

## **GUIDELINES FOR ENHANCING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS WITHIN MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL GENDER POLICY NETWORK**

### **Synopsis**

Members of the IGPN met in Turkey from 21-23 January 2009 for a training of trainers workshop held in partnership with International IDEA and Gender Links of Southern Africa. Experts from South Africa and Tanzania facilitated the workshop that brought together members from Albania; Armenia; Azerbaijan; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Bulgaria; Czech Republic; Estonia; Georgia; Hungary; Kazakhstan; Kosovo; Kyrgyz Republic; Lithuania; Macedonia; Moldova; Mongolia; Montenegro; Romania; Russia; Serbia; Slovakia; Tajikistan; Ukraine; Uzbekistan. The training made use of the access-participation-retention-transformation framework devised by Thenjiwe Mtintso (see *Annex A*). Through the sharing of case studies, best practices and strategies the group drew up the guidelines contained in this document for advancing women's representation and participation in political decision-making in the IGPN countries.

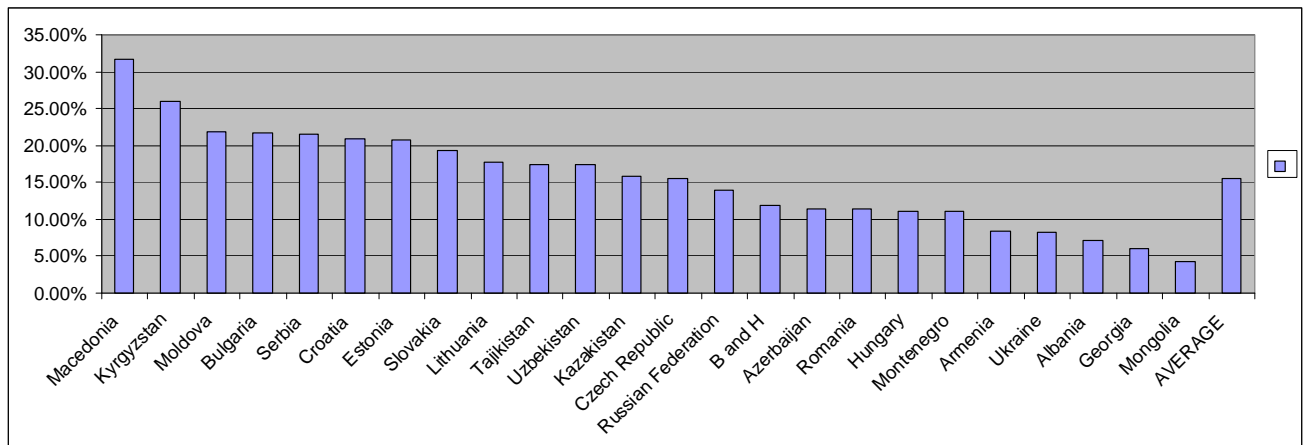
### **Context**

The IGPN member countries have all emerged from socialist or communist backgrounds. In the transition to free market democracies, many have experienced an initial decline in women's representation in political decision-making. Emerging from an era of state feminism, the women's movement is still struggling to find its voice and find its feet. Ironically, freedom of choice has often led to women being even more marginalised within political parties and systems that remain patriarchal in outlook and practise.

### **Access**

Democracy is understood to be government for the people, by the people, of whom 52% are women. To the extent that parliaments in a democracy aim to be a mirror image of society, they must reflect all elements of that society. Sex is the most basic demographic factor in any society.

Measured against this yardstick, countries of the IGPN lag far behind. Women's representation in the parliaments of these countries ranges from 31.7% in Macedonia to 4.2% in Mongolia (see graph below). At 15.3% the average representation of women in political decision-making in our countries is below that of Europe (21%) as well as below the global average (18.6%). However, countries in our midst like Macedonia and Kyrgystan have made rapid advances in this arena. This shows that with concerted will and action change is possible.



### ***Political parties***

Political parties are the custodians of political participation. Across the globe and in our region, women toil behind the scenes in their parties, running campaigns and administration without holding leadership positions or being supported to run for political office. Political parties, with the assistance of the women's movement should:

- ✓ Conduct gender audits of their policies and practices and use these to devise plans for ensuring women's equal participation and representation in party policies and practices.
- ✓ Adopt and implement voluntary quotas for women's representation (see below) whether or not these are required by law.
- ✓ Incorporate gender considerations into their manifestos.
- ✓ Promote a gender sensitive culture in the way that that business is conducted, for example meeting times; language used etc.
- ✓ Give women visibility in public events, campaign materials and in the media.
- ✓ Provide women candidates with the necessary support (human, financial, material).
- ✓ Build the capacity of women through mentorship programmes; on-the-job experience; study visits; exposure and any other strategies for enhancing the confidence and competence of women in public office.
- ✓ Conduct study visits and promote exchanges for both men and women with parties that have succeeded in promoting women's effective participation in their structures and processes.
- ✓ Institute gender training for party functionaries.
- ✓ Create data bases of women willing to run for political office.
- ✓ Publicise the benefits to the party of gender awareness and responsiveness.

### ***Quotas and electoral systems***

Because of the past history of political control, there is a resistance to quotas, although the audit of electoral systems and quotas conducted during the workshop (see *Annex B*) shows that some form of quota (either legislated or voluntary political party quotas) is in place in over half the member countries. Thirteen of the 23 countries have a PR electoral system that globally has been shown to be more favourable to women's representation. In keeping with global trends, it is no coincidence that in the IGPN

region the countries that have the highest representation of women have both a PR and quota system in place.

Four countries in the region have a majoritarian system and the other six a mixed system. There, are however, live debates in several countries regarding which electoral system is best for ensuring transparent, accountable governance.

To enhance women's political representation through electoral systems and quotas there is need to:

- ✓ Ensure that gender considerations are integrated into debates on electoral reform. Changes to the PR system should not be at the expense of reducing women's participation.
- ✓ Advocate for legislated quotas and lobby parliaments to adopt these. The law embodies what a society believes to be right. If a society subscribes to the principles of gender equality it should be willing to enshrine women's equal representation in political decision-making into law until such time as this becomes a matter of course.
- ✓ Advocate for the target for women in decision-making to be raised to 50% and ensure that this is standardized across all areas of decision-making (local, national, in cabinet etc).
- ✓ Accompany legislated quotas with public education and awareness campaigns about why it is necessary to level the playing field for women and men in politics.
- ✓ Conduct research and document progress, including gathering first hand accounts of women who can serve as role models.

### **Participation and retention**

Research globally and in the IGPN region shows that even when women enter political decision-making they are often marginalized and do not stay or progress in public life. The reasons for this include hostile institutional environments; the challenges of balancing family and work life (and lack of support for doing so); disillusionment; lack of experience and capacity; political intrigue and maneuvering. To advance women's effective participation and retention in politics there is need to ensure that:

- ✓ Women receive induction on rules and procedures so that they can contribute effectively to debates and law making and that this is followed up with on-the-job support and training.
- ✓ Women are equally represented in the leadership structures of political decision-making (for example as mayors, speakers, chairs of committees).
- ✓ Institutional norms and procedures (for example meeting times) are reviewed and made family friendly.
- ✓ The contributions of women in political decision-making are documented and affirmed.
- ✓ Participation and retention are monitored, evaluated and publicized so that continuous corrective measures can be taken by civil society and political parties.

## **Transformation**

The impact of women in decision-making has been a mixed one. While some women have actively used their political space to advance gender equality, others have been neutral or even negative towards this issue. IGPN's philosophy around women in decision-making extends beyond numbers. In addition to advocating measures to ensure women's access to political decision-making and to empowering women to participate effectively, we promote a transformative model of leadership that is:

- ✓ Visionary and pioneering.
- ✓ Innovative and creative.
- ✓ Brave and progressive.
- ✓ Principled and transparent.
- ✓ Strategic and analytical.
- ✓ Competent and critical.
- ✓ Proactive and responsive.
- ✓ Consistent and persistent.
- ✓ Has a strong social justice perspective and integrates a gender perspective into all areas of endeavour.
- ✓ Ensures that other women are empowered and supported in the process.
- ✓ Changes the agenda.
- ✓ Changes institutional norms.
- ✓ Builds networks and alliances.

## **Advocacy**

To advance women's representation and participation in decision-making we will make use of the following strategies identified through the case studies presented by our members and partners:

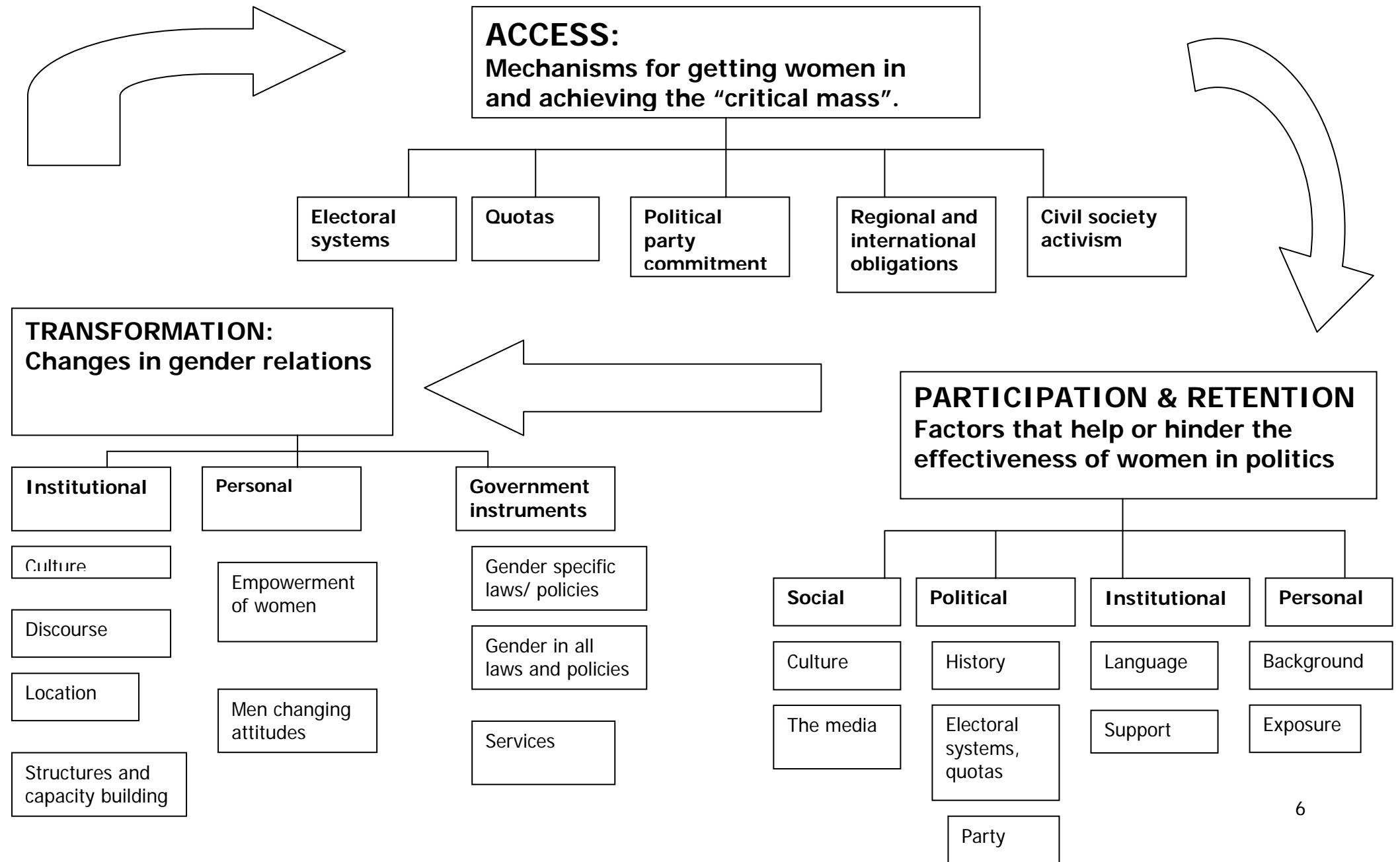
- ✓ Targeted action plans and strategies; accepting nothing but concrete outcomes.
- ✓ Packaging of demands.
- ✓ Naming and shaming.
- ✓ Use of campaigns and images that will capture the public imagination like the zebra and zipper campaigns.
- ✓ Building the women's movement and coalitions, especially at the grassroots level.
- ✓ Building alliances with women in politics across the spectrum.
- ✓ Persistent and focused lobbying of decision-makers to adopt binding commitments to women's equal representation and participation.
- ✓ Building alliances with progressive men.
- ✓ Working with key institutions such as parliament.
- ✓ Exposure to international and regional experience and expertise.
- ✓ Anticipating and preparing for backlashes and unexpected outcomes (staying ahead of the game).
- ✓ Identifying and seizing opportunities; formal and informal.
- ✓ Building networks and alliances with the media.
- ✓ Recognising, celebrating, documenting and publicizing our successes.
- ✓ Sustaining the momentum.

## **The media**

The media plays a key role in shaping public opinions and perceptions. Research shows that in all our countries women are under-represented in the media and often portrayed in narrow and limiting roles. Women in politics are frequently demonized or presented as abnormal. Strategies for promoting women's political representation and participation need to include:

- ✓ Monitoring, research and advocacy on the representation and portrayal of women in the media.
- ✓ Gender and media literacy in schools and in journalism studies.
- ✓ Engagement with media policy regulators, owners, managers and editors, especially in the public media.
- ✓ Citizen mobilization to take up complaints against sexist coverage and advertisements with relevant bodies.
- ✓ Media training for women politicians and activists to assist in packaging and targetting messages for the media.
- ✓ Production of creative materials and organization of visually engaging events that will catch the attention of the media.
- ✓ Regular news briefs; sharing of useful contacts; building of relationships and alliances with the media.
- ✓ Engaging with women's magazines.
- ✓ Working with cartoonists and using humour as a way to challenge gender stereotypes.
- ✓ Using gender benders like how often male politicians change nappies or do the house work to sensitise society to the challenges that women face.
- ✓ Mounting gender and media awards that affirm gender aware coverage.

**Annex A: Thenjiwe Mtintso's conceptual framework**



## ANNEX B: AUDIT OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS AND QUOTAS

COUNTRY	GLOBAL RANK	% WOMEN		ELECTORAL SYSTEM	QUOTA SYSTEM	EU?	Challenges	Opportunities	
		Lower/ single	Upper					Next election	Comments
Macedonia	20	31.7%	-	PR	Legislated national and local	C	Could not fulfill the quota	?	Training with UNDP support
Kyrgyzstan	34	25.6%		PR (Total) every fourth name)	Legislated (partial)	N	No chance to be member of EU; financial dependence; nomadic	2012	Active civil society; mobilising; freedom is enhrined in culture.
Moldova	49	21.8%		PR	Voluntary	N		April 2009	
Bulgaria	50	21.7%		PR-intro of majoritarian system	None- tried at party level	Y	Decline in women representation some women do not want to enter politics Could be further decline	June (?) 2009	Enlightened leadership; new parties coming up
Serbia	51	21.6%		PR	Legislated and voluntary	N	Radical parties	2012	Just had elections
Estonia	54	20.8%		PR	Voluntary party quota one paty	Y	Half women from one party do not have the support from voters	2011	
Slovakia	61	19.3%		PR	Voluntary party	Y	Only small parties apply this	2010	Voters can decide from the list if women are promoted they can get in.
Lithuania	67	17.7%		MIXED	Voluntary	Y	Elections in Oct 5%	2012	Two couples in parl

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							decrease two strong parties woman leader lost		one from different parties; presidential elections woman candidate looking for women's support
Tajikistan	68	17.5%	23.5%	PR	None decree of president on women	N	Women members of Islamic parties due to economic reasons two male MPs from Islamic parties no female ministers	2010	Ratified conventions; can increase womens nos but parity is far off.
Uzbekistan	68	17.5%	15%	MAJOR	None	N	No freedom of speech	2010	President's decree
Kazakhstan	75	15.9%	3.1%	PR	None	N	Only one party in power only one woman minister	2011	Talking to the president to put women in senate women's structure
Czech Rep	76	15.5%	17.3%	PR	Voluntary two parties	Y	Some parties do not care about women lowest no of women in parl	2010	Preferential votes; increase of women in senate
Russia	83	14.0%	4.7%	MAJOR		N		?	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	95	11.9%	13.3%	PR	Legislated	N		?	Training
Azerbaijan	98	11.4%	5.8%	MAJOR	None	N	Dirty politics!	2010	Decree of the President on women



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		Lower/ single	Upper					Next election	Comments
Romania	98	11.4%		MIXED	Voluntary in very few parties not sure if applied	Y	Elections in Nov decline in women despite a lot of effort eg one woman not included because she did not have finances; Big reluctance towards quotas even among women	2012	Three women's ministers but one very compromised
Hungary	99	11.1%		MIXED	Voluntary in socialist party	Y	Quota bill rejected will come back but not much support only socialist party supports this; Quality versus quantity.	2010	Women's movement good at lobbying; open letters; A few MPs
Montenegro	99	11.1%		PR	Legislated	N		?	
Armenia	112	8.4%		MIXED	Legislated (15%)	N	All the parties observed quota but some mandates cancelled President's party only one woman (3%) Dirty politics!	2012	Woman vice speaker one diaspora one culture Lobby for 30% quota Petition every third person on list
Ukraine	113	8.2%		PR	None	N	Quality; No education and promotion on topic.	2011	People tired of the existing politicians a lot of changes if civil society finds

COUNTRY	GLOBAL RANK	% WOMEN		ELECTORAL SYSTEM	QUOTA SYSTEM	EU?	Challenges	Opportunities	
		Lower/ single	Upper					Next election	Comments
									right tools.
Albania	117	7.1%		MIXED	Legislated	N		?	2009 elections
Georgia	121	6.0%		MIXED	None	N	No democracy including in election processes	2012	Before elections in 2008 women launched a petition civil initiative for changing the electoral law
Mongolia	126	4.2%		MAJOR		N		?	