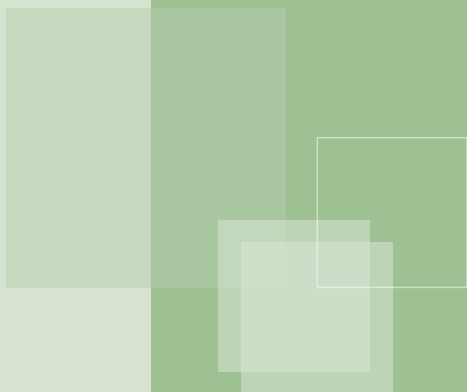# International IDEA

A Framework for Developing Gender Policies for Political Parties

International IDEA

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CONTENTS

1 Introduction

The International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) has designed this Framework in order to assist political parties and gender equality advocates in their efforts to develop comprehensive policies to advance gender equality within political parties.

Political parties have come to embody a central element of modern representative democracies—voluntary associations of citizens that aggregate and represent the interests of the people. Not only have they become indispensable for democratic governance, they have thus become the key gatekeepers for accessing political power and voice in governmental decision-making.

Ensuring genuine representation of the views, interests and needs of all citizens—both women and men—is crucial to the effective functioning of political parties and for their legitimacy and representativeness. As is widely acknowledged, the failure to include women and their perspectives in political decision making weakens the legitimacy of democratically elected institutions and deprives women—half of the population of any given country—of their right to participate effectively in the governance of their societies.

Among the main indicators of a party's commitment to gender equality are the number of women in its leadership structures, the initiatives it undertakes to increase the presence and influence of women in different spheres of political decision-making, and the degree to which it pursues gender equality initiatives in its policy proposals and political activities (Sacchet 2005).

Various political parties in different countries have increasingly adopted measures to create a supportive internal party environment for women. This Framework presents concrete examples of such practices documented by International IDEA in Latin America (International IDEA 2009) and Africa (International IDEA 2012), and points to documented practices from other sources.

Evidence from these examples suggests that political parties which take their gender equality commitments seriously benefit from stronger links with their electorate and with new groups of voters, and develop stronger electoral positions and public recognition over time. Evidence also indicates that 'parties that can produce new faces and ideas maintain a vibrant and energized image in an age of declining voter turnout' (NDI/UNDP 2012: 2).

Yet the vast majority of political parties around the world remain indifferent (if not blind) to the need to promote genuine internal democracy and

reform themselves from within to help train more female leaders. The dominant masculine model of exercising power in political life and within parties creates major barriers to women's advancement in politics. Conservative societal attitudes towards the role of women in society exacerbate these barriers. In addition, women are restricted by the difficulty of reconciling family and public life; a relative lack of personal financial assets to invest in political campaigns; a lack of access to moneyed networks for political financing; and gender-based stereotypes in media portrayal of women in politics.

An essential assumption in formulating this Framework is that party leaders and other party actors genuinely understand and embrace the relevance of a gender-sensitive approach in party development and the need to address gender inequalities through proactive strategies.

The Framework outlines key considerations for developing a party's gender policy, and addresses variety of thematic areas essential for the advancement of women and promotion of gender equality within political parties, including leadership formation, internal decision making, internal oversight and institutional development, candidate recruitment, party programmes and platform development, outreach to voters and campaigns.

The Framework first presents a rationale for institutionalizing a comprehensive gender equality policy within a party. It then provides recommendations on how to initiate and develop such a policy, including steps necessary to conduct a gender-based audit within a party. Next, it moves on to outline key principles and objectives that a gender policy should embody, followed by a more specific set of objectives, indicators and examples of similar practices from a variety of political parties around the world.

2 Why gender equality matters for a political party

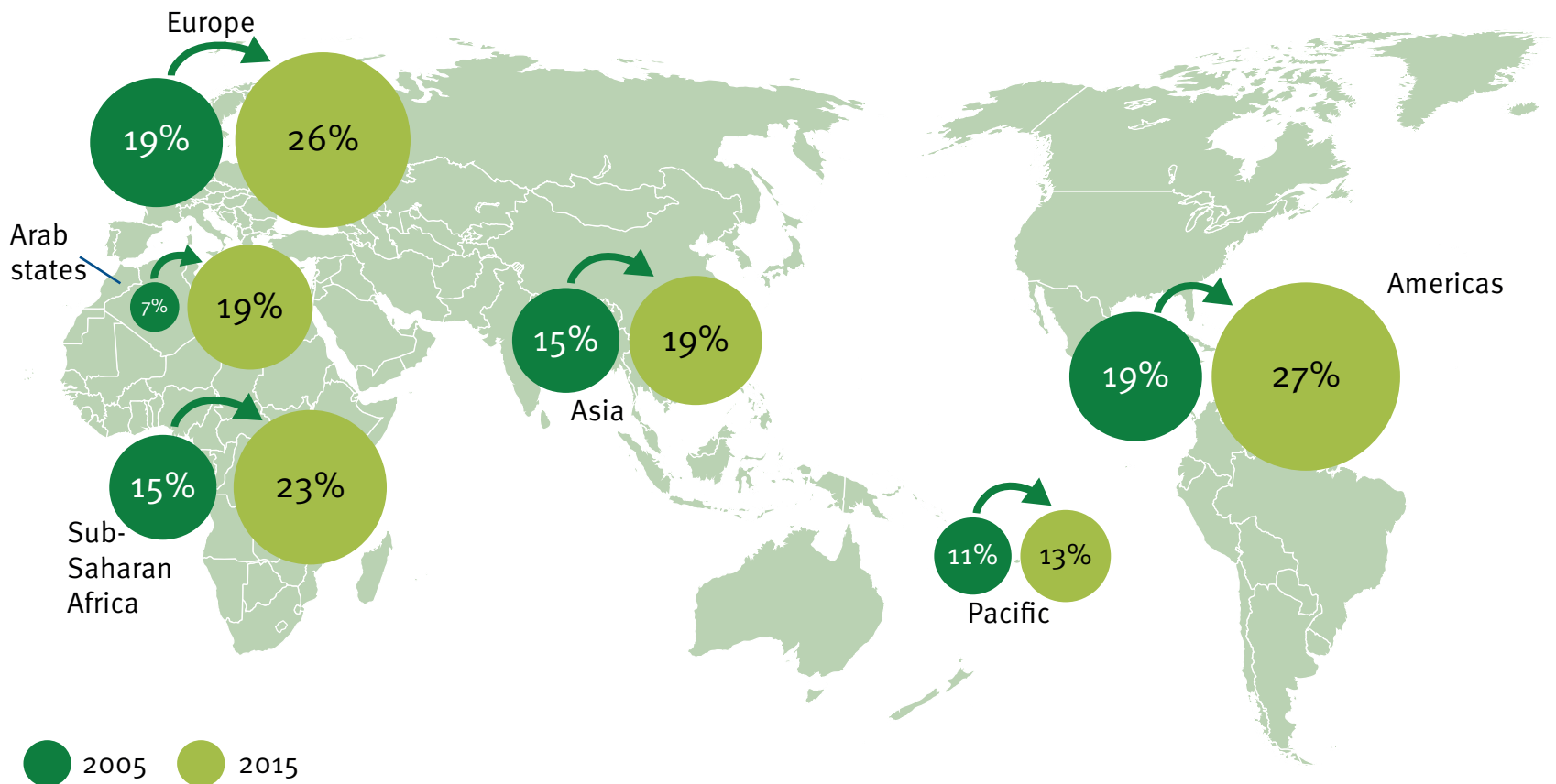**Understanding the problem of women's political under-representation**

As the gatekeepers to elected posts in almost all countries, political parties are consistently identified as responsible for women's political under-representation. At the end of 2015, men held an average of 78 per cent of all parliamentary seats globally (IPU 2015). This over-representation of men is not only problematic in and of itself, but the under-representation of women's interests in decision-making bodies also acts as an obstacle to equitable and sustainable development.

The magnitude of the problem of gender inequality in political representation also varies over time. Over the past two decades, the average number of women in parliaments around the world has almost doubled, from 11 to 22 per cent. However, only 41 countries have more than 30 per cent women parliamentarians—about one-fifth of all countries—and only 12 have 40 per cent or more women in their parliaments. Meanwhile, 73 countries still have as few as 15 per cent or less women in their parliaments; and 5 of these countries (Micronesia, Palau, Qatar, Tonga and Vanuatu) have all-male legislatures (IPU 2015).

The Americas, the Middle East and sub-Saharan Africa have shown significant increases in women's participation in recent years, which have been the result of important legal and policy reforms undertaken due to pressure from women's groups and political openings arising from public upheavals (see Figure 2.1).

While the institutionalization of gender equality objectives and strategies in politics and parties is a vital step towards attaining equality between women and men in public life and decision making, it is a deeply contested field. The dominant masculine model of the exercise of power in political life and within political parties builds on traditional attitudes that sideline women and make it difficult for them to succeed in politics. The media's portrayal of women in politics reinforces gender-based stereotypes, which makes it particularly difficult to reconcile women's active engagement in politics with their domestic roles and responsibilities. Therefore, homosocial attitudes of trust guide gatekeepers' decisions about candidates—that is, men select other men because they feel more comfortable with them (see e.g. Bjarnegård 2013). Unhelpfully, party leaders tend to deny the existence of gender-based discrimination against women, arguing that political and legal systems

Figure 2.1. Proportion of women in parliaments: progress over the past decade

Europe
19% 26%

Arab states
7% 19%

Sub-Saharan Africa
15% 23%

Asia
15% 19%

Pacific
11% 13%

Americas
19% 27%

● 2005 ● 2015

Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union, 'Women in National Parliaments: World Classification [as of 1 December 2015]', [n.d.], <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/world011215.htm>, accessed 19 July 2016

provide for full equality and women are free to pursue political careers if they so desire.

A 2013 study by International IDEA on political parties' commitments in 33 African countries revealed a significant gap between parties' written general commitments to promoting gender equality and specific measures to implement these commitments. Evidence gathered across political parties in these countries suggests that:

... while many political parties' policy documents contain commitments on gender equality, they do not set out strategic measures for effective enforcement and implementation of the commitments. Nevertheless, it is evident that political parties demonstrate a certain level of awareness on gender issues, as 27 per cent have commitments on gender equality in their party constitutions and 58 per cent have expressions of commitments to gender equality in their party manifestos.
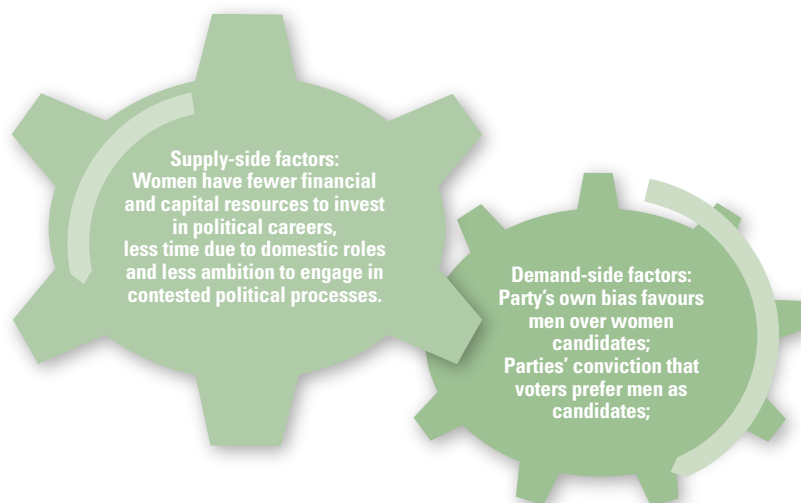
(Kandawasvika-Nhundu 2013: 14)

According to another study, in Latin America, 70 per cent of political parties 'mention principles of gender equality or non-discrimination', while the remaining 30 per cent barely refer to it in party documents (Llanos and Garzón de la Roza 2011: 19).

Supply- and demand-side factors

To understand the problem of men's over-representation (or women's under-representation), the interaction of supply- and demand-side factors needs to be considered (see Figure 2.2). Supply-side factors explain gender-based differences in political aspirations: women have fewer resources (e.g. time, money and skills), are less motivated to run for office and have smaller political networks than men. Demand-side factors suggest that, while women have political ambitions, party gatekeepers and voters assess their abilities, qualifications and experiences differently than those of their male colleagues in candidate selection processes and elections (Norris and Lovenduski 1995).

Both of these factors are critical to consider when developing practical solutions to close gender gaps in politics. A supply-side perspective suggests that political parties should focus on promoting conditions and opportunities that lead women to aspire for political office. A demand-side perspective implies that political parties should change their candidate selection procedures, evaluate their criteria for suitable candidates and reassess how they present their female candidates to the electorate. Consideration of both of these factors, with the commitment to provide meaningful opportunities and incentives for women aspirants and candidates, is essential if parties are to strive for substantive gender equality in politics.

Figure 2.2. Supply and demand-side factors affecting political recruitment

Supply-side factors:
Women have fewer financial and capital resources to invest in political careers, less time due to domestic roles and less ambition to engage in contested political processes.

Demand-side factors:
Party's own bias favours men over women candidates;
Parties' conviction that voters prefer men as candidates;

3 Rationale for a gender policy for a political party

Enhancing gender equality within political parties improves their internal democracy. Ensuring inclusion and fairness from a gender perspective in the functioning of a political party increases the likelihood of more transparent, fair and accountable governance within parties. Moreover, promoting gender equality within political parties is likely to improve their public image and standing, broaden their appeal to more and diverse set of voters, and improve policy agendas by considering more diverse views and inputs. These features should help parties grow into more effective and legitimate political organizations.

In an attempt to increase women's power within political parties, parties' intra-party environments have become more supportive of women over time. While various parties in different countries have developed targeted measures to level the internal playing field for women, many parties are still reluctant to undertake internal reform to promote substantive gender equality between women and men.

In more concrete terms, a gender equality policy will help political parties:

- identify gender-based inequalities as a major inhibitor to equal political participation;
- provide a clear and coherent direction and policy measures for promoting gender equality in politics;
- integrate gender equality into their vision and their strategic missions and plans;
- identify specific objectives in line with key areas of internal organization and operation;
- establish measurable targets and implementation mechanisms; and
- develop internal accountability mechanisms for compliance with these objectives.

Importantly, men must be part of and assume ownership of the party's gender policy in order for it to be effective. A guiding objective for this engagement should be to promote gender equality within their own party, contribute to improving gender equality in political and public life and enhancing overall fairness, intraparty democracy and party appeal to citizens, male and female.

4 Initiating and developing a gender policy

Developing a comprehensive gender policy requires acquiring a complex set of information and evidence on gender gaps in current party practices and outcomes, and reaching agreement within the party on measures and strategies to address these gaps (see Figure 4.1). The policy development and adoption should ideally encompass the following steps:

Figure 4.1. Steps for developing a political party's gender policy
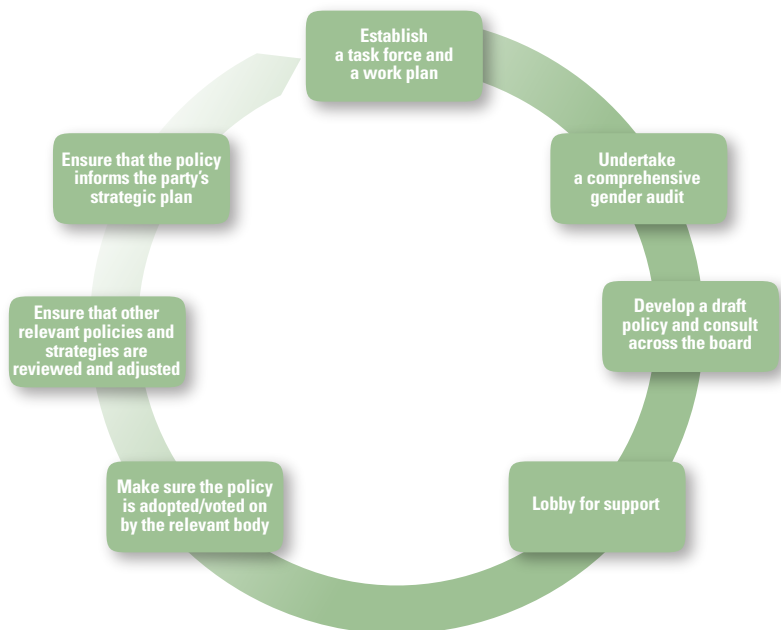
Step 1: Set up a task force within the party

This is an essential step towards creating a leading working body from within the party membership, which will develop and lobby a gender policy. Such a task force should necessarily include individuals from within central and and sub-national level party structures, members with specific gender equality expertise and those with sectoral/issue-based expertise. As gender policy is essentially a multi-dimensional document with objectives along the institutional-organizational dimensions and substantive policy dimensions, enlisting experts with knowledge and experience of both, institutional/party

perspective and substantive policy/issue perspective will be paramount. As specific gender based expertise of these members will vary, gender equality advocates in the task force should work hand in hand with the thematic experts in developing a required aggregate gender expertise of the task force.

For example, including experienced and influential party members as task force members will help ensure that gender-based audits of needs and subsequent gender policy objectives are smart and well informed. In particular, party members possess valuable knowledge of institutional and organizational frameworks, party by-laws and rules, membership outreach and candidate selection processes. Experienced and influential party members with knowledge of various public policy issues of strategic importance for the party, be it public finance management, private enterprise development, social protection, education and issues facing youth, childcare, or security and policing will bring critical knowledge of these and related issues into the process of gender policy development.

The task force should be mandated by parties' decision-making bodies, as provided by relevant statutes, including the description of the detailed objectives and the work plan of such a task force.

Step 2: Conduct a gender audit or needs assessment

In order to ensure that a gender policy addresses gender gaps in all areas of a party's internal organization and operations, a gender audit should assess the situation from a gender perspective in several key areas. Parties should develop a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators to assess the situation and develop a gender-based, comparative picture of the status of women and men within parties. The following are examples of key domains for a gender-based audit:

- participation of women and men in the leadership and decision-making functions within a party's governance and executive bodies;

- the functions and authority of women's organizations within parties and other specialized working groups;

- the impact of rules of procedure and internal working processes on the ability of women and men to balance their professional and private lives;

- gender equality in selecting and nominating candidates for internal leadership positions and publicly elected bodies;

- distribution/access to party and campaign finances by party members, women and men; rules and regulations governing this issue and its gendered impact on the status of women within parties; and

- existence of internal appeals/reporting system for addressing gender-based discrimination and harassment, and the party's record on handling cases of gender-based discrimination and harassment within its ranks.

The gender audit should particularly highlight practices and procedures that most often prevent the creation of equal opportunities and conditions for women and men in accessing party resources, participating in decision-making processes, and influencing party policies and programmes. Party members and experts need to assess parties' compliance with national and international obligations concerning promoting equality between women and men in political decision-making.

The gender audit should involve a wide spectrum of party representatives as participants and take into account a variety of sources such as opinion survey reports, party approval ratings, internal interviews and focus group discussions with past candidates, party constituencies and voters.

Parties should view the drafting of a gender policy as an internal process initiated and led by women and men party members and leaders, including representatives of women's sections of parties and external experts (where outside expertise is deemed necessary). External experts can be identified from among civil society organizations and independent gender experts who have a high level of knowledge and sensitivity to political and gender issues.

Reviewing the practices of other parties—either within the relevant country (see Box 4.1), or regionally and globally—can also help identify important lessons learned about gender-sensitive policymaking, including their implications and results in the short and medium term.

Step 3: Develop a draft policy and consult across the board

Openness, transparency and inclusion in the process of developing a gender policy should be ensured from the early stages of the process, including formation of the task force, and developing the draft policy for internal consultation and feedback.

A draft policy, developed through a consultative process outlined above, should ensure that there is a broad ownership and agreement across the party on the needs outlined and objectives committed in the gender policy.

Step 4: Make sure that the policy is adopted through the established method of policy approval within the party and that the policy informs the party's strategic plan, rules and regulations

Adopting a gender policy through an official policy approval process and voting should be prioritized as a means to ensure that the policy enjoys full legitimacy and forms part of the party's internal regulatory and policy frame-works. A gender policy developed and adopted in this way will be more likely to be followed by all across the party, and will provide route to recourse in cases where practice will differ from the commitments in the policy.

Step 5: Ensure that other strategic documents, rules and regulations, and policies are reviewed and adjusted

Successful implementation of a gender policy largely hinges on the transformative effects that it has on existing rules and practices within the party, notably on party's decision making bodies and rules, identification and selection of candidates for publicly elected offices, party agenda formation and outreach to constituencies and other operations. Accordingly, reviewing the party's strategic documents, rules and regulations and existing policies from the point of view of changes required for the implementation of a gender policy is an essential first step towards the enactment of the gender policy.

Box 4.1. Questions to ask when conducting a gender audit of a political party

Who does what?
- Which activities do men and women usually perform?
- Do women undertake certain party activities more than men because they are women?
- Are any positions more predictably assigned to men or women?

Women's groups and secretariats
- Does the party have a women's group?
- Is this group part of the party's decision-making and executive structures?
- Does this group articulate women's interests and opinions pertaining to the party's internal and external policies?

Who gets the highest posts?
- How many men and women are in the party's National Executive Committee? What roles do women have?
- How many women and men are in the Political Committee? What roles do they have?

Who has more access to resources?
- Do women and men have equal access to party finances in general? During electoral campaigns?
- Do women or men have more access to parties' resources and support (organizational and logistical, political, etc.)?

Who has more access to training opportunities?
- Does the party provide regular training? On what issues?
- Does training address raising awareness about gender equality?
- Are men and women equal beneficiaries of training opportunities?

Who decides which candidates are nominated—and how?
- How does the party nominate its candidates for elected offices? Are the rules and criteria clear?
- Does the party strive to achieve gender parity among its candidates?
- Do women party members participate in candidate selection committees?

Party manifestos and programmes
- How does the party develop its manifestos and programmes?
- Is this process open and inclusive of diverse groups from within a party?
- Do women members have effective access to and a voice in this process?

5 Key components of a gender policy for a political party

Context

Day-to-day party life can be seen as unfriendly to women. Most female party members have experienced some sort of discrimination or attempt to 'diminish' their participation or rights during the course of their political life. Implementing mechanisms to reduce gender inequality and barriers against women's participation is not an easy task, due to material difficulties and likely resistance from party members. Indeed, the legal, institutional and social context in which political parties operate directly affects women's access to power structures within and outside parties, as well as the political will and parties' incentives to promote gender equality in politics.

The context section of the gender policy should outline major societal challenges and constraints affecting women's status in politics. These may include recent trends in political processes and societal attitudes to gender equality and women's political leadership, legal framework and electoral system in which political parties operate, main institutional and cultural challenges that are understood to inhibit gender equality and the full participation of women in political decision-making. This section should also highlight the findings of the party's gender audit in order to demonstrate the rationale for developing the policy.

A vision and key principles related to gender equality

A political party's vision of gender equality is determined by how its political ideology embraces or upholds the principles of gender equality and how it addresses gender-based inequalities. Most political parties and leaders refrain from openly rejecting the concepts of gender equality and women's full participation in politics and decision-making. Yet statements proclaiming a party's support for gender equality such as those found in political party statutes and other founding documents or programmatic plans are only meaningful when supported by concrete measures and actions.

A gender-equality policy should be viewed as an essential roadmap for a party that identifies its vision of gender equality in line with its ideology, mission and overall vision. This vision should include a recognition of the equal rights of women and men and the unacceptability of discrimination, direct or indirect, as well as a party's views on special measures that it is willing to undertake to address gender-based inequalities and discrimination.

A gender policy should embrace and institutionalize the following key principles:

1. *Promote substantive equality rather than mere formal equality.* Gender equality and equity, understood as rights and opportunities made available to women and men in a manner that takes into account their different positions and situations.

2. *Use of special measures to promote gender equality.* Parties' willingness to undertake a positive obligation to address gender-based discrimination or exclusion through special measures, such as gender quotas or parity commitments for candidate selection processes, additional incentives and support to women candidates to run for elected offices, specific measures to provide training and awareness against gender-based harassment in the workplace.

3. *Seek to address the situation of especially marginalized/affected groups among women.* Women belonging to certain minority groups, such ethnic, racial, religious, sexual orientation, linguistic, or disability-based, are particularly vulnerable to mistreatment and disentrancement. Parties should be willing to understand and respond to such needs through sensitive and inclusive practices, engaging with them as party members, constituents or citizens.

4. *Reconciliation of personal/family and professional life.* This principle entails developing a firm commitment to make political party engagement feasible for people with personal/family responsibilities and pursuing a culture, which promotes healthy work and life balance among its members, both women and men. This includes pursuing a culture of gender sensitive time and venue choices for meetings, avoiding late hour engagements, and promoting family-friendly working culture.

5. *Collection of sex-disaggregated statistics and gender based expertise within a party.* Establishing a sound awareness of needs to be addressed through a gender policy is necessarily based on gender-disaggregated data produced by parties through their own data gathering and analysis mechanisms. Any data gathered by parties for internal or external needs should be disaggregated by gender, and whenever possible by other socio-economic criteria such as age, education, professional profile, income, ethnicity, urban/rural profile.

Objectives of a gender policy

Each party's gender policy objectives will be determined by the specific social, political and electoral contexts within which it operates, as well as by its internal state of affairs from a gender-equality perspective. These objectives should generally strive to:

- promote equal rights and opportunities for women and men to participate in their country's political decision-making;

- facilitate women's leadership in a party's decision-making and governance structures;

- enhance the decision-making powers and resources of women's groups within parties;

- should go beyond formal equality and promote substantive equality and equity in accessing and enjoying the benefits of party resources (both financial and intangible) for women and men;

- aim to attain a critical mass of women leaders within a party and achieve gender parity in candidate lists;

- increase women's participation and influence in parties' programme development; and

- develop internal accountability mechanisms to monitor compliance with the gender policy.

6 Formulating the specific objectives of a gender policy

This section outlines a number of specific objectives that could be included in a political party's gender policy.

Gender equality in party governance

Objective: Improve women's participation in party governance structures, including at the highest levels

This objective should entail setting a target for gender parity or stipulating a high (40 per cent or higher) quantitative threshold as a minimum level of women's participation in various decision making bodies within parties (see Boxes 6.1 and 6.2). The party should review and reform the rules governing the election and composition of these structures to enable the implementation of such gender-based targets. Parties should also review procedures and practices to eliminate those practices that inhibit women's access to decision-making forums, including measures such as avoiding late hour working meetings, requiring discussions and debates on all key decisions within party's executive boards (with reasonable quorum requirements) and input from women's organization from within parties.

Indicators

- Proportion of men/women party members

- Proportion of women in the National Executive Committee (NEC) and other internal governance bodies

- Proportion of women occupying leadership positions in these bodies

- Level of quota accomplishment in the NEC (if relevant), and the presence of other rules for gender balance in congress or assembly delegates and compliance with these rules

Box 6.1. Applying parity in parties in Rwanda

Rwandan Patriotic Front-Inkotanyi (RPF-Inkotanyi)
In addition to the requirement of 30 per cent minimum women's representation, chairpersons of Party Women's Council also sit on the NEC [National Executive Committee] and Political Bureau . . . Within the party's internal structures (national to village level), women occupy over 40 per cent in decision-making positions.

Social Democratic Party (Parti Social Démocrate, PSD)
The party's senior leadership is composed of seven people, three of whom (42.8 per cent) are women. The party's standing rules require that committees elected at each organ of the party shall abide by the gender equality principle and that the Political Bureau shall always give guidelines regarding the observance of this principle.

Centrist Democratic Party (Parti Démocratique Centrist, PDC)
Article 36 of the Internal Rules and Regulations provides that 'the election of the members of the organs of the Party shall abide by the principle of gender equality and interdependence between men and women'.

Ideal Democratic Party (Parti Démocratique Ideal, PDI)
The party has 50 per cent gender parity in its NEC and women represent 33 per cent of the party's heads of Commissions.

Party for Progress and Concord (Parti pour le Progrès et la Concorde, PPC)
Two of the five party Executive Committee members are women (that is, 40 per cent); the leadership of party Commissions however falls short of the 30 per cent minimum required by both the Constitution and the Law on Political Parties . . . Women account for 100 per cent of party representatives in parliament, pointing to the underrepresentation of men.

Source: *International IDEA, 'Review of political parties' commitments to gender equality: a study of 33 African countries', 2012 (unpublished).*

Box 6.2. Application of gender quotas in Chile, Mexico and South Africa

Chile: Party for Democracy (Partido por la Democracia, PPD)
The PPD's equal opportunity principle specifies that neither men nor women shall occupy more than 60 per cent of elected positions in party bodies. In the case of national vice presidencies, this translates into the election of two male vice presidents and two female vice presidents in order to ensure parity (Llianos 2008).

Mexico: Institutional Revolutionary Party (Partido Revolucionario Instituional, PRI)
Article 37 of the PRI's statute requires that leadership positions in national, state, federal district, municipal and regional commitments shall have no more than 50 per cent of members of the same sex (Llianos 2008).

South Africa: African National Congress (ANC)
In 1997, the ANC stated in its constitution that at least 33 per cent of all party decision-making positions would be reserved for women. Ten years later, 'at the 52nd ANC National Congress, the Constitution was amended to increase the quota to 50 per cent. Today, 50 per cent of the elected members of the National Executive Committee are women. However, in terms of the top positions in the party, the gender parity provision is not complied with' (Kandawasvika-Nhundu 2013: 62).

Status and effectiveness of women's organizations within parties

Objective: Ensure that adequate levels of power and resources are allocated to women's groups and that these groups are included in decision-making processes

To achieve this objective, women's groups should be integrated into the party's central decision-making process and be given adequate powers and functions.

Indicators

- Inclusion of the women's group/associations in the national executive organ of the party (see Box 6.3)

- Mandate/powers of the group to participate with full voting rights into the party's decision-making organs

- Clear and overarching mandate to develop and propose improvements into the party procedures and practices with the view of promoting gender equality

- Amount/proportion of internal financial resources allocated to the group's needs/annual budget

Box 6.3. Women's groups/commissions in political parties in Canada and El Salvador

Canada: Liberal Party of Canada
The party has established the Aboriginal People's Commission, the National Women's Liberal Commission, the Commission of Young Liberals of Canada, and the Senior Liberals' Commission. In line with the party's Constitution, each of these commissions 'may appoint (a) one member of the National Board of Directors, (b) one member of the National Policy and Platform Committee, and (c) one or more members of committees as provided in this Constitution or in the Party Bylaw establishing the committee' (Liberal Party of Canada 2011).

El Salvador: National Liberation Front Farabundo Martí (Frente Farabundo Martín para la Liberación Nacional, FMLN)
In 2001 the FMLN stated that 'gender policies and other regulations [must promote] equity and equality between women and men. Party member and party proceedings must foster and oversee the accomplishment of gender politics'. Therefore the party's statute obliges it to provide 'political and material support', and the national, departmental and local Secretaries of Women are in charge of monitoring this objective (García Quesada 2004: 164). In order to foster women's empowerment and monitor the implementation of gender policies, in 1997 the FMLN created a 'Female commando of finance, communication and leadership' within the party. Among other initiatives, this entity was mandated with channelling financial support to female candidates.

Effective access of female candidates to political finance and resources

Objective: Adopt measures to improve female candidates' access to political finance and resources, including access to media campaigns (see Box 6.4)

Men and women should have equal and equitable access to all party resources (financial as well as intangible) during both electoral and non-electoral periods. This includes equitable access to public and private media and other intangible resources, such as support staff and the endorsement of party leaders. This objective can be achieved by:

- setting up fundraising networks within the party to support female candidates' campaigns;
- creating a special internal party fund for women's campaigns or providing subsidies to female candidates; and
- ensuring that the party allocates a certain amount of funds from any public funding obtained by the party for enhancing gender equality and women's political empowerment.

Indicators
- Percentage of party funds allocated to gender equality-related and female/male candidates
- Party finances allocated to women's groups and associations

- Compliance with gender sensitive allocation of public funding (direct and indirect) for political parties and electoral campaigns (when relevant)
- Existence of internal fund-raising initiatives to support women candidates
- The ratio of female and male candidates with access to party-funded television and radio advertising
- Presence and compliance to internal subsidies to women candidates, reduction of nomination fees, etc.

Box 6.4. Party support to female candidates in El Salvador and the United States

El Salvador: FMLN
In 1997, the FMLN allowed the Electoral Committee to design a finance strategy (including financial support) to foster women candidates to reach out for support among the electorate (Llanos 2008: 43). Two groups were created to obtain financing: one solicited funds from companies, and the other lobbied supporters out of the country. The campaign collected USD 22,875, which was used to market products that promoted female candidates (Llanos 2008: 43).

USA: EMILY's List
'EMILY's List, the largest [American] resource for women in politics, was created by Ellen Malcolm in 1985 to fund campaigns for pro-choice Democratic women, and strategically torch-light the balance of power in our government. . . . The name EMILY's List was an acronym for Early Money Is Like Yeast . . . The saying is a reference to a convention of political fundraising that receiving major donations early in a race is helpful in attracting other, later donors . . . Today's EMILY's List goes beyond fundraising with a strategic approach to recruiting candidates, winning elections and mobilizing voters'.

Sources: *EMILY's List, 'Our history', [n.d.], <http://www.emilyslist.org/pages/entry/our-history>, accessed 19 July 2016*

Increased access of women to elected positions

Objective: To enhance women's opportunities to run for elected offices and increase the pool of female candidates (see Boxes 6.5 and 6.6)

This objective should entail the following actions:

- identify gender-sensitive strategies to reach out to female potential aspirants, for instance setting up search committees that are guided by clear rules concerning what characteristics to look for (in order to avoid nepotism), instituting rules for gender balance in candidate selection committees and establishing high numerical quotas for final lists of candidates;

- developing and conducting trainings for gender awareness raising for candidate nomination committees;

- formalizing rules on how candidates are nominated; and

- setting a target for gender parity or stipulating a high (40 per cent or higher) quantitative threshold as a minimum level of women's participation in various decision making bodies within parties.

Indicators

- Commitment to promote gender equality and parity in nominated candidates

- Clear gender equality targets in candidate selection policies

- Ratio of men/women aspirants for various elections and aspirants actually interviewed

- Ratio of men/women candidates for various elections (such as lower/upper houses of parliament, subnational elections), candidates elected at various levels (specific to electoral systems)

- Gender ratio of candidate-selection panels and those with gender-balanced composition

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Box 6.5. Gender quotas adopted by Norway's Labour Party (Det Norske Arbeiderparti)

In 1983 Norway's Labour Party adopted quotas. As Matland observes: 'Why did the Labour Party adopt quotas? One important factor was that a large section of the party elite viewed it as the right thing to do . . . That women made up one-half of the population and one-half of Labour voters and hence deserved one-half of the nominations was a compelling argument. A second important factor was that Gro Harlem Brundtland was the leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister for most of the 1980s. She was a powerful force who was actively engaged with a large number of issues, including pushing the Labour Party in the direction of greater representation of women. Her support for quotas was not necessarily decisive, but it was significant. Finally, even when there was a degree of reluctance on the part of some men within the party or some party strategists, the political reality was that the party was under pressure from the Socialist Left with respect to this issue. Leftist women within the Labour Party could easily say, "You do not need to accede to our demands, we can just leave, the distance to the Socialist Left is not very great. If you are not willing to provide us with meaningful representation then we can simply move over to a party that will do so." In many ways the Labour Party was forced to adopt this policy so as not to lose votes to the Socialist Left' (Matland 2005: 68).

Box 6.6. All-women shortlists adopted by the British Labour Party

Since 1997 the British Labour Party has worked to implement the All-Women Shortlist principle, aimed at selecting women in half of all winnable seats. As of end of 2015, 43 per cent of members of the House of Commons from the Labour Party are women, while women make up 29 per cent of the total number of seats in the House. According to the party's Labour Women's Network (LWN), 'experience shows that AWS is the most effective way of delivering gender equality in our one member, first past the post parliamentary electoral system' (LWN 2015). Among other objectives, the Campaign PowerPledge led by the Labour Women's Network pledges to 'defend the principle and active implementation of All-Women Shortlists and other positive action measures to reach and maintain equal levels of representation in the Parliamentary Labour Party, local government and other bodies and assemblies in which Labour contests elections; and support 50:50 membership of Labour's cabinet/shadow cabinet and Labour cabinets/shadow cabinets in local government' (LWN 2015).

Training and support for women's empowerment

Objective: Ensure the gender-sensitive allocation of training resources and the mainstreaming of gender issues in regular training activities for all members

To achieve this goal, parties should guarantee the access of women aspirants and candidates to training that helps them develop skills in campaign fundraising and thematic issues of concern to the party (see Box 6.7). Parties should also develop gender-sensitive and gender-specific training curricula, accessible for women and men in parties.

Indicators

- Proportion of women that have undertaken training in electoral campaigning and other issues

- Presence of gender-sensitive and gender-specific training and development initiatives within parties

- Number of training courses on women's political empowerment, gender equality, and gender ration of participants

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Box 6.7. Training opportunities for women in Brazil, Costa Rica and Panama

Brazil, Costa Rica and Panama have laws that favour financing women's training in political parties (Rosas, Llanos and Garzón de la Roza 2011). In Brazil, the 2009 act on public finance ruled that at least 5 per cent of public finance must be assigned to develop programmes that promote political participation of women; political parties that do not obey this rule face a 2.5 per cent decrease in public financing for those activities (Rosas, Llanos and Garzón de la Roza 2011: 23). In Costa Rica, a 2009 law established 'parity training opportunities' for women and men, 'aiming to improve capacities and foster knowledge on Human Rights, Ideology, Gender equality, promoting leadership, political participation, empowerment, nomination [and] practice in decision making posts' (Rosas, Llanos and Garzón de la Roza 2011: 22).

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Engendering policy agendas of the party

Objective: Ensure that the party consistently introduces gender-based analysis and strategic issues concerning rights of women and men, girls and boys into its policy positions

To achieve this goal, parties should develop their internal capacity to analyse public policy issues from a gender perspective and develop a relevant policy agenda. Women's working groups, tasks forces on equal opportunities (permanent or ad hoc), outreach to civil society experts with strong gender equality expertise or other similar working groups, can be developed to maximize both, gender-based and policy-specific expertise for these purposes. In case of parties with legislative representation, often, party's legislative offices can act as important focal points or anchors in gender-based research of public policy issues and leading the process of engendering the policy agenda in national or sub-national legislatures.

Indicators
- Gender-sensitive initiatives pursued by the party as part of its electoral manifesto

- Gender-sensitive initiatives pursued by the party after gaining legislative representation

- Gender-specific initiatives pursued by the party as part of its electoral manifesto

- Gender-specific initiatives pursued by the party after gaining legislative seats

- Does the party engage in the systematic outreach to women's groups, particularly those affected by specific policy issue, during the policy agenda formation process?

- Does the party collect views from the public, both, women and men, on policy preferences of the public and its various groups, in order to inform its policy agenda?

- Does the party have effective public communications channels through which it engages on objectives and results achieved with the representatives of the public, including women's groups?

7 Timeframe, oversight of implementation of a gender policy

Each objective in the Policy should have an associated time frame. A general time frame in which the party plans to implement the policy, and review and renew its policy commitments should also be specified in order to set clear expectations and ensure the continued relevance and sustainability of the policy. As such, gender policies should be considered permanent endeavours that require constant efforts and regular review and adjustments in order to better respond to current and emerging needs.

Effective internal monitoring and accountability for the implementation of a gender policy is essential for the success of the policy. To achieve this objective, periodic action plans should be adopted to determine necessary action under each of the policy objectives, implementation timeframes, review of progress and setting of new objectives in line with emerging trends and challenges.

Parties may consider establishing a permanent internal oversight body mandated to oversee the implementation of the gender policy (see Box 7.1 for an example). Such functions can also be integrated into the mandate of an existing party organ, but such an organ should necessarily be equipped with independence and capacity to undertake such functions, and should involve women and men from across the party organization and hierarchy.

> **Box 7.1. The Prosecutor's Office on Gender Equality established by Costa Rica's Citizen's Action Party (CAP)**
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> In Costa Rica, the CAP set up the Prosecutor's Office on Gender Equity as a branch of the Electoral Tribunal. It was mandated to guarantee respect for the PAC's equity principles, and to report infractions or recommendations to the Political Commission. Unfortunately, this initiative did not continue within the PAC beyond 2002 (Llanos 2008: 26).

8 Conclusions

Political parties, both in established and fledgling democracies are vital vehicles of representative democratic governance—associations of citizens, aimed at aggregating and representing diverse identities, interests and aspirations of their constituents, women and men. In the age of growing citizen disenchantment with 'politics as usual' and democratic qualities of various representative bodies of governance, political parties across the globe face a critical challenge of ensuring true inclusion and access to politics for all of their members and citizens, women and men.

This Framework is intended to serve as a guide for political parties in their efforts to develop comprehensive policies for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in political life. In other words, the Framework is an aid to parties in their efforts to practice what they preach in relation to promoting substantive equality for women to compete with men and achieve full realization of their political and social potential.

Institutionalizing gender equality commitments through the adoption of a gender policy should ultimately help avoid practising one-off initiatives targeted to singular issues of concern for women into more sustainable and systemic pursuit of institutional reform from within the party organization.

Annex A. International standards and commitments

Global commitments

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and **Beijing Platform for Action (1995)** include legally binding commitments and guidelines on actions that political parties need to undertake to achieve gender parity in political processes. They call for an examination of party structures and procedures in order to eliminate barriers that directly or indirectly discriminate against women's participation.

Furthermore, the Beijing Platform for Action urged political parties to establish initiatives for women to participate in all decision-making structures, including the party leadership and appointment and election processes.

Regional commitments

At the regional level, countries have undertaken a wide-ranging set of binding as well as political commitments to promote and uphold equality between women and men as a fundamental aspect of democratic participation and representation. Some specific commitments, as outlined below, refer in particular to parties' responsibility to promote gender equality in their participative and representative functions.

THE AMERICAS

The Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women (1948) recognizes women's right to political equality and the right to vote and be elected, and bans discrimination based on sex in exercising this right. Furthermore, the **American Convention on Human Rights and its Additional Protocol (1969)** provide a firm commitment that states must uphold a broad array of political rights, such as the right to be elected, participate and be represented in government and equal access to public service for all citizens.

The most recent addition to this body of obligations is the **Inter-American Democratic Charter (2001)**, which underscores states' responsibility to promote the full and equal participation of women in the political structures of their countries as a fundamental element of the promotion and exercise of a democratic culture.

The **Quito Consensus document (2007)**, adopted by representatives of political parties in Latin America, provides a commitment to develop

permanent policies to mainstream gender in party policies, activities and statutes, and to ensure equitable participation, empowerment and leadership to achieve gender parity as a state policy. Political parties commit to taking positive steps and implementing strategies (communication, financing and training) and internal organizational reforms to achieve gender parity in participation in political organizations.

AFRICA

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) obligates State Parties to take specific positive actions to promote participative governance and the equal participation of women in the political life of their countries. The Protocol specifies the achievement of its goals through affirmative action, enabling national legislation and other measures to ensure that women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral processes, and that women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of state policies and development programmes.

At the sub-regional level, through the adoption of **Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development (2008)**, countries in southern Africa have affirmed their commitment to promoting women's political empowerment and endeavouring to ensure that women hold 50 per cent of decision-making positions in all public and private sectors.

EUROPE

The **European Convention for Human Rights (1950)** and its Protocol 12 on the Prohibition of Discrimination have provided a firm basis for national reforms for the 47 Council of Europe member states in advancing equality and non-discrimination for women.

The **Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the Balanced Participation of Women and Men in Political and Public Decision Making (2003)** recommends several special measures and actions to eliminate gender-based discrimination in the public and political spheres, and brings these recommendations to the attention of political parties to promote their actions in line with the recommendations.

EU member states are also committed to gender equality through the **European Pact for Gender Equality** (originally adopted in 2006, and renewed in 2011) which urges member states to work towards achieving equality in decision-making spheres and other areas.

The OSCE Ministerial Declaration on Women's Participation in Political and Public life (2009) commits the organization's 56 member states across the Eurasian region to undertake all necessary measures to promote action by political parties to empower women within their organizations and eliminate barriers to their full and equal participation in political processes.

Annex B: Key concepts and definitions

Electoral gender quota: A type of affirmative action that strives to reduce a structural gender gap or increase women's political representation.

Gender: The roles, responsibilities and behaviour socially assigned to women and men in each society within a historical context. These roles and responsibilities change over time, differ from one culture to another, and are influenced by several factors, including education, income level, social class and religion.

Gender blindness: The lack of recognition that roles, behaviour and responsibilities assigned to women and men, boys and girls are not 'natural' but defined according to each culture and society. It also involves blindness to recognize gender inequalities.

Gender equality: Women and men share the same conditions and opportunities to realize their full potential, respect others' human rights and treat them with dignity.

Gender equity: The process of being fair. Gender equity is a means of achieving gender equality.

Gender gap: Measurable and systematic differences between women and men, boys and girls in areas of social life and policy sectors such as education, employment opportunities and participation in decision-making spheres.

Gender mainstreaming: Assessing the different implications for women and men of any policy or political decision, including legislative decisions, and taking these implications into account when designing and implementing policies or programmes.

Gender parity (in politics): Equal participation of women and men, sharing benefits and opportunities. In politics, this refers to equally sharing decision-making posts and opportunities in parties and government.

Sex: The biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women.

Women's empowerment: The process of acquiring or improving women's power to develop their capacities under equal conditions as members of society, including the capacity to make decisions related to their own lives.

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This Framework outlines key considerations
for developing a party's gender policy,
and addresses a variety of thematic areas
essential for the advancement of women and
promotion of gender equality within political
parties, including leadership formation,
internal decision making, internal oversight
and institutional development, candidate
recruitment, party programmes and platform
development, outreach to voters, and
campaigns.