this background, following Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women held in Beijing in September 1995, human rights activists, civil society groups, and women rights organizations started campaign to introduce 33 per cent representation of women in all the elected bodies of the country.<sup>33</sup>

In 1999, General Pervez Musharraf took over the country by imposing emergency in the country. In 2000, under pressure from international community & civil society here in Pakistan, military regime of Pervez Musharraf adopted the Devolution of Power Plan and established the same set-up of local government bodies in all four provinces of Pakistan. The devolution of power

*Musharraf's Devolution power plan guaranteed 33 percent quota for women at all three levels of the local government*

plan guaranteed a 33 per cent quota for women at all three levels of the local government. Elections were held in local government in 2000 in which members of the union councils were elected directly but the *tehsil* and *zila* (district) council nazims were elected indirectly through an electoral college formed by the elected councilors within the union councils. The union council was composed of 21 members—one chairman (nazim), one vice-chairman (naib-nazim), eight general Muslim seats, four women Muslim seats, four Muslim peasant/worker seats, two women peasant/worker seats and one religious minority seat. In this way, 6 out of 21 seats were reserved for women in Union Council in local government. Thus, the actual quota percentage was 29 percent

<sup>33</sup> Aurat Foundation. Legislative Quotas for Women: A Global and South Asian Overview of Types & Numbers. Published by Legislative Watch Program for Women Empowerment. Pg 31

and not 33 percent, which is usually quoted. This is because there were no quotas allocated for the women nazims or the minority seats.<sup>34</sup>

Military government restored the constitution of 1973 with some major amendments through Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002. The LFO provided for women with 17 per cent of representation in parliaments, allocating 60 seats in National Assembly and for the first time 17 seats for women in Senate. The LFO also fixed 17.6 per cent reserve seats for women in each of the Provincial Assemblies in the General Elections held on 2002. In the next General Elections held on 2008 and 2013, the same percentage of women was again elected on the reserved seats, under the amended Constitution.<sup>35</sup>

According to the IDEA, the overall proportion of the representation of women in the parliament is 20.7% and it is the third highest proportion of women representation in South Asian region, after 29.9% in Nepal and 27.7% in Afghanistan.<sup>36</sup> The table below shows the representation of women in different legislatures of Pakistan.

**Table 6: the representation of women in different legislatures of Pakistan**

Sr #	Legislatures	Total seats	Women Elected Directly	Women Elected on Reserved Seats	Seats Held by Women
1	1st Legislature Aug10,47-Oct24,54	30	-	-	2
2	2nd Legislature May02,55-Oct07,58	80	--	---	0
3	3rd Legislature June08,62-June12,65	156	6	--	6
4	4th Legislature June 12,65-Mar25,69	156	6	---	6
5	5th Legislature Apr14,72-Jan 10,77	144	6	---	6
6	6th Legislature Mar26,77-July05,77	210	1	10	11
7	7th Legislature Mar20,85-May29,88	217	1	21	22
8	8th Legislature Nov30,88-Aug06,90	217	4	20	24
9	9th Legislature Nov3,90-July17,93	217	2	---	2
10	10th Legislature Oct15,93-Nov5,96	217	4	---	4
11	11th Legislature Feb15,97-Oct12,99	217	6	---	6
12	12th Legislature Nov16,02-to date	342	13	61**	74

\*\*Including 1 woman elected from seats reserved for non-Muslims

Source: <http://www.pildat.org>

<sup>34</sup> Graff, I., 2003. 'Women's Representation in Pakistani Politics: The Quota Systems under the Musharraf Regime'. Paper presented at the International Conference on Women and Politics in Asia, Halmstad, Sweden, 6-7 June.)

<sup>35</sup> Election Commission of Pakistan. Composition of national Assembly.

At [http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/CompSeats/Composition\\_of\\_NA.pd](http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/CompSeats/Composition_of_NA.pd). Accessed at May 23, 2014

<sup>36</sup> PILDAT. *Women Representation in Pakistan's Parliament*. At <http://www.pildat.org>. Accessed at May 23, 2014

Similarly, the table 7 below shows women quota in National Assembly of Pakistan province wise established during 2002 General Elections and is continuing to date:

**Table 7: Provincial Representation of women in National Assembly**

Province/Territory	General Seats	Reserved Seats for women	Reserved Seats for Non- Muslims (Nation-wide)	Total
Punjab	148	35		183
Sindh	61	14		75
NWFP	35	8		43
Balochistan	14	3		17
Federally-Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)	12			12
Islamabad	2			2
Non-Muslims			10	10
Total	272	60	10	342

Source: [http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/CompSeats/Composition\\_of\\_NA.pd](http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/CompSeats/Composition_of_NA.pd)

In addition to national assembly, the quota for women representation is also applied in the all-provincial assemblies of Pakistan shown in table 8 below:

**Table 8: the number of women in each Provincial Assembly of the country**

Province	Total Seats	SEATS RESERVED FOR WOMEN
Punjab	371	66
Sindh	168	29
NWFP	124	22
Balochistan	65	11
Total	728	128

Source: [http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/CompSeats/Composition\\_of\\_NA.pd](http://www.ecp.gov.pk/Misc/CompSeats/Composition_of_NA.pd)

## Civic Actions for Women Empowerment

*“Every country deserves to have the best possible leader and that means that women have to be given a chance to compete. If they’re never allowed to compete in the electoral process then the countries are really robbing themselves of a great deal of talent.”<sup>37</sup>*

Madeleine K. Albright

<sup>37</sup><https://www.ndi.org/womens-political-participation>

Fair participation and representation of women in political arena is very much essential for stronger democracy. It is now widely believed that World cannot achieve the true spirit of democracy if half of its population remains underrepresented. To tackle this issue there is intense need to empower women to be able to participate in all spheres of life especially in politics by engaging them in political parties, political processes, governing bodies, human rights activist groups, & institutions and enabling them well-informed citizens. Repeatedly, mostly the governments declare their commitments to enhance women civic and political participation; however it is quite unrealistic to expect from governments alone to safeguard women place in society.

In this backdrop, there is need of joint efforts put by all relevant stakeholders to advocate governments to take measures of women empowerment. Civil society including non-governmental organizations, human rights groups, women's support groups, and community based organizations, and other civic and religious groups must play an active role in pressing forward the measure of increasing women's representation. These groups should also help women already in politics to equip them with the essential skills to ensure that issues raised by women are taken into account in the political and legislative debates. Additionally, to empower women and to enable them to participate in politics, it is necessary to extend the scope of women's participation at the grass-roots level in locally elected bodies. This also constitutes an important step towards confidence building and facilitates the sharing of experiences.

Increasing women empowerment and meaningful participation requires effective strategies and plan of actions to address the obstacles and build women's capacity to engage them in political process. Here are few recommendations for actions to increase women participation and strategies that enables women to be an effective political actor in male dominated society.

### **Addressing Obstacles in the Way of Women's Participation**

First step to empower women is to remove all social, cultural, religious, economic, and political barriers that provide restrictions in empowering women. These measures must constitute of following:

- Redefining the term politics that often excludes women form decision-making process;
- Developing and implementation of policies and programs at international and national level to eliminate women's poverty by economic empowerment;
- Supporting and developing effective strategies to counter the gender-based violence;

- Promotion of policies that promote gender-balance power relationship within the home, workplace and at community level;
- Promotions of policies that transfer responsibility for providing social services to the individuals;
- Disrupting of traditional male political actors by promoting poor, marginalized, and disabled female role models.

### **Case Study**

The COMUS is Association of United Communities of Usulután (COMUS), El Salvador. The COMUS uses a strong gender perspective to advocate for the right of disabled people in the municipality of San Francisco Javier, El Salvador. The organization has worked to support women in region in gaining access to different political structures, such as in municipality development committees and community development councils. They have supported women in participating in municipal elections and have provided trainings on capacity building of both female and male leaders on gender and attitudinal change. In this background, to address gender discrimination in schools, COMUS has facilitated a program that trained 52 male and female teachers in gender theory.<sup>38</sup>

### **Enabling Women to Effectively Participate in Political Life**

The next step is to enable women to participate effectively in political life. For this purpose, following measures can be taken:

- Capacity building and raising awareness of women rights to have their voices heard at decision-making level;
- Women confidence building through trainings, monitoring, and education;
- Engaging women in feminist movement, community meetings and other social movements;
- Encouraging Women's rights civil society organizations and government institutions at national and international level.

### **Case Study**

Institute of Politics and Governance (IPG) is a research, education, and training, centre for NGOs, citizens' organizations and local government in Philippines. It focuses on promoting participatory democracy, people-centered development, and good local government in Philippines. IPG is also secretariat of the Barangay-Bayan Governance Consortium (BBGC), which is a civil society response to the issues of decentralization

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<sup>38</sup>- Pedwell Carolyn. *Just Politics: Women transforming political spaces* (London: One World Action 2008), 18.

that were created by adopting the Local Government Code in 1991. In this backdrop, IPG successfully influenced government policy through their three main programs that focused on good governance, active citizenship, and women in governance, and subsequently promoted political engagements, increased the participation of women in politics, and helped contributed to more empowered and sustainable communities.<sup>39</sup>

## Ensuring Women Political Participation

Women participation can be ensured through following measures:

- By increasing electoral quotas of women from at least 30% to 50% in formal politics;
- Promotion of already available proportional representation system;
- Guaranteeing quotas are set in selection and nomination process of political parties;
- Supporting of local, national, and regional level of political transformation through international advocacy initiatives.

## Case Study

In France, the 1999 amendment in the constitution enriched the principle of parity, where inter alia, 50 % of candidates nominated for elections were required as being women. According to provision, for the election of the candidates to the lower house, political parties have to face financial sanctions if they do not put forward 50 percent candidates of both sexes. Additionally, political parties may also lose part of public funding when the differences between the numbers of each sex goes beyond of the total number of the candidate of list.<sup>40</sup>

## Supporting Women in Formal Politics

There can be taken following measures that could support women in formal politics:

- Creation of steering groups and political alliances to bring together women and men on gender issues;
- By Utilizing media to increase awareness about the messages of gender equality and to challenge conventional role of women;
- By generating knowledge of political issues and strategies for reforming traditional systems by dialogue;

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<sup>39</sup> Pedwell Carolyn. *Just Politics: Women transforming political spaces* (London: One World Action 2008), 15.

<sup>40</sup> *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties*. <http://www.undp.org>

- Developing alliance between feminist movements and supporters of male dominance in all spheres of political fields.

### **Case Study**

In Morocco, women for several years have been struggling to increase the social and political participation, with the help of women's sections of political parties, and independent organizations connected with parties. Their joint efforts were a significant factor that leads to the reform of the Family Code (Mudawana) in 2003, which addressed the cultural and judicial discrimination women faced due to inferior judicial status in the previous code.

This development not only informed women but also influenced other changes to women's socioeconomic and political status. Coalitions of women CSOs and party members worked to raise civic awareness about the value of women's political participation and provisions for women's equal rights in the Moroccan constitution. A broad arrangement of local and international women's organizations organized to advocate for a national quota system, slowly building public awareness about and media attention to women's representation through awareness campaigns, public seminars and conferences, and workshops/training activities. Resultantly, there emerged a public discourse around issues of women's exclusion, women's right to participation, and the role of quotas.<sup>41</sup>

### **Enhancing Accountability to Women**

Women empowerment can also be ensured through accountability process such as:

- Holding accountability of state government to international commitments related to the Human and women Rights like CEDAW, Beijing +5 and Millennium Development Goals etc;
- Ensuring accountability of political parties to their promises and manifesto through civil society organizations and other feminist groups;
- Building networks that held responsible for gauging progress of women participation and to ensure accountability of political parties and government institutions in this regard;
- Utilizing media to hold political parties accountable to election promises and to put pressure on government to address critical gender issues;

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<sup>41</sup> UNDP. *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties*. At <http://www.undp.org> . Accessed at May 25, 2014

- Pressurizing political parties and government to eliminate the corruption, through International agencies and feminist movements.

## **Case Study**

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) works for the enhancement and strengthening of democracy through the institution of parliament. It does this based on the understanding that there is a fundamental relationship between gender equality in politics and democracy, and that more precisely the involvement of women in all aspects of political life is key to a more just and equitable society, as well as to stronger, more representative democracy. In 199, the IPU consolidated these views in its Universal Declaration of Democracy, article 4 of which explicitly endorsed the link between democracy and a 'genuine partnership between men and women in the management of public affairs'.

Accepting that genuine democracy cannot exist without the equal participation of men and women in politics, the IPU has been at the forefront of efforts to support women in this field. More specifically, in working positively towards the promotion of women's participation in parliament, the IPU has also taken on board a number of the key strategies.

Having perceived the need to fill a gap in terms of research and data collection, the IPU set out to collate and analyze information on the status of women in parliaments worldwide. Its earliest research effort in 1975 synthesized the experiences of women in 32 countries. Today, the IPU is the world's leading source of data on the proportion of seats held by women in 13 national parliaments. Using these data, the IPU has been able to monitor the trends in the participation of women parliamentarians and to present an accurate depiction of their situation.<sup>42</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Women across the world including in Pakistan is being empowered on social, economic and most significantly on political fronts. Although quota system has enabled women to get access to parliaments, however, the need is to look forward beyond quota system to create atmosphere where women like men can easily participate in political processes. In context of Pakistan, political quota on all three tiers of government has empowered women, but there is need to address several social, cultural, economic, and political hindrances behind women underrepresentation in national parliament and in all fields of life.

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<sup>42</sup> Palmieri and Jabre. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers, revised ed.* (Stockholm: Trydells Tryckeri AB, 2005), 214.