RESEARCH PAPER
GENDER EQUALITY AND
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN
UGANDA

EXPANDING WOMEN’S POLITICAL
PARTICIPATION

UN WOMEN UGANDA
Kampala, March 2015
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Hodan Addou
Country Representative
UN Women Uganda
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<td>AA</td>
<td>Affirmative Action</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANC</td>
<td>African National Congress</td>
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<td>APRM</td>
<td>African Peer Review Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Constituent Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Central Executive Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCEDU</td>
<td>Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda</td>
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<td>CEDOVIP</td>
<td>Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEWIGO</td>
<td>Centre for Women in Governance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPAW</td>
<td>Coalition for Political Accountability to Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Conservative Party</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSOS</td>
<td>Civil Society Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EALA</td>
<td>East African Legislative Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Electoral Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC</td>
<td>Forum for Democratic Change</td>
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<td>FGM</td>
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<td>JEEMA</td>
<td>Justice Forum Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCCA</td>
<td>Kampala Capital City Authority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC</td>
<td>Local Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MGLSD</td>
<td>Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization National Resistance Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resistance Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POA</td>
<td>Political Organisations Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PR</td>
<td>Proportional Representation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWDS</td>
<td>People with Disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSMS</td>
<td>Temporary Special Measures</td>
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<tr>
<td>UFA</td>
<td>Uganda Federal Alliance</td>
</tr>
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<td>UN SCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolution</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nation Agency for Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNRISD</td>
<td>United Nations Research Institute for Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>Uganda People's Congress</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN WOMEN</td>
<td>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWONET</td>
<td>Uganda Women's Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWOPA</td>
<td>Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>WDG</td>
<td>Women's Democracy Group</td>
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1. INTRODUCTION

Political participation is one of the basic indicators of good governance. It is one of the ways in which citizens influence the political agenda and participate in the political decision-making process. By definition, political participation encompasses all processes in the political continuum including both traditional (conventional) and non-traditional politics (Thakkar, 1985). Political participation relates to the different mechanisms for public expression, to exert influence on political, economic and social decisions made in a certain entity, including various facets of political activity such as lobbying, demonstrating, self organizing and petitioning.

This study is concerned with a key aspect of political participation with regard to women’s political leadership. Commissioned by UN Women’s Uganda Country Office, this report falls within UN Women’s mandate to work towards the elimination of discrimination against women and girls; the empowerment of women; and the achievement of equality between women and men as partners and beneficiaries of development, human rights, humanitarian action and peace and security. With this study, UN Women has sought to examine and identify avenues for women’s greater political participation in the forthcoming 2016 elections as candidates and to determine the mechanisms through which political structures should engage women. Hence, this study seeks to document the experiences of women in political leadership in Uganda, specifically aimed at increasing women’s political representation in the forthcoming 2016 elections and for the near future. The study looks at women’s engagement in parliament and in local councils, the roles played by political parties, the Electoral Commission and CSOs in fostering women’s political participation and documents lessons learned.

This report is organized in seven sections as follows:

- **Chapter 1:** The introduction situates women’s political leadership in the country, makes broad comparisons in the region and explains the concept of affirmative action in Uganda.
- **Chapter 2:** Presents the analytical framework and conceptual discussions within which the study.
- **Chapter 3:** Gives a numerical picture of women in positions of political representation.
- **Chapter 4:** Discusses the qualitative aspects of representation, highlighting the potential prospects for women’s political leadership;
- **Chapter 5:** Provides a discussion on possible hazards to the progress of women in politics drawing on narratives from different actors in the political sphere. These are the areas around which actors with an interest in the issue of women’s political participation, and specifically in the issue of leadership, can focus their energy.
- **Chapter 6:** Proposes an outline action agenda and presents specific recommendations divided into two categories. One category is composed of recommendations for the women’s movement and the other for UN Women and other development partners. The recommendations to the women’s movement are made with the understanding that it will be the task of the women’s movement to demand accountability from actors such as political parties, the Electoral Commission, the Executive and the Parliament.
1.1. The Methodology and Research Process

The following research methods were utilized in the process of this study: literature reviews, roundtable discussions, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and scoping studies. The first of the research methods utilized, entailed a review of existing literature including legal and policy documents on women’s political participation in Uganda and in other countries. Second, two roundtable discussions were organized, one with current and former women Members of Parliament (MPs), the other with leaders of women’s NGOs and representatives from the Ugandan women’s movement. In these discussions each group was asked to map the sources of power and causes of powerlessness for women in the political sphere in Uganda with an aim of designing strategies to increase women’s electoral success and to develop women’s transformative leadership. Thirdly focus group discussions were organized with both male and female former members of parliament to explore some of the issues that had been identified relating to the dynamics within Parliament and to the introduction and passing of gender-sensitive legislation. In-depth interviews were conducted with key actors in political parties, government ministries and civil society organizations, with a specific focus on women’s organizations. Finally, a scoping visit was conducted in Gulu district. The district was selected on the basis of UN Women’s presence in the northern region, as well as to include perspectives of women in a post-conflict situation. The focus on Gulu district was aimed at exploring the dynamics in which women leaders in district local councils operate and how this compares with the situation at national level. In Gulu, discussions were conducted with a range of key stakeholders and a group discussion with district women councillors.

1.2. The Context of Women’s Political Leadership in Uganda

Historically, participation in political leadership has been skewed in favour of men, the wealthy, owners of land and resources and influential persons. From this imbalance the need arises to critically examine the trajectory of women’s involvement in leadership and how women can be acknowledged as legitimate leaders in society. The impetus for a woman’s right to participate in decision making has not come by accident. It is the result of a long struggle by the women’s movement nationally and globally, and has come to be reflected in instruments agreed to at global, regional and national levels. The right to participate in political decision making is expressed in several UN instruments:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) Article 21(1), which stipulates “Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country directly or through freely chosen representation.”
- The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) adopted in 1979 by the United Nations provides the basis for realizing equality between women and men through ensuring women’s equal access to, and equal opportunities in, political and public life, including the right to vote and to stand for public office.
- The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), which outlined 12 strategic objectives and critical areas of action including “Women in power and decision making”.

At the regional level, instruments such as the African Union’s (AU) Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, on the Rights of Women in Africa, cover a wide variety of women’s rights ranging from the right to be free from discrimination and violence, the right to dignity and security, health and reproductive rights, the right to a livelihood - including social security and protection by the state – and the right to participate in leadership and decision making.
Nationally, the Government of the Republic of Uganda has ratified most international and regional instruments aimed at promoting gender equality and women’s rights. Specifically, Uganda’s Constitution, revised in 1995, has several provisions to advance gender equality, central among which are Articles 32 and 33 providing for affirmative action for women in decision making. The Constitution makes specific provisions for district women MPs in every district and the Local Government Act (1997) stipulates a one third quota for women in local councils (Ahikire, 2007). One positive outcome of these initiatives is that women have attained a physical presence in the political sphere. By July 2014, there were 135 women in a parliament of 380 (35 percent). In comparison, in 1980 there was only one woman in a legislature of 126 members. The percentage of women district councilors has risen to 46.8 percent, above the minimum requirement of 33 percent. With 35 percent women members in parliament, Uganda surpasses the 30 percent target identified by ECOSOC and is well above the regional average in Sub Saharan Africa of 22.5 percent.

A significant strategy for the increased participation of women in political leadership has been the use of Temporary Special Measures (TSMs), a form of positive discrimination intended to address historical imbalances and a tool for change for disadvantaged groups whether defined by race, gender, age, geographical location, religion or disability. A scan of the situation across African countries demonstrates variations in the manner in which TSMs are used in electoral politics to address the problem of women’s low representation in political decision making. Rwanda, which currently leads the world with 64 percent women members of parliament, has a combination of a legislated quota as well as a proportional representation (PR) electoral system in which the percentage of votes equals the percentage of representatives in parliament. South Africa also follows a proportional representation system and a voluntary quota implemented by the dominant party, the African National Congress (ANC) has resulted in a high proportion of women MPs (see table 1).

On the composition of parliament, the Constitution notes that Parliament shall consist of:
1. Members directly elected to represent constituencies;
2. One woman representative for every district;
3. Such numbers of representatives of the army, youth, workers, persons with disabilities and other groups as Parliament may determine; and
4. The vice-president and ministers, who if not already elected members of parliament, shall be ex-officio members of parliament without the right to vote on any issue requiring a vote in parliament (Art. 78 (1)).

At the local government level, the Local Government Act (1997) stipulates that the population quota of women representatives shall be determined by the requirement of women constituting a third of any Local Council being considered (Part X, Article 109 (3)). Section 11 of the Constitution, reserves seats for women in the composition of district councils; in paragraph (c) two councillors, one of whom shall be a female youth representing the youth in the district; in paragraph (d) two councillors with disabilities, one of whom shall be female; and in paragraph (e) women councillors forming

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1 Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU) http://www.ipu.org/... Accessed on April 19, 2014
one third of the council such that the councillors elected under (b), (c), (d) shall form two thirds of the council.

The Ugandan model of women’s inclusion in political leadership has been viewed with mixed reactions. On the one hand, Uganda was seen as a pioneer in the 1990s with a sharp rise in numbers of women in parliament and local councils. On the other hand there have been questions about the add-on nature of the model, in which women seem to remain in the margins and are perceived to be competing amongst themselves, with some arguing the system creates a “second class status” for women MPs, spurring some women to contest open seats. In addition, some critics have pointed to the limited impact the numbers of women have made in terms of achieving gender equality and women’s empowerment (Isis-WICCE; 2014, Goetz, 2009). The forthcoming general election in 2016 offers an opportunity to rectify some perceived shortcomings in women’s political leadership. It presents an opportunity to clearly define a common agenda to which duty holders can be held accountable. This report attempts to document the current concerns in women’s political leadership in order to enable key stakeholders to appreciate current realities and identify means to improve women’s effective political participation in the forthcoming 2016 elections and after.

### Table 1:

**Selected Statistics** on Women in Parliament in Eastern and Southern Africa


1 The selection of countries was made on the basis of the variations in the models and outcomes of TSMs in the region (Eastern and Southern Africa) in order to properly situate the Ugandan model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categorie</th>
<th>Rwanda (Lower House)</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Mozambique</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
<th>Uganda</th>
<th>Kenya (Lower House)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Electoral System</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Proportional</td>
<td>Majoritarian</td>
<td>Majoritarian</td>
<td>Majoritarian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Women</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of Women</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quota type</td>
<td>Legislated candidate quotas and reserved seats</td>
<td>Voluntary party quota</td>
<td>Voluntary party quota</td>
<td>Reserved seats</td>
<td>Reserved seats</td>
<td>Reserved seats</td>
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2. THE FRAMEWORK FOR WOMEN’S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

One of the questions driving this study was regarding the institutionalized gender inequality in the political system and how this inequality affects the electoral process and women’s general political life. Corresponding emphasis is laid in this chapter on the methods by which women’s collective power can be enhanced to expand the political prospects of women in leadership.

Power is a crucial concept in this study, as it is seen as an integral part of politics. Power operates at three levels: ‘the personal’, which relates to women’s confidence and the ability to overcome internalized oppression; ‘relational power’ as women improve their abilities to negotiate and influence the world around them; and ‘group power’ when women work collectively for goals that could not be achieved alone (Zapata, 1999).

The first two aspects are centred on a woman’s individual attributes that make her an effective political actor or otherwise, whereas the notion of collective power highlights the women’s movement. Examining the Ugandan women’s movement is critical, as some studies have shown that the numbers of women in decision making are dependant on the nature and strength of the women’s movement in a specific country (UNRISD, 2005). In this paper, emphasis is laid on the third form of power, relating to the means and mechanisms through which women’s collective power can widen women’s political horizons.

The term political horizon, in this report, is used to indicate actions and possibilities beyond the actions of individual women leaders and to identify effective mechanisms through which women can engage in the electoral process. In this sense, the use of the term political horizon illustrates a concept that embraces a more nuanced perspective of political participation that Anne-Marie Goetz refers to as political prospects (Goetz, 2003).

The concept of women’s collective power also queries the effects of having women in political leadership:

We need to look beyond the frequently asked question of how to increase the numbers of women in parliament, and move towards presenting examples and experiences of how women can impact on the political process while working through a parliamentary structure (Karam, 1998:9).

Since it has been asserted that numbers are an inadequate measure of women’s effectiveness (Tamale, 1999, Ahikire, 2007, Kwesiga et al, 2009, Isis-WICCE, 2014), the question has been asked: What is the impact of having women in parliament? One response is that the inclusion of women in politics is a matter of social justice. Since the interests of women differ of those of men, there has been an articulation of a need for women leaders to steer the women’s movement in this direction (Tamale, 1999, Hassim, 2002).

Even though the numbers went up, in Uganda the outcome of women’s representation especially in parliament has been questioned, citing a lack of visible transformative change through legislation, policies and programmes aimed at women.

Tamale (1999) argued that the inclusion of women in Uganda’s parliament could be categorized as a descriptive mode of representation as it did not seem to make a substantive contribution to women and their interests on the ground. Presently, a sense of disappointment exists among some activists in the area of gender equality that women MPs have not lived up to the ideal of women’s representation.
However, it is important to situate this debate in the proper context. Women, as new entrants in state structures, are subject to scrutiny. Men are not asked whether they have a special role in parliament (Ahikire, 2009), whereas it is not uncommon to question the role of their female colleagues. We need to be cognizant of the fact that women and their interests are characterised by diversity and therefore cannot be taken for granted and that the burden of change cannot be placed solely on women parliamentarians.

Indeed, one can argue that the entry of women into policy-making arenas still promises to bring more women’s issues to the agenda. Examples exist in Uganda’s history to justify this optimism, for instance in Uganda’s experience of constitution making in the early 1990s. In addition, it is necessary to look at the extent to which women’s access to parliament is translatable into an institutionalised presence, together with a required shift in systems to enable previously excluded groups to influence decision making in a tangible way (Goetz, 2002).

There are several actors in this process, not just women political leaders. It requires more than female politicians for the complexities of gender inequalities to be fully addressed in policy terms (Ahikire, 2013). The role of various other actors - the women’s movement, political parties, government, and the general society - in effectively and collectively creating and pursuing a transformative gender agenda within state processes and society at large should be stressed.
3.

THE NUMBERS: COUNTING WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

This section presents statistics of women in leadership positions, encompassing the Executive, the Legislature, Political Parties and Local Government. The numbers indicate areas in which progress has been registered as well as those in which gender gaps persist.

3.1. The National Assembly

Of the political representation institutions, the National Assembly has shown the strongest increase in the number of women members. As seen from table two, the percentage of women has been rising since 1989, through the various assemblies and governments, including the National Resistance Council (NRC, the fifth parliament), the Constituent Assembly (CA) and the current parliament.

As of the ninth parliament, including the new districts created in 2010, Uganda’s Parliament comprises 375 members, including 131 (35 percent) female MPs, a 3.4 percent increase from the eighth parliament (FOWODE, 2013). However, fewer women were elected on the open (mainstream or county) seats, from 14 women MPs in the eighth parliament to 11 in the ninth parliament. It is therefore important to highlight that the increase in numbers of women has been largely predicated on the system of reserved seats and therefore on the creation of new districts in 2010.

If only open or mainstream seats were taken into account, the percentage of women in the ninth parliament would be 11 percent. Principally, this is because parties are not fielding women in open contest in the county seats (table 2 and figure 1). It should also be underlined that there is a wide variation between the numbers of female candidates fielded by the various parties.

Inside Parliament, women’s leadership in chairing committees has seen an upward trend. A study carried out by Isis-WICCE (2014) for example, indicates the number of female committee leaders increased over the three selected parliaments (figure 2). In the ninth parliament, female committee leaders (chairpersons and vice-chairpersons) reached 32 percent of the committee leadership as shown in table 3.

High attrition rates for MPs also affect women. An outline of the turnover is presented in table 4. While the percentage loss for women is consistently lower than for men, the average percentage loss of 35 percent for women is still significant, as this study will later explore, new female members of parliament have to overcome various obstacles before they can make useful contributions in parliament, and the political system is able to utilize this turnover to weed out strong female leaders.
TABLE 2: Women’s Representation in Parliament


Key: AA=Affirmative Action, NRC = National Resistance Council, CA = Constituent Assembly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>No. Districts</th>
<th>Assembly</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>Open Seat</th>
<th>Others*</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total MPs</th>
<th>Women Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>24.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These include representatives of People with Disabilities (PWDs), workers, youth and presidential nominees

FIGURE 1
Female Representation in Parliament 1989 - 2011

TABLE 3: Parliamentary Committees’ Headship by Sex by December 2013


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parliamentary Committees</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percent Female</th>
<th>Percent Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Committee Chairpersons</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Vice Chair</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 4:  
Attrition Rates for MPs (2001-2011)

Source: Lists of Members of Parliament (6th, 7th, 8th and 9th) at Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Year</th>
<th>Total Loss</th>
<th>No. of Men who Lost</th>
<th>No. of Women who Lost</th>
<th>No. of Men in previous parliament</th>
<th>No. of Women in previous</th>
<th>Percent loss men</th>
<th>Percent loss women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.  
Women in the Highest Tiers of Politics

Currently, one of the three arms of government (the Legislature) is headed by a woman and one of the three deputies (of the Judiciary) is also a woman. Globally, 39 countries have female speakers of the house, nine of which are in Africa. Although women remain a minority at this level, the presence of a female speaker is noteworthy. As one participant in the study observed, the position of Speaker can be a strategic take off point for women to the presidency (interview with former official of CEDDU, July 2014). The position of Speaker being held by a woman is a result of the cumulative effect of women’s representation in parliament. A female head of the legislature is an indicator of women’s ability to attain principal leadership positions despite the prevalence of gender-based resistance.

3.3.  
The Executive

In the executive arm of government, an increased number of women has been appointed to ministerial positions.

In August 2012 a new cabinet was instituted of which women constituted 31 percent of cabinet ministers and 28 percent of state (deputy) ministers. This is in contrast to, for example, where women ministers were only 11 percent in 2011. However, in March 2015 new cabinet ministers and ministers of state where appointed. The new appointments led to a decrease in the number of females in cabinet, with 25 percent of cabinet ministers and 29 percent state ministers. (see table 5).

It should be noted that these statistics show, that not one of the six topmost government executives (President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Ministers) is a woman. This has been the case since 2005 when the first female vice-president on the continent left office (CEWIGO, 2012).
3.4. Political Parties

Political parties, as a means of political mobilization and recruitment to the legislative, occupy a strategic role in the gendered distribution of political representation. The year 2005 marked a return to multiparty politics following a referendum. The return to a multiparty system offered optimism for greater opportunity for women’s political participation. (Tamale, 2003). Since then, two women have contested the presidential seat in 2006 and in 2011.

Nonetheless, in general, multiparty politics have been dominated by men. According to the Electoral Commission, responsible for registering and monitoring political parties and organisations, there are 38 registered political parties in Uganda. Only four (10.5 percent) of political parties registered women as political party promoters. Political party leadership also remained male dominated. In 2006, only one party had a female chairperson. In 2011, a new party, known as the Federal Alliance was chaired by its female promoter. Moreover, in the run up to the return to multiparty politics in 2005, some parties created multiple deputy positions, in which women were fielded as second deputy thereby appearing to have a significant number of women in their structures while minimizing women’s actual roles.

It is important to note that political parties continue to restrict the number of women candidates fielded for open or mainstream seats. For instance in 2006, out of the 808 candidates in the race for mainstream seats in parliament, only 33 candidates were women, constituting only 4.1 percent of the aspirants.

Hence, Uganda’s current record of 35 percent female parliamentarians is not the result of women making greater inroads into mainstream representative parliamentary politics but of the special ‘add-on,’ reserved or district seats designated for women. Thus, the unwillingness of political parties to field a higher number of women means that women as a social group remain largely excluded from the political mainstream in Uganda.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5</th>
<th>Composition of Cabinet Ministers by Sex as of March 2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> <a href="http://www.parliament.go.ug/new/index.php/members-of-parliament/cabinet-members">www.parliament.go.ug/new/index.php/members-of-parliament/cabinet-members</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CABINET COMPOSITION BY SEX</strong></td>
<td><strong>FEMALE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice President</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Ministers</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The position of 3rd Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of East African Affairs was vacant at the time of writing.
### BOX 1.
Cabinet Ministers in Uganda as of March 2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Vice president</td>
<td>Minister for Karamoja Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Prime Minister</td>
<td>Minister of Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Service</td>
<td>Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Sports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Minister of Foreign Affairs</td>
<td>Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Minister Incharge of the Presidency</td>
<td>Chief Whip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Minister of Internal Affairs</td>
<td>Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Minister of Work and Transport</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Minister of Water and Environment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Attorney General</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Minister of Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Minister of Communication and Information Technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Minister of Local Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Minister without portfolio (in charge of political mobilization)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Minister for General Duties, Office of the Prime Minister</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Minister of Defence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Minister of Disaster Preparedness and Refugees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Minister of Information and National Guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 6:
Composition of National Party Leadership Structures (2006 and 2011)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2011</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>FDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy One</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Two</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Three</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary General</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: NRM = National Resistance Movement; FDC = Forum for Democratic Change; DP = Democratic Party; UPC = Uganda People’s Congress; FA = Federal Alliance (source: compilation from consultant’s fieldwork).

TABLE 7:
Political Parties and Women Contestants for Open Seats 2006 and 2011

Source: Ahikire and Madanda (2009), Women’s Democracy Group (2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PARTY</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. Candidates</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JEEMA</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.5. Local Government

Local government offers greater opportunities for women to participate in the politics of their communities and to influence the governance agendas in their own localities. The Local Government Act of 1997 provides for decentralization to ensure good governance and democratic participation in, and control of, decision making by citizens at different local governance levels. Section 2 of this act states its objectives. In paragraph (c), the Act aims to ‘establish a democratic, political, and gender sensitive administrative set up in local governments.’

Decentralization has created an expansion of participation, including that of women in the reserved seats. The African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) Country Review Report of 2009 outlined women in local government structures as follows: 47 percent of councillors in district local councils; 67 percent of councillors at sub-county level, 1.4 percent of chairpersons in sub-counties and 1.4 percent of chairpersons of district local governments. Again the top positions have remained a male preserve. The example of Gulu district in the table below shows a persistent dominance of men in strategic leadership positions. There are some districts where efforts have been made to attain a 50/50 balance in the councils (Kadaga, 2013) but this is still a rarity.

Currently there are only three female district chairpersons (Local Council V) out of the 112 district chairpersons in Uganda. The three female LCV chairpersons compose 2.7 percent of the district chairpersons in Uganda an increase from 1.4 percent from the previous electoral period. Even fewer numbers of women are registered as speakers of local councils.

Whether women are contesting and losing, or shunning the top seats in local government is debatable. For instance, in the contest for the position of sub-county chairperson in 2011 only 1.7 percent of the candidates for sub-county chairperson were women (Figure 3).

The post of sub-county chairperson is significant in the local government system of service delivery and local revenue mobilization since district planning is sub-county based. Furthermore, as we analyse municipalities, the urban equivalent of a sub-county, it is evident that were it not for the reserved seats, the numbers of women in local government structures would be considerably lower (table 10).

1 According to a representative of civil society in 2011 Dokolo District attained a 50/50 balance of councillors, had a female speaker and 60 percent of secretaries were female as a result of training and other forms of engagement in the district by CSOs

---

**TABLE 8**

Gulu District: Composition by Sex of Leadership Positions (July, 2014)


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Male</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Local Council V Chairperson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Local Council V Chairperson</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Speaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Council III Chairpersons</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Committees</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Statutory Board C/ Persons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
TABLE 9
Results of Uganda’s Presidential Elections 2006 and 2011


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Candidates - Nominating Parties</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoweri Museveni - National Resistance Movement</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>4,109,449</td>
<td>59.26</td>
<td>5,428,369</td>
<td>68.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kizza Besigye - Forum for Democratic Change</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>2,592,954</td>
<td>37.39</td>
<td>2,064,782</td>
<td>26.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Ssebaana Kizito - Democratic Party</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>109,583</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abed Bwanika - Independent</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>65,874</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>51,708</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miria Obote - Uganda People’s Congress</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>57,071</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norbert Mao</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>147,917</td>
<td>1.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olara Otunu</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>125,059</td>
<td>1.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Kamya</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>52,782</td>
<td>0.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bidandi Ssali</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>34,688</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Lubega</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>32,726</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,934,931</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>7,938,031</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.6. Presidential Elections

Since Uganda’s independence in 1962, presidential contests have been dominated by male candidates. The first female presidential candidate stood in 2006, 44 years after independence. In both the 2006 and 2011 elections the female presidential contestants won less than 1 percent of the total vote (table 9).

Women are a heterogeneous category. It should not be assumed that women, who constitute a sizeable number of the voters, would automatically vote for women when they contest political positions. For example, when Miria K. Obote contested, reactions among women included cynicism and half-hearted celebration. Her candidature was not universally acknowledged as a real gain for women. The ascendance of Obote to the helm of the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) was seen by some as a crisis response following the death of her husband, the then exiled Milton Obote, who had chaired the Uganda People’s Congress for over three decades (Ahikire and Madanda, 2009). When Betty Kamya of the Federal Alliance ran in 2011, a significant number of women were said to not identify with her party’s ideology of federalism.

However, an argument could be made that if women continue contesting the highest levels of power (kuntiko¹), normally the preserve of men, it could have the impact of changing the perception of the presidency as a male privilege (Ahikire and Madanda, 2009).

Conclusion

This section presented a numerical picture of women’s political leadership, in which remarkable inroads have been made, but where persistent gaps remain and greater effort is required to bring women into the mainstream contest. These persistent gaps also emphasize the inherent institutional barriers within Ugandan political culture. The subsequent sections are an attempt to interrogate this gendered political culture, taking into account positive aspects of, as well as the flaws in the political system and the actions critical to addressing these identified flaws.

1 Kuntiko – a Luganda word that signifies the ultimate position of power and control of a particular system.

---

TABLE 10: Women in Elections at Municipal Level


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Contestants</th>
<th></th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Percent. Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal Chairpersons</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>1120</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1169</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>372</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.

POSSIBILITIES AND PROSPECTS FOR WOMEN’S POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The context of women in political leadership in Uganda presents a mixture of opportunities, prospects and barriers that must be interrogated and managed in order to extend women’s political horizons.

This section attempts to map the sources of women’s power in the current political trajectory and to outline the possibilities and opportunities for women’s political empowerment. These opportunities include; affirmative action to increase women’s physical presence and provide political space for women to demonstrate their ability to govern; the phenomenon of male champions in parliament; expanded prospects in multiparty politics; and the synergies of collective effort within parliament as well the women’s movement.

4.1. Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is institutionalized by the Constitution and other legal instruments as a means of promoting the inclusion of marginalized people in politics. It makes the physical presence of marginalized groups in the political arena possible - being the very basic measure of representation. According to a male informant, affirmative action has given women political visibility:

It changed the face of political representation. If it was not there, parliament would be full of men only. It encourages women to venture into areas where they have never been. It is inspirational to children in schools – they have examples to look up to. They hope they will grow to be like the women they see in politics. (Interview with Male MP Ninth Parliament, July 2014)

It was further suggested that the increased number of women in Parliament had contributed to gender sensitive policy and legislation. Parliamentarians interviewed, noted that female MPs, in particular, tend to highlight gender issues and make references to gender-sensitive legislation and gender-responsive budgeting, which aim to have gender equality outcomes.

Women’s presence has been credited for changing the public discourse by introducing issues previously considered private onto the public agenda, such as maternal health and gender-based violence. Wang (2013) cites the enactment of the Domestic Violence Act in 2010 as not only a significant advance in the interaction of the law with domestic relationships but also an improvement in terms of legislative achievements for women. The benefits of women’s political representation can be summed up in four areas as shown in box 2.
4.2. Women’s Accomplishments in Governance

Perhaps the most notable achievement by female Ugandan politicians is the ascension to heads of legislatures - the Parliament of Uganda and the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA). Taking on the third highest position of Speaker of the House in the country’s political hierarchy (after the President and Vice-President) is a significant accomplishment (Isis-WICCE, 2014). Further examples of women who were pointed out as having demonstrated women’s ability to govern in 2015 include ministers holding key positions in the cabinet such as Ministry Energy and Minerals, the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Security and several others.

In the current period, media reports have propounded the possibility of a female president. Although Uganda had female contestants in the 2006 and 2011 presidential elections, much less public discussion occurred regarding the real possibility of a female president.

In a focus group discussion (FGD) with LCV women councillors in Gulu district, all the FGD participants indicated that they would vote for a woman to a top leadership position in government on the basis of a record in managing parliamentary business, hard work, boldness and honesty.

These and other responses from surveys indicate widening political opportunities for women in Uganda. The views given represent just a few of the successes that need to be documented and harnessed to create lessons for present and future women political leaders in particular and the women’s movement in general.

---

**BOX 2**

An Overview of the Achievements of Affirmative Action

Source: (Ahikire 2007; Kwesiga et al 2003; Tamale 1999)

**The Numbers**

Affirmative action in Uganda has increased the number of women in politics. Affirmative action both at the national and local levels raised the percentage of women to 35 percent of parliament and 46 percent of local government councillors - well above the Sub-Saharan African average of 20 percent.

**Expanded Public Debate**

Increased representation of marginalized groups has expanded the range of issues under public debate, deepening public concerns and bringing new questions onto the political agenda.

**Change in the Ideological Outlook of Political Structures**

The attitude of decision-making bodies has changed, ideologically accommodating a broader understanding of leadership.

**Towards a Greater Acceptance of Women as Public Actors**

At the larger societal and family level, people have been compelled to contend with women as public actors beyond the limits of the traditional maternal role.
4.3. Political Parties and Widening Prospects for Women

Another source of political power is the multiparty setting. Uganda’s conversion to multiparty politics was envisaged to widen general political participation and has implications for women’s political leadership (Asiimwe, 2006). The view that multiparty politics offers women greater political opportunities was reiterated by a Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) party analyst who said: “Political parties can also be sources of power especially if a party identifies and finances women for political competition.”

Political parties are institutional arrangements within which collective effort can be taken to support women who are contesting for instance by shielding political candidates from the demands of the electorate, providing political networks and social and financial capital that women can use to compete for political positions.

Various participants in this study said that there are more opportunities for women’s participation that come with the increased visibility of women in political party leadership and party structures. First of all it was said that Uganda’s political leadership had seen women building social and political networks that could be capitalized on. It was for instance observed that:

All National Resistance Movement (NRM) women MPs are ex-officios in district councils; they are in critical decision-making bodies. Hon. Rebecca Kadaga is a member of district women’s league, she sits on the NRM Central Executive Committee (CEC), she is a speaker, and this is where critical decisions take place. Hon. Irene Muloni is the National Treasurer, MP, and the minister of Energy and Mineral Development. All these are spheres of engagement. (Key informant, NRM, June 2014)

The potential for expanding women’s political space also exists in political party commitments expressed in party constitutions and structures. All political parties covered in this study had written party constitutions with provisions on promoting gender equality. Whether these provisions are adhered to or not, they indicate a step in the right direction, of recognizing existing gender inequalities in politics and the willingness to address them, of realizing the relevance of gender issues, particularly women’s right to participation and representation.

For instance, the NRM political party constitution (as amended in 2010) makes reference to the party’s commitment to politically empower previously marginalized sections of society, such as women, youth and the elderly. In its Article 38A on gender representation, it stipulates:

In electing the leadership of the organs of NRM, 40 percent of the positions shall be reserved for women except in cases where it is impracticable to do so... The Electoral Commission shall be immediately notified of any organ of the NRM that finds it impossible to raise the 40 percent representation of women.

The UPC’s constitution (2008) also emphasizes commitment to gender issues. According to Article 2.10 UPC has declared that it is committed to supporting women’s emancipation and advancement, by mainstreaming and integrating women and women’s issues effectively into the party and party leadership, by supporting and advancing gender equality in party programmes, structures, and decision-making processes, and in economic and social activities. The article also calls for advocating the rights of women nationally and internationally. The UPC constitution also states that the party constitutional organs shall have the position of woman leader and assistant woman leader at each level of party leadership from area branch to the national level.

Similarly, the party constitutions of NRM, UPC, FDC and DP provide for special organs within the party structures in form of women’s leagues to promote women’s political participation. According to in-depth discussions, all the registered political parties have women’s leagues whose leadership is part of the political party strategic decision-making structure.

In the DP constitution, what we have is a women’s league headed by a national woman leader and her deputy. The national woman leader and her deputy sit on the national party council and that’s how they become part of decision making in DP. (DP party president, May 2014)

In the NRM party structures, there is a women’s league. The chairperson of the women’s league is a member of the Central Executive Council. All members of parliament are members of the national executive council, and CEC reports to NEC. So there are many avenues through which women in the league and women in parliament can contribute to party policies and decisions. (Deputy NEC chairperson, NRM, June 2014)
However the effectiveness of the political parties’ women’s leagues in Uganda is questionable. Making a contrast with the women’s league of South Africa’s African National Congress (ANC), a participant highlighted the following:

In ANC, during their meetings, women would come up with numerous positions and resolutions, which they agree on and push through the party structures. But here in Uganda, I have never seen or heard the women’s league leader of NRM. I don’t even know who she is. There is only women’s league leader you hear but even then, her voice does not really come out on issues of gender concern. They are always complaining about general policy issues like the rest of us. (DP Party President, May 2014).

Potentially the women’s leagues can draw on their outlined party provisions in order to play a critical role of elevating women’s political participation in party platforms and by providing a network of women party activists, leaders and candidates for mentorship and support - an area for building women’s collective power within the political parties.

4.4. The Synergy in Collective Effort

A commonly identified source of power for women in political leadership is the collective effort that women exhibit. The premise of effective collective action is the understanding that promoting women’s political leadership is dependent on multiple actors. For instance the women’s movement efforts in Uganda to jointly develop and support a common women’s agenda for women in politics acknowledged the relevance of the collective power in scenarios where they could not act individually.

Considering that most of what women want is dependent on other actors taking their full responsibilities seriously to activate the change process, the women are determined to lobby and render technical support and resources to ensure the achievement of the results articulated in the Uganda Women’s Agenda. (FOWODE, 2010)

Collective action is an essential source of power upon which women in political leadership have drawn upon to enhance their political participation, for instance:

- The crafting of the Uganda Women’s Agenda championed by the Women’s Democracy Group (WDG) in strategic partnership with Government, CSOs, development partners and other political actors.

- The organizing and mobilizing of women Members of Parliament under Uganda Women Parliamentary Organisation (UWOPA). UWOPA in partnership with CSOs generated a legislative agenda that women MPs jointly agreed to push through the parliamentary legislative process.

- Collective mobilization, dialogue with and induction of new members of parliament by the Women’s Democracy Network (WDN) - a global initiative for women’s participation in democracy. WDN together with UWOPA facilitated a dialogue on how women can make a difference in parliament.

The creation of legislation such as that on Domestic Violence and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) can be directly attributed to the synergy of collective effort. In the specific case of the Domestic Violence Act (2010), the coalition building efforts of UWOPA, civil society organisations, particularly UWONET, Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) and Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) were noted to have facilitated the process of evidence building, political will mobilization and the drafting of legislation. The mobilization effort that went into the process of passing the law is an indicator that collective action is possible. Lessons could be drawn from this and many other success stories.

Collective articulation of women’s interests also involves women’s organisations identifying and supporting women to aspire for elective political positions, running programmes on gender and civic education, democracy, gender capacity-building workshops, designing mechanisms for accountability such as the Coalition for Political Accountability to Women (COPAW) and developing a shared understanding of the women’s agenda between female political leaders and the women’s movement. Civil Society Organisations draw their power from collective action as part of a social movement.

1 Equal by Right: The Uganda Women’s Agenda was coordinated by the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) in the run up to the general elections in 2011. It was built upon consultations with a cross-section of women across Uganda and outlined issues of gender inequality that needed to be addressed by the incoming government.
Galvanizing collective efforts also requires coordination, mobilization, information sharing and advocacy. It has been argued that the success of women in the constituent assembly was based, among other things, on efficient coordination by civil society.

4.5. The Emergence of Male Champions in Parliament

In the course of this study cases of the strategic involvement of male parliamentarians in promoting gender sensitive legislation were recorded. Participants cited cases in parliament where male legislators were key in the processes of passing gender sensitive legislation such as the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009), the Domestic Violence Act (2010) and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act (2010.)

Women MPs in the eighth parliament understood that such bills required the backing of male MPs and went ahead to identify potential champions to lobby and created a map of influential male legislators. In the specific case of the Bill on the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation;

There were male champions who supported the moving of the motion in support of the bill… A doctor had facts on FGM, he had scientific research backing his arguments and when he explained the need for this law, he drew men on board. (Hon Betty Amongi, former UWOPA Chairperson, ninth parliament)

The law on FGM was supported by a number of male MPs on the basis of its harmful effect on women’s health and society in general. The bill on Domestic Violence received great support from men who even ensured that it was quickly exposed to Parliament. In the case of the Domestic Violence Bill, the chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, made a submission on the second reading of the Domestic Violence Bill 2009 (11th November, 2009):

And I want to say that this Bill is before our Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and I want to confirm to this House that we take it as a priority and within the next 45 days we shall return it, for enactment into law… I should also add that this Bill on its own may not be enough in addressing the problem we are trying to solve. In this regard, I should appeal to government especially to the Attorney General that other laws relating to family relations should also come up. The Domestic Relations Bill and other related Bills that address family relations and family law should come to this Parliament to address this important matter.

This idea of male champions highlights the option of expanding the actors involved in creating gender sensitive legislation. On the other hand, it is possible that the use of male champions might remove women MPs of their power to create change, rob them of attribution and ownership of their work, and create a situation in which only those acts approved by men are allowed to pass. Hence, this process of utilizing the social power of men will require a conscious effort to steer it in the direction of enhancing women’s collective power, as opposed to accentuating women’s social powerlessness.

5. CHALLENGES TO WOMEN’S EFFECTIVE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP PROSPECTS

The obstacles in women’s avenues to political leadership can be divided into two categories; first are the challenges that curtail women’s electoral participation and second are those that hinder them from influencing political decisions once they are in leadership positions. This study identifies a number of constraints that include: women’s internal political competition for reserved seats; political parties’ reluctance to facilitate women’s political leadership; sexual harassment; as well as the general fractures in Uganda’s women’s movement. This section draws on the accounts of different actors to clarify the manner in which these contentious issues manifest themselves and the ways in which these areas narrow the political horizon for women, thereby leading to the actions necessary to expand women’s prospects in political leadership as well as their general political participation.

5.1. Affirmative Action: a Mixed Blessing?

Paradoxically, affirmative action is a tool with great potential and yet at the same time presents a significant hazard. One of the major objectives of the study was to identify if and how women can move beyond affirmative action and increase the number of women contesting for what are known as ‘open or mainstream seats.’ Throughout the study, affirmative action was one of the most debated and most contentious issues around women’s political leadership. A reading of the discourse around women’s political leadership in Uganda shows that there is dissatisfaction with the slow progress in the advancement of women’s rights and a fear of possible regression in the gains women of Uganda have earned. What is the genesis of this debate and what animates the various negative sentiments around the reserved seat? In the following section four dominant narratives shall be presented.

Conceptual Clarity Regarding Elected Women’s Mandate

The formal description of the reserved seats in parliament and local councils are district women MPs and women councillors respectively. In public discussions, various labels exist such as, indirect seat, women’s seat, affirmative action and district seat. The opposite are called mainstream seats, constituency seats or direct seats. However, reserved seats are still contested. Candidates for the reserved seat are voted for by the electorate of the district (women MPs) and the sub-county or parish (women councillors). The district or sub-county is the seat’s constituency, reserved or open, therefore labelling county seats as the opposite to reserved seats is incorrect.

The Question of Representation

Who do the women leaders in reserved seats represent? Women MPs maintained the position that they represent everyone in the district, not just women. During the roundtable dialogue with women MPs, one MP stated that women MPs are voted for by the general electorate of the district and have to deal with national
issues, not just with women’s interests (roundtable for women MPs, May 2014).

The definition of the seat is regarding the sex of MP in question and not the designation of a representative of women. However, despite reservations, the general consensus is that affirmative action, as a tool rooted in global and national experiences, should not be removed. Furthermore, the argument especially advanced by the women’s movement is that regardless of legal definitions, women leaders have a social constituency.

During a dialogue in Gulu district, women councillors were given the example of a county already represented by the county seat MP. The question arose of what or whom the district women MP represented in this situation? What was their mandate and what was expected of them? In response some women councillors suggested that in this situation “We represent women’s interests.” This was not the same response in the dialogues with women MPs.

According to observers, there is a lack of clear mandate in women leaders acting to increase their relevance by, for instance, purchasing ambulances, distributing farming equipment, providing educational scholarships, as well as, purchasing medicines for health centres - roles that fall beyond the remit of an MP.

Reserved Seats as an Easy Win

Reserved seats are generally believed to be easier to win than open seats. However, women MPs and councillors all attested to the complexities of attaining such as position. It was stated that men act as gatekeepers and largely determine the conditions under which particular women win seats. As one woman MP said, “You fight battles right from day one. It is exhausting. It is disruptive.” (Roundtable dialogue for Women MPs, May 2014)

Male MPs do not want strong women in their districts especially if the male or female MPs are born in the same area. The male MPs work to frustrate you so that you do not cross over from the affirmative action seat. As gatekeepers, men hold the power to determine who is nominated. This strategy matters more than expecting women to be effective once they are in positions of leadership. There is need for political conversations with leaders (local councils, religious, traditional) that make it hard for women to act freely and independently (former female legislator, eighth Parliament).

Some of the participants indicated that they would stand for mainstream seats but are fiercely discouraged by men. In cases where women expressed interest to stand for a county seat they are confronted with questions such as “Why do you want to leave the women’s seat?” (Roundtable dialogue for Women MPs, May 2014). Without doubt this political gatekeeping accentuates the perception that open seats are intended for men and that women should restrict themselves to the reserved seats.

The situation becomes even more complex in the case of districts made up of one county. The creation of districts from pre-existing districts has created many one county districts. This makes it more difficult for women to contest because this would mean that the district is represented by women only. This situation is seen as being difficult for voters who may still be struggling with the idea of women in political leadership. It is considered too difficult to ask of Ugandan women in
the current political milieu as it would be challenging to justify to the constituents a district represented by women only. This situation is ultimately a form of political exclusion and another barrier to women’s political participation. (Gollifer, 2013).

With these and other considerations, it seems targeted actions are necessary to facilitate more women contesting mainstream seats. Moreover, during the dialogue with current and former MPs, it became clear that a majority of them were intending to run for the reserved seats. 33 of the 42 participants (78 percent) indicated that they intended to contest the woman’s reserved seat in 2016 (see figure 4). It can be argued, in this case, that politics is not seen as a place for altruism and women leaders, as politicians, have to be strategic in their political choices.

Furthermore, some women politicians observed that the system of reserved seats for women breeds intrigue and infighting amongst women.

We are fighting amongst ourselves. We do not support each other, as we should. We have had no opportunity as women to sit together and assess our strength as candidates and decide on the best candidate to stand. As a result, you have a flood of women joining political race, tearing each other apart. (Former woman MP, eighth parliament)

You have all this oppression against women in politics but women are not organised. When you face oppression, that oppression should be the basis of your organizing to resist. Women need to organise as women because they face oppression as women. (DP Party president, May 2014)

This is especially so because the nature of Ugandan politics, like in many other countries does not support issue-based engagement (Goetz, 2003). In a group discussion with former MPs, it was noted that unlike their male colleagues, women in politics are assessed by the electorate on the basis of what one wears, whether one is married or not and whether they are contesting areas in which they are married or were born. All these and many other personal or family background issues are used to assess whether women are viable candidates to support, and such issues may be seen to divide women as they seek to conform to the electorate’s notion of an ideal political representative. Political opponents are thus able to use such characteristics to reduce women’s chances of winning political office.

**BOX 3**

**A Voice from Pader District**

Source: (Ahikire 2007; Kwesiga et al 2003; Tamale 1999)

In conversation with the Speaker, Pader District.

Question: Do you think it is possible for women to stand and win on open seats?

Answer: Possible and not possible. Possible because some women have proved to be better performers like now if the incumbent (county) and district MP stand for election the woman would sail through. However, we should note that women don’t support women. People think that big things can only be done by men and yet women perform even better. We need to prepare the minds of the people to know that women can lead at all levels. In Latanga sub-county, there was a woman who acted as the interim chairperson after the creation of Latanga from Awere Sub County and she performed very well. People even encouraged her to stand for the post of chairperson. When it came to election time, she lost. We were all surprised that she lost and yet everybody seemed to like her.

In conversation with a woman farmer in Omonynjobi village, Pajule sub-county, Pader.

Question: How do you rate the woman MP of this district?

Answer: She is very good and accessible. She has even offered scholarships to the best students in Primary Seven and offers scholastic materials for candidates. The man on the other hand is only heard on radio.

Question: Therefore, would you vote the woman on the county seat?

Answer: That would mean we are represented by women only!
Understanding the Role of Affirmative Action

A male MP in the ninth parliament contended that the introduction of affirmative action was not followed with civic education to enhance people’s understanding of the roles of women parliamentarians. In his analysis, this lack of understanding presented a hurdle to women who sought to contest open seats. Lack of civic education was, for instance, identified as one of the reasons why the electorate look to their political leaders for money and services as opposed to representation. For women, the lack of civic education also tends to accentuate the perception of superfluous seats.

If you have a curtailed civic education, limited knowledge on gender equality and women’s empowerment not only with those who are aspiring but the general population, you cannot achieve much. (Deputy Chair EC, NRM, June 2014)

The system complexities of reserved seats, once again are a reminder of the necessity of collective action in order to entrench a strong position for women. These complexities are difficult for the individual to overcome. As seen from the analysis above, within the current environment it will remain difficult for women to move from reserved seats to contesting open seats.

5.2. Political Parties: The Problem of Patronage

Walle and Butler (2001) observed that African political parties are plagued by weak organisational structures, low levels of institutionalisation and weak links to the society that they are supposed to represent (cited in Randall and Svasand, 2001:10). In contemporary Uganda, these problems are aggravated by the fact that the political parties were not allowed to operate for two decades, thereby freezing their internal democratization and institutional development. The deleterious effect of this freeze is that their patriarchal leadership structures and patronage practices are entrenched in the political system (Isis-WICCE, 2014). The patronage system, combined with patriarchal leadership operates to weaken women within the parties.

However, in a situation in which marginalization and disempowerment within the political parties exist, the overall effect of this on women inside the party structures is that they are unable to lobby effectively for greater gender sensitivity and responsiveness in policy making and implementation. This lack of effectiveness creates unfavourable sentiments about affirmative action and specifically about quotas for women. Women elected through affirmative action are seen to support party policies rather than as representatives of the citizenry.

Historically, Uganda has recorded incidents of violence during elections. Women MPs, in a roundtable discussion, described a general reluctance to express alternative opinions because of the possibility of being subject to violence especially during the election period. Hence, it has been reported that women in Uganda tend not to openly display support for any set of policies or candidates but express their choice through by voting. Such situations restrict the ability and freedom of women to participate openly and to actively influence the political system.

The operations of political parties in Uganda were perceived as being inconsistent - parties appear to be relevant only towards and during the period of elections. Some observers were of the view that although political parties in Uganda exist in name and have structures as described in their party constitutions, in reality, these structures and organs hardly function. The parties’ unstructured nature has implications on their commitment to party constitutions, promotion of intra-party democracy, social accountability and promotion of healthy competition for good governance. It was for instance noted that political parties may have party constitutions with provisions on promoting gender equality but in reality, such provisions are not adhered to and they remain unfulfilled. According to Tamale:

… political parties include issues of democracy and even gender equality in their political manifestos, but in practice they have come up with contradictory practices. As a result, they are not willing to address issues of sex discrimination, domestic violence, sexual violence, gender equity and often dismiss out of hand all that women say. (Tamale, 2003)

Inconsistencies within constitutional commitments are reflected in the political parties’ lack of policies and programme to operationalize constitutional provisions. For example, responses from political parties indicate the following:

In the DP constitution … All we have is a women’s league headed by a national woman leader and her deputy… I do believe that women should be organized as women to be able to promote particular agendas and programmes that attract women to the party. But at the moment, what we have as a country is the challenge of electoralism – a
serious malaise, where women only come up during the elections to contest for the women's seat. (DP President, Norbert Mao)

UPC constitution provides for 40 percent women representation in appointed and elected positions. The same provision goes for the youth. However, we have not followed the required representation fully because this party has been out of national leadership for long. As a party, we have returned to active politics only recently so we are working hard to attract and retain membership including women who can participate. (Political Party Analyst, UPC)

The NRM party constitution puts into place a list of commissions with specialized functions including the Defence and Security Commission, Electoral Commission, Ethics and Discipline commission, Finance Commission and the Social and Economic Planning Commission. Unfortunately, none of these commissions are designated to promote gender equality, equity, equal opportunities or the interests of special groups identified in the NRM constitution. The constitution does not provide for a specific directorate at the national secretariat to promote gender mainstreaming even when in its objectives, they commit to the consolidation of “programmes, which are responsive to gender and marginalized groups.” Furthermore, it was found that the composition, duties and responsibilities of the women’s league and other special interest groups were not well defined in the NRM constitution. These duties and responsibilities have been left to individuals’ discretion. It was also observed that although issues of gender equality need to be addressed across institutional structures, policies and programmes, NRM has yet to formulate a crosscutting strategy to consolidate gender responsiveness.

The above realities are drawn from party constitutions and individual reflections during in-depth interviews point to political parties’ inadequate implementation not only of their constitutions but also to the national legal provisions for gender equality and in particularly women’s participation in decision making.

As some participants indicated, political parties may be different in the way they approach politics but they must be committal to the national constitutional provisions. Instead what has become characteristic of political parties is a rhetoric on promoting women’s participation without corresponding programmes in place to promote equality. Indeed one of the respondents observed that:

There is usually no deliberate effort in forming party structures through consultative processes. This affects other constitutional provisions. Someone calls from the headquarters to the district and says, we need structures there so we can send you money, the people at the district will also call the sub-counties, and so on. In the end, people on these structures are just written out. (Female aspirant, 2016)

The gaps within the political parties are also supported by the regulatory framework. For instance the Political Organisations Act (POA) 2005, does not require gender inclusiveness in any substantive manner. In fact, the Act makes no mention of the word ‘women’ and the word gender appears once in Clause 10:

Every political party or organization shall elect such persons as may be determined by the members of the political party... as members of the executive committee... with due consideration for gender equity.

The provision does not set any standards, targets or sanctions for non-compliance and does not offer any incentives for the political parties to be gender inclusive. This leaves women to negotiate their way through the party patronage networks. These deficits within the political parties and the relevant legislation tends to concur with Tamale (2003) who argued, in the run up to the 2006 elections under the reinstated multiparty system, that the norms of male privilege and power were deeply embedded in state processes.

The deficits within Uganda’s party system have also led to women’s reluctance to join opposition political parties. According to a female politician in the opposition, attracting highly educated women into politics is difficult because women would prefer to have a career, a formal job, earn an income and support their families, than to engage in aggressive and competitive politics. This view of opposition politics deters women from joining politics, which translates into a low number of female representatives in parties other than the ruling party. The women in the ruling party generally adhere to the dominant political culture, which is reportedly characterized by suppression and intimidation. Women MPs across the parties presented party gagging and intimidation as critical factors accounting for their limited collective effort on the gender equality agenda. Looking ahead, engagement with the political parties is one of the daunting challenges for women’s political effectiveness.
5.3. The Effect of a Sexualized Political Space

A study conducted by Isis-WICCE highlighted sexual harassment in Uganda's political arena as one of the hurdles faced by women political leaders (Isis-WICCE, 2014). The report reads in part: The over sexualisation of political space persistently came out as a major obstacle to women's substantive engagement. (Isis-WICCE, 2014:39)

The study pointed to the existence of perceived exchange of sexual favours, organized, persistent and repetitive acts of sexual harassment, comments, jokes, statements or other related practices, which severely impact women's effectiveness. Because it takes place in the “hidden public” (Beck 2003), sexual harassment, though topical, is easy to dismiss.

Men's attitudes towards women are the same – discrimination, sexism and undermining them. (Party analyst UPC, May 2014)

There are many things we are told women go through to get support of men in political parties. They are sexually molested. Women confess to us. They have no funds to run an election, and the source of this money is the men. (DP, May 2014)

We need to talk more about sexual harassment in politics. We have heard cases of women MPs being raped by fellow (male) MPs when they go on mission and are booked in the same hotels especially on outside country assignments. Male MPs still do not look at female MPs as colleagues. Put simply, sexism undermines women's political participation. (CSO official, June 2014)

In some districts, women submitted it was common knowledge that in order to win party primaries at the local level, one had to sleep with senior men in the parties. (CSO official, June 2014)

Sexual harassment cannot be fought by women as individuals. It is perpetuated within the context of democratic deficits within the political system. Therefore, it is an issue that needs to be placed on the public agenda and its perpetrators named and held accountable.

5.4. The Competition for Ministerial Positions

Discussions with women MPs and former MPs all pointed out competition for ministerial appointment brings about rivalry. In Uganda, ministers are usually appointed by the President from the pool of MPs. For example, among the nine female ministers, as of August 2014, only one is not a member of parliament. It was observed that some male MPs are particularly fearful of strong women legislators especially when they hail from the same districts. Moreover, “In some cases,” observed a female MP, “male MPs use women to fight fellow women:"

Male MPs fear competition over ministerial positions. They think that if you are a popular woman MP, you are likely to affect their opportunity of being seen by the President and a chance of being appointed minister. They would prefer to fight you and have a new woman MP. By the time this new woman MP becomes popular, the male MP would have become a minister. (Female former legislator, eighth Parliament, June 2014)

When I was elected, a male colleague (MP) told me, now that you are coming to parliament, please first keep quiet, listen and learn. Indeed the first month passed without me saying anything on the floor of parliament. But as debates went on I could listen to discussions, which I could have contributed to. So I decided to start participating. Later I found an anonymous letter in my pigeonhole at parliament warning me that I was becoming too much. (Female former legislator, eighth parliament, June 2014)

The MPs said that such infighting for ministerial positions not only promotes politics of patronage but is also disruptive and exhaustive and the political effectiveness, especially of women, is negatively affected. This battle for ministerial positions is also said to contribute to strong women leaders being systematically weeded out.

This conflict was said to extend to the alleged exchange of sexual favours. For example, male politicians were said to use the possibility of ministerial appointment as a tool for sexual harassment. "I have seen the proposed list of ministers and your name is there," was alleged to be a common sexual recruitment statement. Sexual recruitment in this case refers to the situation
where men allegedly use their power to enjoy sexual favours in return for appointments. This, however, does not mean that appointments are necessarily made on the basis of sexual favours, rather it points to the whole terrain of a sexualised political sphere where women’s bodies become a battleground for political manipulation.

5.5.

Alone and Isolated: The Paradox of Women Leaders

When women reach up there, they become detached from local women and they start championing their own agendas. The higher women go, the more detached they become. (Female former MP, Isis-WICCE dialogue for women MPs, July 2013)

The terrain of women’s leadership is often characterized as being one of isolation, which accentuates the disconnection with women of the general public and their issues. Many observers posed a question as to why female politicians appointed to key ministries have not achieved tangible results for women. It was suggested that once women are appointed ministers, they become detached from the issues affecting local people. For example, one CSO actor commented:

How do we engage women ministers? They have remained stars up there and we do not really benefit from them as women. We should engage them and give them a bigger role in the women’s movement. (CSO actor, May, 2014)

However, this was seen differently by other participants. Putting women political leaders into perspective, a woman minister indicated that female political leadership globally and in Uganda in particular is acutely pyramidal which has implications on the nature of political agendas and interests that women at higher political levels can achieve. The minister’s view about women’s political leadership being akin to a pyramid is illustrated in figure 6.

“Women political leaders tend to be ‘detached’ when they get to higher positions because of the level of responsibility. As women keep going higher up, they become fewer which makes it hard for them to remain focused on all women’s issues. The situation of women in political leadership is pyramidal. As they get fewer, their roles, mandates and agendas become broader. At the bottom, there are relatively more women involved at different levels of decision making. As women advance in higher positions of leadership, they keep on reducing, ‘seemingly’ becoming detached from the lower levels. The fewer women at the apex may not have significant influence downwards especially in the contexts where society is largely characterised by male domination and low levels of education. Widening women’s prospects at the apex requires a long-term bottom-up approach, education, economic empowerment, and gender sensitization to change the attitudes of the masses towards women’s political leadership.” (Interview, July 2014)

What this analysis outlines is that for female ministers it becomes increasingly difficult to focus on women’s issues when they get to the top of the pyramid. Women may in fact still wish to introduce and pass gender-sensitive legislation but cannot be expected to be pro-women by the fact of being biologically women.

The challenge remains how to identify ways in which women ministers can be brought into the ambit of the women’s movement. It is necessary to identify mechanisms that can utilise their current capacities and validate their potential in the existing political terrain.

5.6.

Fractures in Uganda’s Women’s Movement

The need for greater collective engagement of women in order to realize substantive transformation brings us to the women’s movement. Currently the women’s movement in Uganda is increasingly becoming deflated, weak and fractured. An increasing frustration permeates as the different actors in the women’s movement struggle (with some but limited successes) to craft a unified agenda for transformative change beyond the minimalist reforms that the government advocates. The second tier of disappointment is that women political leaders seem to be disconnected from the larger interests of the women’s movement (Isis-WICCE, 2014).

In an ideal situation, women political leaders would be the frontrunners of the women’s movement. According to observers, that situation seemed to develop in the 1990s during the revision of the Constitution and its
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immediate aftermath (Trip, 2000, Tripp et al. 2003), yet, this apparently no longer the case.

There seem to be two reasons for this seeming disconnect. One is the nature of the political system and the other the nature of the women’s movement itself. In the latter, the successes of the 1990s as well as the popularization of the notion of gender mainstreaming could have had the unintended effect of making the gender agenda more technical (Mukhopaday and Wong, 2007, Tamale, 2006). The impetus of the 1990s was powered by development specialists and gender experts as opposed to feminists and dramatically changed the manner in which issues are pursued, which then had a negative impact on women leaders. Several observers were of the view that if women leaders had a firm grounding in the women’s movement, they would be able to utilize that synergy to surmount some of the key obstacles in political leadership. “A woman leader grounded in the women’s movement has deeper roots,” said a CSO leader.

The apparent disconnectedness of women political leaders can be shown through their legislative effectiveness. In 2013, a media report drawing from the parliamentary Hansard ran a headline saying that 50 female MPs spoke five times in two years and that seven female legislators had not said a word on the floor of the House in the previous two years (table 11).

The quotes in box 4 bring out the various hindrances to women’s legislative effectiveness, which range from individual to institutional barriers. There are issues to do with individual capacity and ideological commitment to gender issues, limited legislative experience and exposure, as well as inadequate gender analysis skills. However, there are also issues related to the systemic barriers due to the functioning of the political parties and the institution of parliament itself. Addressing such constraints requires substantive repeal of male privilege and equally calls for a more strategic collective response to address systemic and institutional barriers (Gollifer, 2013).

This is where the women’s movement becomes involved. Women leaders specifically stated that activities organized by women’s NGOs, such as capacity building and workshops, can be tiring and that such efforts be coordinated and concentrated. NGO activities are perceived as being structured around logical frameworks to fit into donor reporting. Women politicians further argued that the women’s movement lacks a shared identity.

Actors in women’s NGOs on their part contended that they have done their best in terms of supporting women political leaders and now feel a sense of frustration when the latter do not fulfil the women’s agenda (CSO roundtable, 2014).

Overall, it has been agreed that it is necessary to re-energise the women’s movement in Uganda and recognize the change of environment for women’s rights. For example, liberal strategies such as affirmative action are not appropriate for securing rights to bodily integrity or women’s property rights in legislation. While the former is ameliorative in nature, the latter pursues an overhaul of male privilege. Today’s strategies lie in the redistributive or transformative arena (Kabeer, 1999). The battle for such rights is therefore a much harder one.

The nature of the constraints identified in this study veers towards the proposal that the approach to women’s political leadership will require a long-term perspective involving the leaders themselves and many other actors in the political field. The multidimensional nature of current challenges will require inventiveness in crafting a long-term agenda of which the women’s movement can take the lead. The section that follows captures the views of different stakeholders on this long-term perspective.
BOX 4
Selected voices of female MPs
Source: Interviews

“I have done my best especially at the committee level. I am being careful with whatever I am doing. I don’t just shout for the sake of seeking public attention but I focus on issues.”

“In the house I do not comment on everything and some of us are serving our first term in parliament. We are learning how to move motions, contribute to debates and we are from different academic disciplines.”

“Contributing in the committees to me matters more than in the house because that is where much of the work is done.”

“There is inadequate skills development on legislation in relation to gender issues. That is why we propose this and other MPs shut us down. Lack of awareness about gender issues has remained a big issue but also sometimes some MPs just keep quiet. They lack skills to articulate issues. The other big problem is trying to tow party positions.”

“Women have been active on key issues unlike men who want to comment on everything. On average women have performed. There is no single law that has been passed in parliament where women have not participated.”

“Women are still training. Our village life is current in parliament. Other factors include catching the Speaker’s eye. We do not have a guarantee that everyone is given the opportunity to talk on an issue. It has happened to me. But for the case of the Marriage and Divorce Bill, women never stood for the women’s cause and we let them down. Also women suffer from overburdened responsibilities…”

TABLE 11:
Two-Year Media Ratings of Female Legislators of the Ninth Parliament
Source: The Daily Monitor Newspaper, 2nd September 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Performance</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>No. MPs</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Worst Performers</td>
<td>Not spoken</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Spoken &lt; 5 times</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairly Good</td>
<td>Spoken between 5 - 15 times</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Spoken between 16- 30 times</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Spoken between 31 -50 times</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Spoken &gt; 50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.

2016 AND BEYOND: WIDENING POLITICAL HORIZONS

This section seeks to synthesize the narratives around key actions for widening women’s political horizons in 2016 and after. The suggestions in this section were guided by a series of questions, which included: What prospects do women have for the 2016 elections?; What are women’s prospects when contesting mainstream seats?; What actions and actors are necessary in order to improve women’s prospects for 2016 and beyond?

A point of emphasis in this study has been that the women’s movement must play a central role in enhancing women’s political leadership prospects in order to expand women’s political horizons. The main recommendations are therefore made to the women’s movement, who will then be able to demand accountability from other actors such as political parties, the Electoral Commission, the Executive and Parliament. Specific recommendations are also made for UN Women as an entity. These recommendations also apply to development partners in general.

6.1. Actions recommended for the Women’s Movement

**Actions before nominations**

A) **Address the issue of coordination:** Insufficient coordination was highlighted as a critical issue in the women’s movement. As coordination amongst women’s organisations is crucial, it must be improved based on a mapping of capacities and gaps so as to harmonize its existing competencies. Additionally, a candid discussion on the ideological orientation of the women’s movement in Uganda must be held regarding the means by which women political leaders can be substantively brought back into the movement.

b) **Expand the citizen focus of the gender equality agenda**

Institute cost effective sensitization of voters through radio and social media, target cultural and faith-based organisations to nurture discourse around women’s right to political leadership and engage with perceived gatekeepers. Women must appreciate and embrace their right to participate in politics, especially contesting the so-called ‘men’s seats.’ These sensitizations must have a rights-based focus and should explain the relevance of having women in political leadership.

c) **Engage with political parties**

Focus on creating rapport as well as imparting knowledge. Engage on and hold parties accountable to their constitutions and the protocols to which Uganda is a signatory. Undertake advocacy on reforms on the legal framework governing political parties and enjoin the parties to create gender sensitive frameworks. These dialogues need to be regular and duly convened with the party’s participation (first with individual political parties and later followed by a joint dialogue with all the parties).

Engagement with political parties should contain two aspects; one is the intraparty mode of engagement...
where women, as insiders, call their parties to account. Women members of the different parties should be enabled to identify key areas to focus upon, such as their manifestos, leadership positions in the parties, nominations on winnable seats and party support for candidates, both at national and local level. Specifically, on the question of winnable seats, women within parties could map the electoral contest and attempt to have their parties field women for selected potentially winnable seats. Another useful strategy would be to increase the number of women in the electoral contest, because the more women contesting, the greater the likelihood that female candidature becomes normalized and voter preference for female candidates increases.

The second aspect should be interparty dialogue with the women’s movement (represented by women’s NGOs working in the area of leadership and governance). These party dialogues should be structured in a way that identifies milestones against which parties can be called to account. It’s important to note here that the women’s movement will need to craft an agenda that reflects a win-win situation for the parties and for the women’s movement as opposed to merely putting political parties on the spot. These dialogues will have more value if organized before the delegates’ conferences and nominations. The mode of these dialogues should be derived through a shared understanding with the parties so that it becomes part of their own political programme.

**d) Identify women to stand for political positions**

Target women who are interested in candidature, but also strategically identify women with a potential for politics and encourage and support them. Support can be both technical and financial through, for instance, financing radio programmes, posters and general capacity building. The period before nominations is crucial because after this, certain actions may be misconstrued as being partisan.

**e) Strategic selling of the gender agenda**

An expanded definition of gender issues should be promoted. The understanding that national interests have a gender component, would help many women MPs who often argue that they are concerned with national interests and not with narrower gender interests. The crosscutting nature of gender in regards to national policy must be appreciated by the electorate.

**f) Advocacy on electoral reforms**

Given the difficulties presented by the system of reserved seats, other options could be proposed, including, for example, a multi-member constituency system (where each district would be represented by one woman and one man). In effect, this would remove the ambiguities surrounding the current affirmative action measure of separate seats and would also contribute to the reduction of the size of parliament.

Many gender advocates believe that potential supporters would be immediately discouraged when considering that such a proposal would not be passed by the current parliament, given its character and architecture. However, this should not deter the effort to address the inherent ambiguities in women’s representation. Instead, the issue should be included on the public agenda, since women’s political horizons even after 2016 are under consideration. Other areas requiring attention include the system of ministerial appointment from the pool of MPs, which has been shown to undermine state accountability in general and is detrimental to women in particular. Ministerial appointments from outside of parliament may go some way in minimizing the reach of patronage in the workings of parliament as an institution.

**Actions beyond 2016**

**a) Place a long-term focus on women as citizens:**

Attempts to widen women’s roads to political leadership were premised on the understanding that women are not a homogenous category but rather a social group with various identities, aspirations and expectations. Hence the need to focus on women in three ways – women as citizens, women as voters and women as candidates. Of particular mention is the need for women to utilize the power they have as the majority of Uganda’s population. Sensitization of women as voters needs to focus on demystifying the use of money in political campaigns and other related activities and to emphasizing the need for issue-based politics. The women’s movement can map out recommendations to the Electoral Commission as the electoral management body in terms of key messages and concrete activities towards enhancing women’s electoral chances.
b) **Awareness raising on the reality of being an elected female MP**

As voters, the electorate, both women and men, must appreciate the challenging contexts within which women political leaders function. This includes creating awareness around specific experiences (such as sexism, political patronage, and the public-private divide) that female politicians encounter which their male counterparts may not experience. Members of Parliament of both sexes should be able to appreciate these realities.

c) **Induction meetings for newly elected MPs**

Induction is seen as an important activity in terms of mobilizing women MPs to appreciate what it takes to pursue a gender sensitive legislative agenda. These induction meetings can be jointly carried out by CSOs, UWOPA, political parties, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and development partners. Systematic processes must be facilitated as opposed to ad hoc capacity building events.

d) **Moving Beyond Electoralism**

Elections were identified as only one of the many processes within political participation. Other aspects identified included ongoing civic education, voter education, mobilizing electorates in constituencies, actual legislative work in parliament, and character building of public political leaders. Collective efforts in harmonizing the roles and expectations of different actors and particularly of political parties were identified as essential in shaping common agendas, strategic planning, coordination and of galvanizing human and financial resources for a common cause. In particular the following activities were identified:

- **Research and documentation:** This should be a continuous processes even after the elections. Academia and CSOs need to upgrade their documentation systems and seek to have a direct input into legislative processes by arming women leaders with evidence and analytical frameworks to facilitate informed debates in parliament. Success stories should be documented because they are currently underreported. Such success stories can then be used in mobilization and leadership skills enhancement.

- **Nurture women leaders across generations:** Women need to move from the exception to the norm in the leadership arena. This requires a process of building a critical mass of women leaders. In the short term, women should be encouraged to join leadership contests while in the long run young women and girls need to be nurtured so that in the future they are willing and able to stand for political office. A stronger ideological commitment to gender equality is also required.

6.2. **Suggested roles for UN Women, other UN and development partners**

The support of the international community to women’s political leadership and participation is guided by several UN General Assembly resolutions monitoring women’s participation in national and local decision-making bodies, including governments, parliaments, councils and political parties as well women’s participation and influence in the broader perspective of civic engagement.

The situation of women’s political leadership and participation in Uganda as discussed in this study underlines the need for UN Women and other development partners on support (a) the adoption and implementation of constitutional reforms, laws and policies that promoted women’s inclusion and greater participation, including temporary special measures beyond parliamentary seats; (b) gender-responsive electoral management; and (c) capacity development and institutional change to attract more women into leadership. The realization of intergovernmental goals and commitments to the advancement of women’s leadership and political participation requires continued reinforcement and monitoring, including collection and analysis of data disaggregated by sex. Better coordination and coherence among UN and development partners is also important in terms of policy advice and advisory services on constitutional reform and women’s political participation in electoral processes and beyond. The study has highlighted the need for enhanced capacity building for key stakeholders, women candidates and voters, electoral officials, civil society organizations and particular mentoring programs for female youth. Other suggested roles for UN Women, other UN agencies and development partners include:
A) Critical Contributor to the Electoral Laws Reform Agenda

Currently there is an effort to advocate for electoral reforms generally, through proposals championed by a coalition of civil society actors and MPs. UN Women and other development partners could support women’s NGOs to critically engage proposals with a view to ensuring greater participation of women and to facilitate CSO engagement with political parties.

B) Support Civic Education

“The debate needs to be kept alive,” said a CSO actor. This sentiment captures the need for civic education on critical issues such as the place of women in leadership as well as their rights. UN Women and other development partners can make a critical contribution by supporting sensitization, awareness raising and dissemination of educational messages about women’s leadership and participation.

c) Capacity Building of Women Leaders

The last two decades have seen successes and gaps in women’s leadership effectiveness and political influence (Kadaga, 2013). The issue of capability has arisen when referring to the individual competencies of women leaders as well as to the capacity of women as a collective to work towards engendering systems generally. The latter aspect has been contentious as women politicians progressively struggle to survive in a hostile environment. This calls for a rekindling of the connection between women leaders to the core of the women’s movement. UN Women and other development partners can support activities such as dialogues and briefings immediately after the elections with the new leaders - MPs and councillors. UWOPA as a collective can be supported in its quest to improve its legislative agenda for the tenth Parliament. In this way a multifaceted approach can address the problem of limited political influence.

d) Support Continuous Research and Documentation

As already indicated, research and documentation is a crucial aspect in directing action. This can be in form of CSO research to support the legislative agenda or general opinion gathering to establish the status of gender relations and society’s visions towards gender equitable governance. Such research could be shared in forms that enable different actors to utilize the findings but with an overall goal of expanding women’s political horizons.


Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) 2010. ‘Equal By Right; The Uganda Women’s Agenda 2010 – 2016,’ Kampala


Gollifer, S. 2013. ‘Beyond almost all Politicians there are women in the Shadows: Cambodian Women’s Experiences of Local governance,’ in Journeys from Exclusion to Inclusion: Marginalised Women’s Successes in Overcoming Political Exclusion, Stockholm: International IDEA.


Republic of Uganda (RoU) 2005. The Political Parties and Organisations Act 2005


RoU. 1997. The Local Government Act


Tamale, S. 2003. Gender Implications for Opening up Political Parties in Uganda, Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET), Kampala


## ANNEXES

### I. Participants to the interviews and roundtable discussions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants in the Roundtable Meeting: Current and Former Women MPs</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Agrippina Nandhego</td>
<td>Coordinator, UWOPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Akello Judith Franca</td>
<td>Woman MP, Agago District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Amongin Jacqueline</td>
<td>Woman MP, Ngora District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Amongi Betty,</td>
<td>MP, Oyam County South, Oyam District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Amoit Judith M</td>
<td>Woman MP, Pallisa District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Amero Suzan</td>
<td>Woman MP, Amuria District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Alum Santa Ogwang</td>
<td>Woman MP, Oyam District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Alisimera Babiiha Joy</td>
<td>Former Woman MP Bundibugyo District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Aol Betty Ocean</td>
<td>Woman MP, Gulu District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Atim Joy</td>
<td>Woman MP, Lira District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Auru Anne</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woman MP, Moyo District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Barumba Beatrice Rusaniya</td>
<td>Woman MP, Kiruhura District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Beatrice Lagada</td>
<td>Former MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Bintu Jalia</td>
<td>Woman MP, Masindi District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Capt Suzan Lakot</td>
<td>MP, UPDF Representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Catherine Akunu Marenjina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Egunyu Nantume Janepher</td>
<td>Woman MP, Buvuma District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Kaahwa Tophase Byagira</td>
<td>Woman MP, Hoima District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Kabaale K Olivia</td>
<td>Woman MP, Iganga District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Iriama Margret</td>
<td>Woman MP, Moroto District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Kabahenda Flavia</td>
<td>Woman MP, Kyegomga District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Kamateka Jova,</td>
<td>Woman MP, Mitooma District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Mary Harriet</td>
<td>Administration Assistant UWOPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Lanyero Sarah</td>
<td>Woman MP, Lamwo District</td>
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<td>Hon Lilian Kamugara</td>
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<td>Hon Lowila C D Oketayot,</td>
<td>Woman MP, Pader District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Marian Nalubega</td>
<td>Woman MP, Butambala District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon Mbabazi Betty Ahimisibwe</td>
<td>Woman MP, Rubirizi District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Nagayi Nabilla S.</td>
<td>Woman MP, Kampala District</td>
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<td>Hon Nakawunde Sarah</td>
<td>Woman MP, Mpiigi District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Nakayenze Connie</td>
<td>Woman MP, Mbale District</td>
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<td>Hon Namara Grace</td>
<td>Woman MP, Lyantonde District</td>
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<td>Ms. Namwezi Juvan</td>
<td>UPFC Administrator</td>
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<td>Hon Nauwat Rosemary</td>
<td>Woman MP, Amudat District</td>
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<td>Hon Ninsiima Ronnah Rita</td>
<td>Woman MP, Kabale District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hon Nshaija Dorothy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Hon Nshaija Dorothy
Woman MP, Kamwenge District

Hon Safia Nalule Juuko
Woman MP PWDs

Hon Tabitha Grace
Former MP

Hon Sarah Mateke
Woman MP, Kisoro District

Hon Victoria Sekitoleko
Former MP

Ms. Harriet Pamara
Aspirant, 2016

Martin Ninsiima
Communications Officer
UN Women

Ms. Heleen Annemans
Programme Officer
UN Women

Ms. Hodan Addou
Country Representative
UN Women

Participants in the CSO Roundtable Meeting

Ms. Judy Kamanyi,
Independent consultant Women’s movement

Ms. Robinah Rubimbwa
Centre for Women in Governance (CEWIGO)

Ms. Barbara Acam
Democratic Governance Facility

Ms. Anna Mutavati
Deputy Country Representative
UN Women

Ms. Norah Mat
FiDA-Uganda

Ms. Jessica Nkuuhe,
Independent consultant

Ms. Atukwasa Rita
Institute of Social Transformation

Ms. Proscovia Nakaye
Programme Officer
Isis-WICCE

Ms. Namirimu Faith
President of Girls Network MEMPROW

Ms. Marilyn Kabalere
Advocacy Officer
National Association of Women Organisations in Uganda

Ms. Claire Atwine
Finance Officer
CEWIGO

Dr Bagambe Steven
Country Director
LIPRO Uganda

Ms. Sophie Kange
Program Coordinator
NGO Forum

Ms. Elone N. Ainebyoona
Programme Officer
NGO Forum

Ms. Ruth Ochieng
Executive Director
Isis-WICCE

Ms. Kako Joanita Davina
Programme Officer
CEWIGO

Ms. Sharleen Kabajungo
Intern
Isis-WICCE

Ms. Monica Nyiraguhubwa
Program Manager
MEMPROW

Ms. Mary Nannodi
Executive Director
CEEW – Uganda

Mr Martin Ninsiima
Communications Officer
UN Women

Ms. Anne Nkutu
Consultant
NCG (U) LTD

Ms. Paulina Chiwanga
Coordinator JPGE
UN Women

Ms. Brenda Kugonza Coordinator
Centre for Domestic Violence

Ms. Heleene Annemans,
Programme Officer
UN Women

Participants in Discussion - Gulu District

Ms. Ajok Brenda
Gender Office
Gulu District Local Government

Ms. Tumwikirize Joanita
Assistant Judge
Gulu High Court
Mr Oroma Lucy, Programme Manager War Child Canada
Mr Balmoi Caide Okella Gender Focal Point Ker-Kwaro Acholi (KKA)
Ms. Atim Margaret Programme Manager FIDA Uganda
Hon Santa Oketta, Councillor Layibi and Bardege Sub-Counties Gulu District Local Council
Hon Margret Langol Councillor Odek and Lalogi Sub-Counties Gulu District Local Council
Hon Lamunu Ketty Giri-Giri Councillor Lakwana and Bobi Sub-counties Gulu District Local Council
Hon Akello Grace Ouma Councillor Koro Sub-county Gulu District Local Council
Hon Nyapolo Rose Councillor Ongako Sub-County Gulu District Local Council
Hon Lalam Lillian Stella Councillor Awach, Patiko and Palaro Sub-Counties Gulu District Local Council
Hon Atim Betty Councillor Paicho and Unyama Sub-Counties

Gulu District Local Council
Hon Arach Christine Councillor Pece Sub-County Gulu District Local Council
Hon Amono Rose Abili Councillor Bungatira Sub-county Gulu District Local Council
Hon Adong Caroline Rose Female Councillor for PWDs Gulu District Local Council
Hon Alima Joyce Reeni Female Youth Councillor and Deputy Speaker Gulu District Local Council
Hon Betty Awor Gulu District Local Council
Hon Betty Atim Gulu District Local Council
Hon Teddy Luwar Gulu District Local Council

Key Informant Interviews

Ms. Margaret Wokuri Madanda Aspirant Woman MP Mbale
Mr Okello Lucima Party Political Analyst UPC
Mr Twinomugisha Gideon Administrative Secretary UPC
Group Discussion Participants

Hon Nagudi Wangwa Rutange
Former Woman MP, Mbale District
Eighth Parliament

Hon Loi Kageni Kilyapawo
Former Woman MP, Tororo District
Fifth and Eighth Parliament

Hon Bahane Silver Niyirizi
Former MP Bufumbira North
Eighth Parliament

Hon Beatrice Rwakimari
Former Woman MP, Ntungamo District
Eighth Parliament

Hon Jane Alisemera Babiiha
Former Woman MP, Bundibugyo District
Eighth Parliament

Hon Betty Aol
Woman MP, Gulu District
Shadow Minister for Gender and Development
Eighth Parliament

Hon Emmanuel Dombo Lumala
Bunyole County East, Butaleja District

Hon Sarah Kataike Ndoboli
Woman Member of Parliament
Budaka District
Minister of State for Luwero Triangle

Ms. Silvia Pasti
Chief Child Protection
United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF)

Mr Gwada Tao K’Ogot
Formerly with Citizens Coalition for Electoral Democracy in Uganda (CCEDU)
## II. Registered Political Parties in Uganda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Name of Political Party</th>
<th>Year of Registration</th>
<th>Gender of Promoter(s) at the Time of Registration</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Action Party (AP)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Activist Party</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Bridge Party (BP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Congress Service Volunteers Organisation (COSEVO)</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Conservative Party (CP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Democratic Party (DP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Farmers’ Party of Uganda (FPU)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Forum for Democratic Change (FDC)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male and Female</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Forum for Integrity in Leadership (FIL)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Justice Forum (JEEMA)</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>Liberal Democratic Transparency (LDT)</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>Movement for Democratic Change (MDC)</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>Movement Volunteer Mobilisers Organization (MVMO)</td>
<td>2005</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>National Peasants’ Party (NPP)</td>
<td>2004</td>
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<td>New Order Democracy (NOD)</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>People’s Development Party (PDP)</td>
<td>2007</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>People’s Independent Party (PIP)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>People’s Progressive Party (PPP)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Name of political Party</td>
<td>Year of registration</td>
<td>Gender of Promoter(s) at the time of registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>People’s United Movement (PUM)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Popular People’s Democracy (PPD)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Progressive Alliance Party (PAP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Reform Party (RP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Republican Women and Youth Party (RWYP)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Social Democratic Party (SDP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Society for Peace and Development (SPD)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Uganda Economic Party (UEP)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Uganda Mandate Party (UMP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male and Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Congress (UPC)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Party (UPP)</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Green Partisan Party (GPP)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Uganda Federal Alliance (UFA)</td>
<td>2010</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. The Election Journey

1) Introduction

Competing in an election is a highly involving political activity. It is a direct form of political participation that requires adequate preparation. There are hurdles along the way. Although election hurdles may not be uniform for all women and may depend on actual conditions at family and community levels, there exists a general understanding that the election ground is not level for women and men. For women, there are critical social cultural, economic and political factors that impact on their election journey in a unique manner. At the sociocultural level there is a whole question of how to deal with the norms and perceptions about women at family and community levels; economic hurdles relate to limited resource control and how to finance the process while the political level brings forth issues to do with political party support and the hostile policy environment.

In many ways these challenges should not work as a deterrent to women’s political ambitions. Rather, women need to be adequately prepared to deal with these so as to make the election journey worthwhile. This document is intended as a summary of key stages of the election journey in Uganda so as to act as a quick guide for women who intend to actively participate in the election process either as candidates or as supporters of women leaders. Knowing the key stages in the election journey will enable women to make proper plans on how to navigate election hurdles at each stage. Women contestants ought to map out their election journey and be able to have clear strategies to effectively increase their electoral fortunes.

2) The Regulatory Framework

Electoral processes follow an agreed set of rules – from voter registration, to candidate registration, to the counting of ballots– which are prescribed in legislation and/or regulations. This legal framework ensures that all participants and stakeholders (including voters, candidates and political parties) abide by an agreed set of rules for the conduct of an election. The task of registering political parties and candidates, disbursing public funding and overseeing campaign expenditure and disclosure rests with the Electoral Commission.

The laws applicable for elections in Uganda are the following:

- The Presidential Elections Act 2005
- The Parliamentary Elections Act 2005
- The Electoral Commission Act, Cap 140
- The Local Governments Act 1997

3) Elective Positions in Uganda’s General Elections

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda stipulates that: “All the people of Uganda shall have access to leadership positions at all levels subject to the constitution (Paragraph 11 Democratic Principles)” ii. According to the Electoral Commission records available positions across the entire spectrum of elections were as follows: 13,242 in 2010/2, 13,997 in 2005/6 and 18,637 in 2010/11 (table 1). Women should be able to map their electoral fortunes across the electoral areas. This is specifically so in order to expand women’s participation in non-reserved seats such as district and sub-county chairpersons as well as directly elected MPs and Councillors.

4) Key steps in the election journey

The key steps involved in the electoral journey will typically include the following stages:

- Eligibility to stand as a candidate
- Getting selected by the party or primary elections
- Official candidate nomination/registration period
- Campaign period
- Polling, counting and announcement of results

i) Eligibility

Political contestants must ensure that they are qualified to vie for the respective positions they may be interested in, be it the Presidency, a Member of Parliament or a Local Government Chairpersons and Councillor.
According to Section 2 (1) of the Presidential Elections Act 2000, a person is not qualified for election as President unless that person is:

a) a citizen of Uganda by birth;
b) not less than thirty-five years and not more than seventy-five years of age; and
c) a person qualified to be a Member of Parliament.

The Parliamentary Elections Act 2005 provides that a person is qualified to be a Member of Parliament if that person:

a) is a citizen of Uganda;
b) is a registered voter;
c) has completed a minimum formal education of Advanced Level Standard or its equivalent.

Further, the Parliamentary Elections Act (2005) stipulates that a person is not qualified for election as a Member of Parliament if that person:

a) is of a sound mind;
b) is holding or acting in an office the functions of which involve a responsibility for or in connection with conduct of an election;
c) is a traditional or cultural leader as defined in clause (6) of article 246 of the Constitution;
d) has been adjudged or otherwise declared bankrupt under any law in force in Uganda and has not been discharged; or
e) is under a sentence of death or a sentence of imprisonment exceeding nine months imposed by any competent court without the option of a fine;
f) has, within the seven years immediately preceding the election, been convicted by a competent court of a crime involving dishonesty or moral turpitude; or

g) has, within the seven years immediately preceding the election, been convicted by a competent court for contravention of any law relating to elections conducted by the Commission.

All the above qualifications also apply to the special interest groups. These are: Women, Youth, Workers, People with disabilities (PWDs) and the Army. These are constituted as follows:

- one woman representative for every district or city
- ten representatives of the Uganda People’s Defense Forces (UPDF) at least two of whom shall be women
- five workers’ representatives at least one of whom shall be a woman;
- five Youth representatives at least one of whom shall be a woman
- five representatives for the PWDs, at least one of whom shall be a woman

Local government elections are governed under the Local Governments Act 1997 elaborated under Part X. It stipulates the eligibility criteria for the different positions as follows:

**Chairperson of a District of City**

Section 112 (3) of the Local Governments Act 1997 stipulates that a person shall not qualify for election as Chairperson of a District, or City unless that person:

a) is a citizen of Uganda;
b) is ordinarily resident or has made undertaking in writing to the Electoral Commission that within six months of his or her election he or she shall have established a residence in that District or City;
c) is at least thirty years and not more than seventy-five years of age;
d) is a registered voter;
e) has completed a minimum education of Advanced Level Standard or its equivalent.

**Chairperson of a Municipality, Town, Division or Sub-County**

Section 112 (4) provides that the main requirements for these posts are that a person is:
a) a Citizen of Uganda  
b) is ordinarily resident or has made undertaking in writing to the Electoral Commission that within six months of his or her election he or she shall have established a residence in the municipality, Town, Division or Sub-county  
c) at least thirty years and not more than seventy-five years of age;  
d) a registered voter

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILLORS

Eligibility criteria for local government councilors are that a person is a citizen and registered voter as stipulated in part X Section 117 (1). Accordingly a person is not eligible to be elected a Local Government Councillor if that person is of unsound mind, is a cultural or traditional leader, or is employed by that local government Council.

At the general level the key posts at local government such as district or sub-county chairperson which require residence in the area mean that if women are married in a different local government and therefore resident in the that local government, they cannot contest in their district of origin.

ii) Getting selected by the Party or Primary Elections

A candidate vying for election in regard to the presidency and parliament, must either belong to an existing political party or declare he or she is running as an independent. This decision ought to be made early in the pre-election period so as to allow ample time for preparation especially with regard to getting selected by the party. The decision whether or not to run on a party ticket is individual. Running on party ticket may facilitate the candidate in form of party support, although there is a possibility of critical blockages at the primary election level.

The party presidential flag bearer is elected at the national Party Delegates Conference (DC) while the MPs are selected through Primary Elections. A Primary Election, as a key stage in the electoral process, is an election that narrows the field of candidates before an election for office, especially to determine party flag bearers. These are organized at party level. The electorate is determined at party level. For example in the case of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) the electorate for the MP NRM flag bearer is constituted of all registered party members in the constituency. In the case of Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) the candidates are nominated by Parliamentary Committee and Parliamentary Constituency Conference respectively. Therefore intending contestants ought to be conversant with the party constitutions and regulations. For women specifically intending to contest direct competitive (unreserved seats) there is need to do proper ground work within the party so as to win the party sponsorship on those posts.

iii) Nominations

Nomination procedures are those that establish the eligibility of candidates to be included on a ballot. The qualifications for approval as a political party or candidate typically include: age; nationality; financial security; level of support from electors; and lack of conviction for criminal or electoral offences.

Nomination of candidates is done in two days whose dates are fixed by the Electoral Commission and published in the national gazette. The nomination fee is set by the Electoral Commission and announced accordingly the procedure is as follows:

According to Parliamentary Elections Act 2005, section 11 on the procedure for the nomination of candidates provides that nomination of a candidate is done by two registered voters tendering the following to the returning officer on nomination day. A nomination paper in duplicate in the prescribed form containing a statement under oath in regard to;

1. The name, age, address and occupation of the person seeking nomination;
2. The address designated by the candidate for the service of process and papers;
3. The name and address of the official agent of the candidate;
4. A statement of consent from the agent;
5. Names and signatures of at least ten registered voters in the constituency each of whom must state their village, occupation and voters registration number;
6. A statement under oath that the candidate is a citizen of Uganda is over 18 years and has consented to the nomination. It should also state that the candidate is not disqualified from contesting by any law in Uganda;
7. Where one is sponsored by a political party, the name and address of the political party must be included.

Nomination for candidates for Local Government Councils as outlined in Part X section 120 specifies that a nomination paper should be signed by the candidate and tendered to the Returning officer with the following:

a) Names and signatures of not less than five persons who are registered as voters in the constituency where the person is seeking nomination.
b) Appointment of agent specifying the name, voter’s registration number, address and occupation of the official agent;
c) A statement of oath.

The nomination paper is to be accompanied by a non-refundable nomination fee, ten currency points in legal tender or a bank draft for that amount, in the case of MPs, two and a half currency points for District, City or Municipality, and one currency point for Town, City, Division or Sub-county.

iv) Campaign Period

The campaign period is the peak of the electoral journey on the part of political contestants. Starting a campaign requires adequate preparation. Key messages in this regard include:

- Get acquainted with the laws governing the specific contest and the laws within the political party if contesting under a party;
- Determine the political mission or what is to be achieved;
- Craft campaign messages;
- Map the support structure, including the political party, NGOs and women’s organisations;
- Mobilise resources and work out a strategy for running a cost effective campaign.
- Work out a strategy for an effective campaign and how to overcome gendered electoral hurdles.
- The formal regulations for MP campaigns as according to the Parliamentary Elections Act, 2005, are as follows:
  - The manner and period is determined by the Electoral Commission and published in the gazette;
  - Each candidate shall give his/her campaign program to the returning officer;
  - Campaigns should not commence before the expiry of the nomination period;
  - No campaign meetings may be held within 24 hours before the polling day;
  - Every candidate has the right to conduct campaigns freely in accordance with the law;
  - All candidates are to be treated equally during the campaign period and should have equal access to state owned communication media;
  - Every candidate has the right to use private electronic media;
  - Any campaign materials such as books, pamphlets, reports should bear the name of the author.
  - While campaigning a candidate should not:
    - Use any language intended to incite violence or public disorder or threatens war;
    - Use any language which is defamatory or insulting or which incites hatred;
    - De-campaign another using private electronic media;
    - Use sectarian language.

At the local government level, the Electoral Commission, through the Returning Officer organizes joint candidates meeting accordingly. No candidate is allowed to hold or address his or her own individual candidates’ meeting.

Beyond the formal requirements, women contestants need to be aware that the campaign period tends to lay bare the gendered terrain of public politics. It is in this period that voters tend to want to ‘put women in their place’, whether they are contesting reserved or open seats. When they are contesting open seats they
are asked why they have left the women’s seat to contest with men. When they contest the reserved seats, women are often required to compete with each other on the basis of conformity to notions of womanhood in the particular community. Some are required to kneel for voters, and others asked to promise that they will be ‘real’ women, despite contesting for public office. In the actual campaign process most people who offer to act as campaign agents tend to be men. This fact tends to cause anxiety amongst husbands of women candidates since the concerned woman will be in the company of males that are not necessarily her relatives. Male agents are also known to seek to manipulate women candidates particularly to extract money from them. There are also cases of violence against women candidates or general election violence that negatively impact on women candidates.

At the general level, community tends to require women candidates to justify their ambition for elective office even when the large number of women in public politics for several years now could have created a relative ideological shift towards the acceptance of women’s ability to govern. Women need to build on the relative legitimacy created by their public presence by creating coalitions to collectively address the hurdles in the campaign period. In this way they will avoid the very demeaning processes where they are compelled to pull each other down.

vi) Polling

Voting day is the climax of the electoral cycle, largely in the hands of the Electoral Commission and the voters. Candidates are not allowed to campaign during the polling period and may not post or display any campaign literature, emblem, badge, label, ribbon, flag, banner, card, bill, poster or device, that could be taken as an indication of support for or opposition to a candidate. However, candidates should be able to guard their vote. The candidate needs agents at the polling stations for the entire period up to the declaration of results by the returning officer. For example, the Parliamentary Elections Act 2005 section 32 provides for polling agents of candidates as follows:

1. A candidate may be present in person or through his or her representative or polling agent at each polling station for purposes of safeguarding the interest of the candidate with regard to polling process.
2. Not more than two representatives or polling agents shall be appointed by a candidate and the appointment shall be in writing addressed to the presiding officer of the polling station.
3. A representative shall report to the presiding officer of the polling station on polling day.
4. A representative or polling agent appointed shall be paid an allowance determined by the Electoral Commission.

According to the laws governing all levels of elections (Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government), votes are counted that day at the polling station immediately after the Presiding Officer declares the polling closed. The votes are counted in the open in full view of all present. Hence candidates should ensure that their agents stay throughout the polling process, witness the counting of votes and sign the tally sheets.

vi) Results and Review

The law allows for petitions for any aggrieved candidate for Presidential, Parliamentary and Local Government chairperson positions. Election petitions are filed within fourteen days after the day on which the results of the election have been notified by the Electoral Commission in the Gazette. In the case of election petitions, candidates should ensure that they have concrete evidence to avoid unnecessary costs.

Irrespective of whether they win election or not, women candidates should use the post-election period to contribute to any review of the electoral process; to present their own experience and to submit recommendations for reform. The women’s movement should utilize these experiences to design support strategies, advocacy programmes as well as sensitization messages for subsequent elections.
TABLE 1
Electoral Areas for 2001/2, 2005/6, and 2011 general


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/ N°</th>
<th>Category of Electoral Area</th>
<th>N° Electoral Areas 2001/2</th>
<th>N° Electoral Areas 2005/6</th>
<th>N° Electoral Areas 2010/11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Parliamentary Directly Elected</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Parliamentary District Women Representatives</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>District Chairpersons</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>District Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>998</td>
<td>1339</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>District Women Councillors</td>
<td>607</td>
<td>653</td>
<td>921</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Municipality/City Division Mayors</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Municipality/City Division Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>385</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Municipality/City Division Women Councillors</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>249</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Sub-county/Town/Municipal Division Chairpersons</td>
<td>956</td>
<td>970</td>
<td>1321</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Sub-county/Town/Municipal/Division Directly Elected Councillors</td>
<td>5206</td>
<td>5590</td>
<td>7332</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Sub-county/Town/Municipal/Division Women Councillors</td>
<td>4741</td>
<td>4976</td>
<td>6600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13242</td>
<td>13997</td>
<td>18637</td>
</tr>
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</table>
TABLE 2
The Election Journey at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presidential/Parliamentary Elections</th>
<th>Local Government Council Elections</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primaries (held within the party)</td>
<td>Nomination of candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomination of candidates</td>
<td>Inspection of nomination forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspection of nomination forms</td>
<td>Setting of polling dates by commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting of polling dates by commission</td>
<td>Campaign programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign Programme</td>
<td>Campaigns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaigns</td>
<td>Polling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling</td>
<td>Counting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counting</td>
<td>Declaration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Declaration of winner by returning officer</td>
<td>Submission of results by returning officer to commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of results by returning officer to commission</td>
<td>Publication of results by the Electoral commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication of results by Electoral Commission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 3
Summary of key stages of the journey and possible hurdles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Election Stage</th>
<th>Possible Hurdles</th>
<th>Possible Strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility and transition to Aspirant status</td>
<td>Education attainment, family responsibility, power relations at family level, resources</td>
<td>Enjoin family support prior to elections, income generating activities (IGAs) saving, activism in the women’s movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting Selected by party</td>
<td>Blockages at party level; Party intrigue and patronage; Low party influence on the part of women, limited time for party related activities; Limited chances to contest open seats</td>
<td>Women’s collective action in party, conscious cultivation of influence in party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nomination</td>
<td>Nomination fee</td>
<td>Saving, solicit support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campaign</td>
<td>Resources to finance campaign; Social cultural norms: Manipulative campaign agents, election violence</td>
<td>Effective and efficient campaign spending, collective campaigning, rigorous selection process of candidates agents, utilize women movement spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polling</td>
<td>Resources, raising agents to cover all polling stations in the constituency, agents commitment</td>
<td>IGAs, solicit volunteers, adequate preparation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gender Equality and Political Leadership in Uganda
UN WOMEN IS THE UN ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO GENDER EQUALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. A GLOBAL CHAMPION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS, UN WOMEN WAS ESTABLISHED TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS ON MEETING THEIR NEEDS WORLDWIDE.

UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women’s equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women’s leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women’s economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system’s work in advancing gender equality.