

I. Introduction

In its resolution 66/130 of 19 March 2012 on women and political participation, the General Assembly urged Member States to enhance the political participation of women and accelerate achievement of equality between men and women. It urged all States to take action to ensure women's equal participation, including in times of transition,¹ by reviewing electoral systems for their impacts on women, implementing appropriate measures to eliminate barriers and enhance their participation, encourage political parties to remove barriers that discriminate against women, promote awareness and recognition of the importance of women's participation in the political process, develop training to support women to participate in the electoral process, to investigate allegations of violence against women elected officials and candidates. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Assembly, as its sixty-eighth session in 2013, a report on the implementation of the present resolution. This report is submitted in accordance with that request. Of particular relevance to focus the contents is the provision of precise data on the political participation of women at all levels, and actions taken by States to ensure women's equal participation. It is based on responses to the Secretary General's request for information received from 42 Member States and six United Nations entities,² and draws on findings of the recent report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and practice (HRC/23/50).

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IV. Measures taken by States to implement the resolution at all levels of decision-making

A. Constitutional reforms to promote women's political participation

Enshrining gender equality in constitutions and/or removing existing discriminatory language in line with international obligations is a fundamental step in embodying the principle of equality between men and women. States reported widely on the presence of provisions guaranteeing equality among citizens or equality between women and men in all aspects before the law.³ Non-discrimination clauses, including prohibition of discrimination on the basis of sex or gender and

¹ Some countries in transition submitted responses and their actions are included in this report. In addition, the Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on women and peace and security contains further information.

² Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Cyprus, Djibouti, Egypt, El Salvador, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Malawi, Mexico, Montenegro, Namibia, New Zealand, Oman, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, South Africa, Spain, St Lucia, Sweden, Switzerland, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, Zimbabwe. The United Nations entities are the Department of Political Affairs (DPA), Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).

³ Bahrain, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Italy, Montenegro, Namibia, Oman, Pakistan, Portugal, Qatar, Romania, St. Lucia, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey and Zimbabwe. In total, 136 States have constitutional provisions on equality. UN Women, 2013. *Database of Gender Equality Constitutional Provisions*. Based on analysis of codified and non-codified constitutions in 185 countries.

other criteria are incorporated into many others.⁴ Several States reported specific provisions guaranteeing women's rights in the constitution (including El Salvador, Malawi, Montenegro, the Philippines and Sweden).

Constitutions can also provide the foundation for specifically promoting women's participation in the civic and political life of their countries. States reported provisions that address political participation directly (Ireland, Italy, Pakistan, Portugal, Turkey and Zimbabwe). Others reported on guarantees for women's participation as voters, including Burkina Faso and Niger. Few constitutions set forth gender balance between women and men in elected and appointed posts,⁵ and Bolivia includes the principle of parity and alternation of men and women on lists for the election of members of the departmental assemblies.

Thirty-three States provide for the implementation of temporary special measures or affirmative action in their constitutions.⁶ This positive trend can be attributed to the ratification of the Convention and the implementation of concluding recommendations of the Committee, together with the active campaigning of women's movements.⁷ Under the Convention, States committed to take action with regards to women's political participation, including the adoption of "temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between women and men." The definition and scope of temporary special measures is further outlined in general recommendation No. 25 (2004) of the CEDAW Committee, and are broadly defined to include legislative, executive, administrative or other regulatory instruments, policies and practices, including allocation of resources, preferential treatment, targeted recruitment and promotion, numerical goals connected with time frames and quota systems (para 26).

The most widely legislated temporary special measure is the adoption of gender quotas in electoral arrangements. Gender quotas set a numerical target for women to be nominated as candidates or as elected representatives. Twenty-three States make provision for gender quotas in their constitutions.⁸ Rwanda and Burundi's constitutional provisions extend gender quotas to local government level, and India's unique system of rotating reserved seats in *Panchayat* elections is provided for in the constitution. Zimbabwe's new constitution, passed by referendum in 2013, provides for women's representation in the bicameral parliament.

UN entities, including UNDP and UN Women, have supported Member States to integrate gender equality provisions in national constitutions and reform processes. They supported the participation of women in constitution-making processes, and promoted the sharing of comparative experiences and lessons in a workshop across transitional countries (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Yemen). UN Women has undertaken a global mapping of gender equality provisions in national constitutions, which has been collated and is available in a searchable database, and

⁴ 113 States. *Idem*.

⁵ Bolivia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ecuador.

⁶ Including State responses received from Argentina, Bolivia, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malawi, Montenegro, Namibia, Pakistan, Turkey, Zimbabwe.

⁷ *Report of the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice*, p. 18.

⁸ Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, France, Guyana, India, Iraq, Kenya, Nepal, Niger, Pakistan, Rwanda, Senegal, Serbia, South Sudan, Swaziland, Thailand, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zimbabwe, based on an analysis of 183 countries for which data is available. However, not all States have enacted gender quotas in national legislation.

produced an in-depth case studies of lessons-learned on ongoing constitutional processes. Zimbabwe.

[...]