



**Temporary Special Measures
to Increase Women's Political Participation
in the Pacific:**
Case Studies of Implementation in the Region

Acknowledgements

The story of women's political empowerment in the Pacific continues to be one of struggle and hardship. Commitments have been made by Pacific Leaders to facilitate women's entry into politics. While some countries have translated these commitments into tangible actions, many have not. This publication aims to showcase the success stories, and the lessons learned along the way in implementing TSMs in the Pacific, so that where the path is still to be travelled, it may benefit from those who have gone before.

This publication mirrors the high quality discussions of the Pacific Regional Conference on Temporary Special Measures, held in Port Moresby in November 2015. This conference was a joint initiative of UNDP, the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and UN Women's Multi-Country Office in Fiji, with the financial support of the Australian Aid program. Special thanks are due to all the participants of that conference for their enthusiasm and engagement in this important topic. Thanks are also due to Julie Bukikun, Dyfan Jones, Adelle Khan, Jennifer Namgyal, Tirnesh Prasad and Nanise Saune for the organization of the conference.

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Acronyms

CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
CPA	Commonwealth Parliamentary Association
CPRW	Convention on the Political Rights of Women
CSO	Civil society organisation
CWP	Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians
DWA	Department of Women's Affairs
ICCPR	International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MP	Member of Parliament
MWYCFA	Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs, Solomon Islands
OEC	Office of the Electoral Commissioner, Samoa
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
TSM	Temporary special measure
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
WiSDM	Women in Shared Decision Making



Delegates at the Pacific Conference on Temporary Special Measures to Increase Women's Political Participation, Port Moresby 23-24 November 2015. L to R: Josephine Teakeni, Tara Chetty, Ruth Liloqula, Jerrlyn Uduch Sengebau Senior, Ethel Sigimanu and Seema Naidu.

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Executive Summary

Women's empowerment and political participation are a matter of human rights. While the right to vote and contest elections is now widely available to women all over the world, the goal of gender balance in political institutions is still far from being achieved.

The Pacific region is no exception. Indeed, in this region, the level of women's representation in parliament is among the lowest in the world. Even including Australia and New Zealand, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), women comprise less than 16 percent of all parliamentarians in the Pacific, fewer than in any other region.

In many countries, a fast-track measure to improve the number of women elected to parliaments has been the adoption of electoral gender quotas – namely reserved seats or candidate quotas. Capitalising on the increasing trend of adopting such measures in the Pacific, a regional conference was organised with participants from 13 Pacific Island countries and territories, including Ministers, Speakers of Parliament, Members of Parliament, as well as representatives of civil society and electoral management bodies.

Participants engaged in meaningful discussions on measures that have been successfully implemented in Bougainville, New Caledonia, Samoa and Vanuatu. Reserved seats for women have been established in the electoral frameworks of Bougainville and Samoa, guaranteeing at least three and five seats, respectively, for women. Reserved seats are also provided for women contesting municipal elections in Vanuatu. Here, one seat per ward is reserved for women. When the law was first applied in the municipal elections of Port Vila in 2014, five women were elected – four on reserved seats, and one on an open seat. The Parity Law enacted in France in 2000, is applicable to all French territories including New Caledonia. This law requires that political parties present candidate lists that include an equal number of male and female candidates, and alternate those names down the list. Women, today, represent 44 percent of the New

Caledonian assembly, and 52 percent in French Polynesia.

While efforts have been made to adopt similar measures in other countries of the region, these have been met with greater resistance. In Papua New Guinea, where legislation had been drafted to reserve 22 seats for women prior to the 2012 national elections, amendments to the Organic Law did not win sufficient support to pass the parliament and enact the changes. Similarly in the Solomon Islands, grassroots activism has not been sufficient to persuade (mostly male) legislators.

Discussions on temporary special measures (TSMs) are not new in this region. This report, however, aims to address the gap between these discussions, and the practical experience of implementing TSMs in a Pacific context. It is intended to provide decision makers and other stakeholders with concise and accurate information on the steps taken in various Pacific island countries and jurisdictions to implement TSMs.

Following an overview of TSMs and the global and regional commitments that encourage their adoption, this report details the measures successfully implemented in the Pacific, as well as those that have not passed. Lessons learned in each country are shared with the aim of furthering regional knowledge and acceptance of these measures.

Overview

Women's political participation is crucial to the global goals of achieving democracy and sustainable development. Without women's full and equal participation in politics – be it as voters, candidates, elected officials or electoral administrators, at all levels of government – democracy has not been achieved. Indeed, the legitimacy of political institutions can be called into question where they do not adequately mirror the societies they aim to represent. Parliaments that do not fully reflect their people cannot, by definition, draw on the full range of talents in their society. Nor can they fully understand and address the needs and interests of their entire population.

In most societies, women represent more than 50 percent of the population and yet this has not translated to positions of political leadership. Globally, the goal of 'gender balance', as expressed in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, has not yet been achieved. As of January 2016, women represent 22.6 percent of all national parliamentarians (across both chambers).¹ In executive government, only 12 women served as Head of State and 11 served as Head of Government as of February 2016 and 17 percent of the world's ministers were women as of January 2015.²

The countries of the Pacific region have found it challenging to reach these global averages, let alone the targets of 30 or 50 percent women's representation.³ In this region, women represent on average 6.3 percent of all parliamentarians.⁴ Only in January 2016 was the first woman elected President of a Pacific country, in the Republic of the Marshall Islands.⁵ Table 1 details the number of women in the national parliaments of Pacific Island Forum countries and territories, as of July 2016.

1 IPU, Women in national parliaments, available at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>
















2 UN Women, Facts and Figures on Political Leadership, available at: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures#sthash.IfKOrP4Z.dpuf>; IPU, March 2015, "Sluggish progress on women in politics will hamper development."

3 The target of 30 percent was first expressed in the Economic and Social Council's Resolution 15 of 1990, resulting from the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. The Beijing Platform for Action aimed for 'gender balance' and having the same proportion of both sexes in public positions.

4 This excludes Australia and New Zealand as of July 2016.

5 Dr Hilde Heine, formerly Minister for Education and the only woman parliamentarian in the Nitjela, was elected President when 24 of the f30 voting members of the Parliament endorsed her candidacy. See <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2016-01-27/hilda-heine-elected-first-ever-female-pacific-leader/7118664>.

Table 1: Women's representation in Pacific Island Forum parliaments (July 2016)

Countries and Territories	Number of MPs	Number of women	Percentage of women
 Cook Islands	24	4	16.7
 Fiji	50	8	16.0
 Palau	29*	3	10.3
 Niue	20	2	10.0
 Marshall Islands	33	3	9.0
 Tuvalu	15	1	6.7
 Kiribati	46	3	6.5
 Samoa	50	5	10.0
 Nauru	19	1	5.3
 Papua New Guinea	111	3	2.7
 Solomon Islands	50	1	2.0
 Tonga	26**	1	3.8
 Tokelau	20	0	0
 Federated States of Micronesia	14	0	0
 Vanuatu	52	0	0

Source: Pacific Women in Politics, UNDP <http://www.pacwip.org/women-mps/nationalwomen-mps/>

Notes: * This number combines the membership of both Houses of Congress in Palau - the House of Delegates with 16 members, and the House of Senate with 13 members.

** This includes all representatives, 9 Nobles and the 17 directly elected members.

A range of cultural, financial and political barriers explains this level of women's under-representation. Cultural attitudes and gender bias against women in public life, coupled with the challenge of raising sufficient funds to run electoral campaigns – often against male incumbents – and political parties' preference for male candidates, have meant that when women do run in elections, it is rarely on a "level playing field."

"What stops women from standing as candidates? There is often a lack of security – we don't feel safe to stand; and there are financial concerns – bribery. These are basic reasons women don't run."

Conference delegate, PNG

Importantly, this under-representation is avoidable. A cornerstone of the Convention on

the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (see Box 1), temporary special measures (TSMs) are **proven strategies** to increase women's political representation and have allowed women to bypass the persistent challenges in seeking election. They are a set of laws, policies, and government sanctioned processes intended to end the effect of specific forms of discrimination. CEDAW's Article 4 encourages the use of TSMs to accelerate 'de facto' equality between men and women.

Previous UN conventions had asserted women's equal right with men to participate in all forms of political action – be it as voters, as candidates, as protesters, as leaders of political parties and so forth. There is no question in the Pacific region that women have the right to participate. Men and women are legally eligible to participate as voters, and as candidates to election.

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but concerns men as well as women. Gender equality is a goal for society as a whole.

Source: UN "Concepts and definitions" <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/conceptsanddefinitions>

CEDAW's additional concern, however, is with an equality of outcome for men and women. In its General Recommendation 25, concerning TSMs, the CEDAW Committee noted that "a purely formal legal or programmatic approach is not sufficient to achieve women's de facto equality with men." In terms of political participation and leadership, CEDAW encourages its States Parties to implement specific measures to ensure women are elected to positions of political decision-making. CEDAW outlines a range of strategies in this regard, such as the elimination of laws that directly or indirectly discriminate against women and girls; the implementation of specific programs that lead to de facto equality for women; and addressing prevailing gender relations and the persistence of gender-based stereotypes that affect women.

At a regional level the Pacific Leader's Gender Equality Declaration represents the most comprehensive statement to date of Forum Leaders' commitment to lifting the status of women in the Pacific across economic, political and social sectors. Leaders committed to renewed energy to implement the gender equality actions of a suite of international and regional instruments, including CEDAW and the Millennium Development Goals. They committed to undertake specific policy actions:

- * gender responsive government programs and policies
- * decision making
- * economic empowerment
- * ending violence against women
- * health and education

Noting the specific focus of the case studies on women's political empowerment, it is worth noting specific actions identified in relation to the priority area of decision making. The specific actions identified are:

1. **Adopt** measures including temporary special measures (such as legislation to establish reserved seats for women and political party reforms), to accelerate women's full and equal participation in governance reform at all levels and women's leadership in all decision making.

2. **Advocate** for increased representation

of women in private sector and local level governance boards and committees (e.g. school boards and produce market committees).

The 2015 Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Report noted the progress towards implementing the reserved seats measure in Samoa and that the Republic of Marshall Islands was considering special measures. At local government level such measures were progressing in Australia, Marshall Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Tuvalu and Vanuatu with increasing number of women in local government and councils.

Box 1: UN mandates for action on women's political participation

There is a comprehensive global framework by which many states have **agreed that there is a need** to promote women's political empowerment, and have **made commitments to act**. Women's full participation in political and electoral processes has its origins in the principles of non-discrimination and equal enjoyment of political rights enshrined in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (UDHR) adopted in 1948, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (CPRW, 1952) and other regional conventions that explicitly state that the enjoyment of such rights shall be without distinction of any kind, including sex or gender.

Article 25 of the **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights** (ICCPR, 1966) states that all citizens have the right to not only to take part in the conduct of public affairs, but also "to vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors" and "to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his [sic] country".

The **Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women** (CEDAW), adopted in 1979, paid particular attention to women's political participation in Article 7:

State Parties shall take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

- ✧ To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies
- ✧ To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government.

The **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action** (1995) included a target of 'gender balance' by the year 2000.

The **UN Economic and Social Council Resolution** (E/RES/1990/15) was the first to set a global target of 30 percent women in positions of political leadership. These calls were echoed in the Commission on the Status of Women Agreed Conclusions 2006 (E/2006/27-E/CN.6/2006/15) and the **General Assembly Resolution 66/130** (2011) on Women and political participation.

The **United Nations Security Council** has reaffirmed the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace-building, peacekeeping, humanitarian response and in post-conflict reconstruction in its **Resolutions 1325 (2000)**, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106 and 2122.

Development Goals

The **Millennium Development Goals** included Goal 3 to Promote gender equality and empower women and was monitored by data on the proportion of women holding seats in national parliaments.

The **Sustainable Development Goals**, adopted in September 2015, include two goals that are relevant to women's political participation (Goal 5 and Goal 16), which will both be monitored through targets on women's political participation at different levels of government:

- ✧ 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- ✧ 16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels

"We are here to acknowledge that more is yet to be done. In terms of political representation here in Papua New Guinea, 125 women have contested elections at different levels. Many women were voted in the top 10, and 45 women were elected at the local level of government. This demonstrates the significant shift made in attitudes towards women since independence."

Hon Delilah Gore, Minister for Community Development, Papua New Guinea

Temporary special measures in the context of women's political participation

ELECTORAL GENDER QUOTAS

To fast-track women's representation in parliaments, electoral gender quotas have now been adopted in all regions of the world. The Quota Project – a joint initiative of International IDEA, the IPU and Stockholm University – has classified three kinds of electoral quotas: reserved seats, legislated candidate quotas and voluntary candidate quotas.⁶

✳ **Reserved seats** stipulate the number of women (or representatives of an under-represented sex) to be elected. There are many ways the reserved seat can be filled, but options include the election of a set number of women from districts designed for electing female parliamentarians only; a separate tier of female MPs directly elected in single-member districts; or a separate tier reserved for women to be elected from a special all-women national list or a set of women who are selected from party lists based on a party's share of national votes.

The adoption of reserved seats does not exclude women from competing for open seats. In some countries, women may only be elected one or two times on reserved seats before having to take part in open competition.

✳ **Legislated candidate quotas** are provided for in constitutions and/or electoral or political party laws. They are usually a binding form of quota for all parties that intend to contest parliamentary seats and require that a minimum proportion of candidates are women (or of the under-represented sex), but the level of compliance by parties often depends on the stringency of sanctions imposed.

✳ **Voluntary candidate quotas** are non-binding targets pledged by political parties. They may similarly require that a minimum proportion of candidates are women (or the under-represented sex).

Studies have frequently concluded that electoral gender quotas can be ineffective unless they are context-appropriate and relevant to the electoral system.⁷ Quotas tend to work differently under different electoral systems. Quotas have been most easily introduced in proportional representation systems and have effectively resulted in greater numbers of women elected because they allow for multiple candidates to stand and be elected to any one constituency. This means political parties may nominate both men and women on their lists. In a limited number of countries, quotas have been introduced in plurality-majority systems, even though in these systems, women usually need to be selected by their political parties (over a man) to compete in the election of one constituency representative.⁸

Two other conditions are often necessary for the election of greater numbers of women under candidate quotas. The position of women on the party list is key. If women are not placed in 'electable' positions (usually towards the top of the list) or if men and women's names are not alternated, it is unlikely that women will be elected. Secondly, unless there are sanctions for non-compliance, political parties may be unlikely to nominate women candidates. Effective sanctions include a refusal to register a political party that has not complied with the quota law, or a reduction in public finance (in countries with systems of public political finance).

⁶ Quota Project, Global Database of Quotas for Women, www.quotaproject.org.

⁷ Drude Dahlerup, "About quotas", www.quotaproject.org.

⁸ Examples here include elections to the Scottish parliament, and local elections in India and Bangladesh. See Drude Dahlerup, "About quotas", www.quotaproject.org.

The debate on electoral gender quotas is often characterised as controversial because these measures are, in essence, a form of positive discrimination for women. They give women an advantage over men to circumvent the significant cultural, financial and political

barriers that exist for women in the electoral process. This 'advantage' has led to arguments that quotas are not merit based. More detailed arguments for and against electoral gender quotas are presented below:

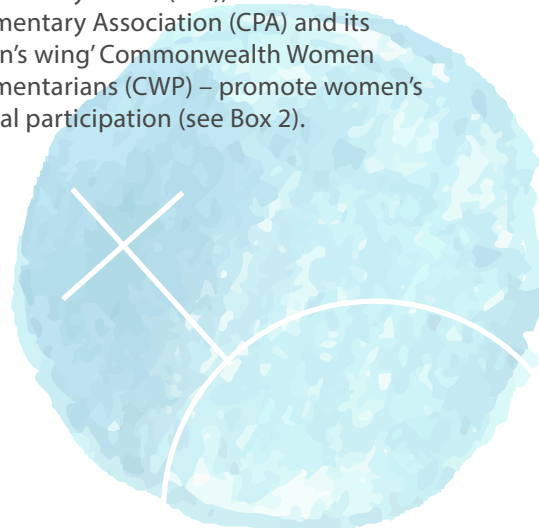
Arguments against:	Arguments for:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Quotas are not based on merit; they give preference to women over men. * Women may be uneasy with being selected just because they are women, and may be stigmatised as 'quota women' (i.e. not as competent). * Quotas can act as an upper ceiling to women's participation rather than a lower floor. * Legislated quotas (especially reserved seats) make women compete against women rather than campaign together to achieve greater influence. * Some view quotas as undemocratic by limiting the voters' choice of candidates. * Some quotas might presume that only women can represent women. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Women have the right to equal representation, and to have their life experiences reflected in politics, just as men do. * They are a 'fast-track', temporary way to achieve a better gender balance. * They compensate for barriers that prevent women from election. * Quotas give voters a chance to elect both women and men. * If women perform well, voters are likely to be more willing to elect women candidates in future elections, even in the absence of quotas. * Role model effect of having more women in parliament: more women will stand and gain election. * More women in parliament benefits society by drawing on wider range of talents and resources and strengthening democratic participation.

Source: Adopted from Quotas: Pros and Cons, at <http://www.quotaproject.org/aboutQuotas.cfm>

A BROADER RANGE OF TSMS

Electoral gender quotas are but one form of TSMS. For the most effective results, electoral gender quotas should be accompanied by a range of other measures including special media and advocacy campaigning; capacity development programmes for women candidates and elected officials; as well as campaign financing support for

women running for office. In addition to the United Nations, a number of international parliamentary associations such as the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) and its 'women's wing' Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians (CWP) – promote women's political participation (see Box 2).



Box 2: Parliamentary organisations at the ready

The international parliamentary development community has also embraced women's political empowerment, and gender balance in both their membership and leadership in politics. Assistance is available to support parliaments that want to work in this area. Also organisations such as the IPU and the CPA – including the CWP – have made commitments and developed useful resources.

Inter-Parliamentary Union:

- ✱ The IPU Assemblies have frequently resolved to increase women's political participation and work towards the goal of gender equality, including through the:
 - » Plan of Action to Correct Present Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life (1994).
 - » Resolution on Parliamentary action for women's access to and participation in decision-making structures aimed at achieving true equality for women (1995);
 - » Resolution on education and culture as essential factors in promoting the participation of men and women in political life and as prerequisites for the development of peoples (2014);
 - » Outcome Document of the General Debate on the theme "Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women" (2014).
- ✱ The IPU has also changed the discourse on women's political empowerment by promoting the idea of Gender-Sensitive Parliaments through its research and its Plan of Action (adopted in 2012).

Commonwealth Parliamentary Association:

- ✱ The Harare Commonwealth Declaration of 1991 reaffirmed the commitment of Commonwealth countries to gender equality.
- ✱ The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005-2015 draws on international commitments for the realization of women's rights.

Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians:

- ✱ The inaugural Commonwealth Women's Forum Women Ahead: Be All That You Can Be was celebrated in November 2015 as part of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta.
 - » Targets and quotas related to gender equality are set in the outcome document 'Women's Forum: A Call for Action on Gender Equality beyond 2015'. <https://drwuthowonznuc.cloudfront.net/chogm/files/womens-forum-final-24nov15-outcome.pdf>
 - » A recommendation of this forum is to establish an independent Technical Working Group on gender equality and women's empowerment in alignment with the targets for the SDGs and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE 'TOP TEN'

There has been significant change in the range of countries that rank in the 'top ten' of the world's parliaments in terms of women's representation. Twenty years ago, it was a similar group of countries, mostly from the Nordic region and Europe who led the world. At the top of the list, and indeed, a world leader for decades, was Sweden with 40.4 percent (in 1994). The 10th placeholder, Iceland, had just over 25 percent (see Table 2).

In 2015, not only was the range of countries far more diverse, the proportion of women in the top ten parliaments was significantly higher. Since 2004, the leader has been Rwanda. At its last elections in 2013, the country elected a lower house with 63.8 percent women. The top ten now includes countries from Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. Only two are from the Nordic region, including Finland in 10th place with 41.5 percent.

This more diverse range of countries achieved these impressive proportions of women's representation through various means, but four factors have been key. The first is as a result of post-conflict governance reform, during which electoral gender quotas have been implemented. In the case of Rwanda, the quota was entrenched in the constitution in the transitional period following the 1994 genocide. In South Africa, in the aftermath of apartheid, the electorally successful African National Congress amended its party statute to include "the provision of a quota of not less than fifty percent of women in all elected structures." Secondly, a number of these countries fought

for, and successfully introduced, ambitious electoral gender quotas, including the more recent trend towards 'gender parity' (or 50 percent) in Latin America, with stringent enforcement mechanisms. Countries in this region were also advantaged by the prevalence of a third factor: proportional representation electoral systems that have been shown to increase the likelihood of success. Finally, it is clearly the case that in countries like Finland and Sweden, where electoral quotas are either not adopted or used only on a voluntary basis, respectively, societal acceptance of women's role in public life drives the higher numbers of women elected to parliament.

Table 2: The top ten (1997-2015)

Rank	As of 1 January 1997		As of 1 November 2015	
	Country	%	Country	%
1	Sweden	40.4	Rwanda	63.8%
2	Norway	39.4	Bolivia	53.1%
3	Finland	33.5	Cuba	48.9%
4	Denmark	33.0	Seychelles	43.8%
5	Netherlands	31.3	Sweden	43.6%
6	New Zealand	29.2	Senegal	42.7%
7	Seychelles	27.3	Mexico	42.4%
8	Austria	26.8	South Africa	42.0%
9	Germany	26.2	Ecuador	41.6%
10	Iceland	25.4	Finland	41.5%

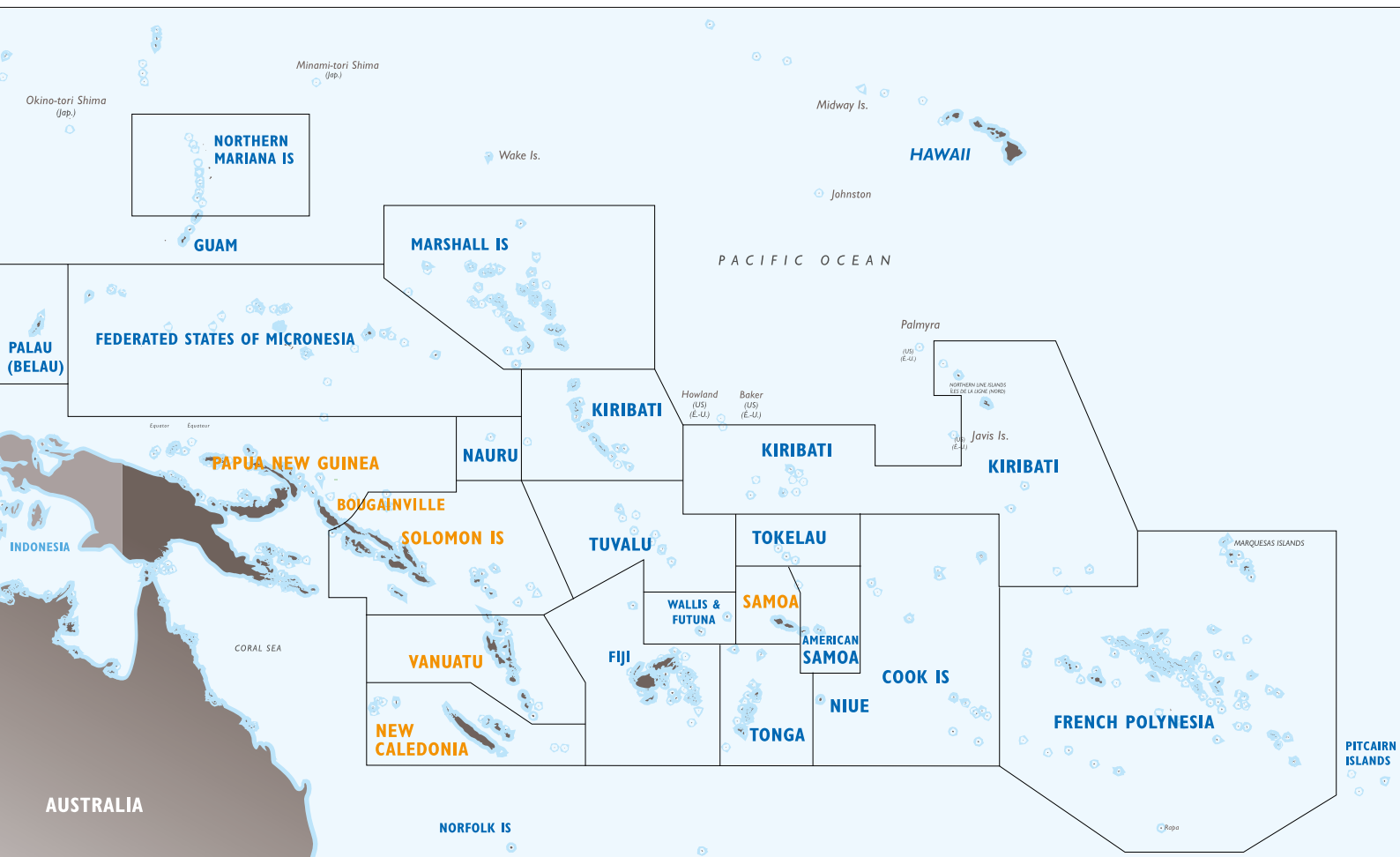
Source: IPU, Women in national parliaments, available at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

Note: Countries in bold have adopted some form of TSM

Increasing Women's Political Participation: Conditions for Success

- ✱ **Political will** among parliamentary/political leadership
- ✱ **Monitoring and accountability mechanisms** for the gender equality legal and policy framework (e.g. sanctions for non-compliance)
- ✱ A gender sensitive **electorate** that accepts women's role in public life and leadership
- ✱ Political parties that actively promote women's participation and leadership
- ✱ Advocacy support and lobbying from **women's organisations and civil society**
- ✱ **Media** (both traditional and social) that moves beyond gender stereotypes when it interacts with women MPs
- ✱ An **international development community** that **funds** these activities and **works collaboratively** to promote gender equality

Adopting TSMs in the Pacific



"It's more than about facts and figures – it's about trying to change culture." Charles Chauvel, UNDP

TRANSLATING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS LOCALLY

At the 43rd Pacific Islands Forum Rarotonga, Cook Islands (28 – 30 August 2012) the Pacific Leaders Gender Equality Declaration was approved. In this Declaration, Pacific Leaders committed to implement specific national policy actions to progress gender equality in the areas of gender responsive government programmes and policies, decision-making, economic empowerment, ending violence against women, and health and education.

On decision-making, the agreement included the adoption of measures, including TSMs (such as legislation to establish reserved seats for women and political party reforms), to accelerate women's full and equal

participation in governance reform at all levels and women's leadership in all decision making.

When Pacific Leaders adopted this Declaration, there was strong concern about the paucity of women in the region's leadership positions, in addition to the high incidence of violence against women and women's low levels of economic empowerment. These issues were seen as inter-dependent, and gender inequality was understood to be imposing a high social and economic cost. Working towards gender equality was seen as a means to achieving a more prosperous Pacific region. Four years after the adoption of the Declaration, it is clear that commitments made at the political level still need to be translated into action.

Box 3: TSMs in other contexts

“While affirmative action can be seen as a controversial measure, the concept has been successfully applied to other areas of life, including sports and education. For example, understanding that ‘the most important thing in the Olympic Games is not winning but taking part’, Equatorial Guinea was allowed entry to the 2000 Olympics through a wild card scheme. Affirmative action was applied to the South African rugby team to ensure inclusivity. Just as Pacific Islanders are given special dispensation and financial resources to attend certain schools or universities, women can be afforded a place in parliament to include a wider range of ideas and talent. There is, then, scope to apply the same principle to women’s political participation in the Pacific.” Sione Tekiteki, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

THE ROLE OF WOMEN’S ORGANISATIONS AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society organisations (CSOs) have been extremely active in the Pacific on the subject of TSMs, albeit with varying degrees of success. The Fiji Women’s Rights Movement, for example, has worked tirelessly to debunk myths surrounding quotas and women’s role in politics. In the lead up to the 2014 election, the group surveyed over 1200 Fijians to capture community views about women’s leadership, and found that 72% of respondents (78% of women, 64% of men) considered that it would be better for the country if there were more women in national government. While these efforts have not led to the implementation of quotas in Fiji, 8 women were elected to parliament in 2014 (16%).

Coalitions of women’s organisations have also been created, with donor support. The Women in Shared Decision Making (WiSDM) projects in Solomon Islands and Vanuatu have been supported by a combination of local organisations, universities and government departments, with the financial support of Australia and the European Union, to undertake diagnostic reports of previous elections and run training workshops for women candidates.

The strength of CSOs therefore lies in their constant advocacy for women’s political empowerment, and their technical support to women candidates and MPs. Without the training provided by these organisations, and their localised research, arguments for women’s increased role in politics cannot be substantiated, and women will not have the opportunity to demonstrate their ‘merits’.

SHARING POSITIVE STORIES

Further to the various national and regional level discussions held on the principles and

merits of TSMs, there is a need for more practical information. Key decision-makers and electoral officials, in particular, have sought more detailed advice on the TSM models currently being implemented across the Pacific, as well as the process traversed in moving from initial discussions to the actual adoption of legislation and final implementation of TSM systems.

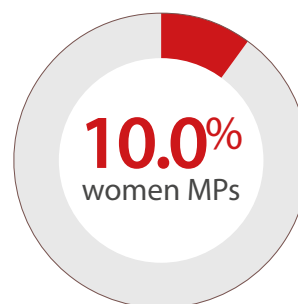
The following section aims to address this gap by providing information on each different TSM model by country, as well as some of the key drivers that led to its introduction, followed by the specific lessons learned in each case. Reflecting one of the most important lessons learned internationally about the implementation of TSMs, each of the models used in the Pacific – namely, in Bougainville, New Caledonia, Samoa and Vanuatu – suits its local context. No model is exactly the same, and indeed, it is clear that there is no ‘one size fits all’. While reserved seats for women have been established in the electoral frameworks of Bougainville, Samoa and Vanuatu (at the local level), the precise details of the models in each country are quite different, and based in different electoral systems as well as diverse national cultural dynamics. The Parity Law enacted in France in 2000, is applicable to all French territories including New Caledonia. The dynamics involved in applying this TSM are again quite different to those in other parts of the region.

Case studies are also included of countries where a discussion on TSMs led to the proposal, but ultimate rejection of a model to increase women’s participation in parliament (or local government), namely in Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.

Samoa

Adopted TSM for Samoa: **RESERVED SEATS**

Number of seats: 50
Date of last election: 2016
Number of women currently elected: 5 (or 10.0%)
Electoral system: First Past the Post
TSM: 5 reserved seats



How does it work?

In June 2013, Article 44 of the Constitution was amended to guarantee a minimum of five seats in the Parliament of Samoa. If fewer than five of the 49 members elected are women, additional seats will be added to make up a

total of five women. Women candidates who attained the highest percentage of votes but were unsuccessful in the election will be given the additional seats (see Table 3).

Table 3: Application of Article 44, Constitution of Samoa

Minimum number of women elected	Number of "additional seats" required	Total number of seats in parliament (49 + additional seats required)	Percentage of women in Samoan Parliament
5	0	49	10.2%
4	1	50	10.0%
3	2	51	9.8%
2	3	52	9.6%
1	4	53	9.4%
0	5	54	9.3%

Additional seats are created for the constituency in which the highest-polling women run in the election. If a woman wins a seat at the general elections, and a woman from that same constituency polls the highest percentage of votes, that constituency will have two women MPs.

additional seat. If an open seat (that is, a non-reserved seat) held by a woman Member of Parliament becomes vacant and a man wins it at the by-election, the woman with the highest percentage of votes from that by-election or general election will fill an additional seat for that constituency.

If an additional seat reserved for women becomes vacant, the woman with the next highest percentage of votes will fill the

"We decided that we needed to provide a floor, not a ceiling."

Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Samoa

How was it designed and implemented?

The reform was deemed necessary to reverse the persistently poor representation of women in parliament. Heeding its obligations to various international conventions and Article 15 of the Constitution on the "advancement of women", the leadership of the Human Rights Protection Party in Samoa, which enjoys a two-thirds majority in parliament, decided to take action

and presented a range of options to Cabinet. In addition to the proposal of reserving five seats for women, other options proposed included the creation of special constituencies for women, or the appointment of women (i.e. non-election). Following some debate in Cabinet, reserved seats – provided for in the Constitution – were chosen.

The Government brought the proposal to parliament and submissions were received. Arguments against the proposal were presented, notably by Members of the opposition Tautua Samoa party in the months leading up to the vote. Tautua Samoa argued that the Government should seek the community's views through a referendum and noted that, in some villages, women were not allowed to hold the title of matai (chief), which is a prerequisite for parliamentary candidates seeking election to parliament. Other arguments were made against the proposal including that the amendment would discriminate against men, that women elected on reserved seats would face ridicule and disrespect, and that the election of women to parliament contradicted women's traditional role in Samoan culture to "fa'amaepaepa (sit aside)"; to be the peace-keeper and peace-maker ("pae ma le auli");

and not be "fa'aeleelea (tainted)" with political discussions.

The Electoral Commission (OEC) was not involved in the design of the amendment, although it is responsible for its implementation. The electoral quota was first applied to the general election of 4 March 2016. More women ran as candidates in this election than ever before. Of the nearly 170 candidates contesting the election, 24 were women, an increase from 9 at the previous 2011 election. Four women won seats outright, and a fifth was given an additional seat.

"You have to have a leadership that has the political will to [introduce a TSM]. We need to target the leadership – they need to say, this is the job and this is the action we need to take."

Hon. Fiame Naomi Mata'afa, Samoa

Lessons Learned

1. To be effective, TSM models must suit the specific electoral system and national political culture.

The model designed in Samoa is unlike any other TSM, mirroring its own specific cultural and electoral context. This is important because TSMs will not be effective unless they are accepted – both by decision makers and voters – as an organic part of the electoral system. The unique flavour of the Samoa model also encouraged other decision makers in the region to design something similarly context appropriate to their own national context.

2. The adoption of TSMs requires the commitment of the political leadership

The inclusion of women in political decision-making is a key principle of numerous international, regional and national resolutions. These, however, have little meaning unless action is taken to implement them. This requires political will, a decision by senior decision-makers that the time for action is now.

3. TSMs are one among a number of reforms required to achieve gender equality

This constitutional amendment is not a 'stand-alone' reform for women in Samoa. It follows previous reforms implemented to ensure universal suffrage (1991), the amendment of the Women's Affairs Act in 1990 to include Sui Tamaitai as representatives of villages for government affairs, and the passage of the Family Protection Act (2013) to protect families and victims of domestic violence.

4. Reserved Seats have allowed for a positive public debate on the role of women in political leadership

Implementing TSMs has provided a catalyst to discuss and debate the value of women in public life, and to provide an opportunity for people in the community to reconsider traditional attitudes. Many women have indicated their interest in contesting the 2016 election now that some barriers have been broken. There is scope to work with both men and women to ensure that women are supported in their public role.

5. More work is required with political parties

As the gatekeepers to politics, political parties must also be on board with the promotion of women in politics. Ensuring greater internal democracy and transparency is essential. Even where legislative approval is cannot be sought, political parties are always able to adopt their own – voluntary – gender quotas or targets.

New Caledonia

Adopted TSM for New Caledonia: **LEGISLATED CANDIDATE QUOTAS**

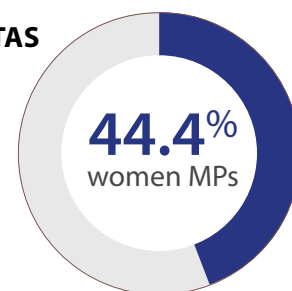
Number of seats: 54

Date of last election: 2014

Number of women currently elected: 24 (or 44.4%)

Electoral system: Proportional Representation

TSM: 50% of candidates on political party lists shall be women



How does it work?

In 2000, France introduced the Law on Parity. The law requires political parties to include 50 percent women on their lists of candidates in elections, alternating one man and one woman from top to bottom of the list. Parity by 'slices' of six candidates (three men, three women) also applies to French municipal elections in

towns with more than 3,500 inhabitants. Non-compliance by parties results in their lists not being registered.

The Parity Law was applied in all French overseas territories including New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna in the Pacific.

How was it designed and implemented?

Because the Law on Parity was imposed on all French territories, there was no parliamentary debate about the cultural applicability of this quota model in the New Caledonian Congress. There had been previous discussions about improving women's political participation, with some women's groups advocating for equal representation for women in the territory, but these efforts had not been entirely successful. The Parity Law gave the New Caledonian government the impetus – indeed, the obligation – to increase women's participation in politics.

"Arguments were made that women, and particularly Kanak [indigenous] women, were not 'ready' to enter parliament. There was this idea that women in politics would just be like having a vase in your house – it would look very nice, but would not serve a very useful purpose." Magalie Tingal, Political Advisor FLNKS Group, North Province, New Caledonia

The implementation of the Parity Law has resulted in high numbers of women elected in both New Caledonia and French Polynesia owing also to the existence of reasonably strong political parties and the use of proportional representation.

Lessons Learned

1. Implementing a quota allows women to demonstrate they have the necessary experience to be in politics.

In New Caledonia, the quota has given women the opportunity to demonstrate their ability to contribute to decision-making. This leads to a role model effect, whereby more women see themselves as potential leaders and put their hands up. In New Caledonia, women have achieved leadership positions even where the quota is not imposed. Of the eleven members in the Executive Government, five are women, or 45 percent. In each Province, women serve on the executive. Women have twice served as President of the government of New Caledonia.

"Women are pragmatic and are becoming increasingly indispensable to decision-making for our society in New Caledonia. But if we did not have the parity law, we would not know that women had merit."

Hon Isabelle Béaruné, Member of Congress, New Caledonia

2. Eliminating sexist attitudes and gender-based stereotypes requires multiple reforms, but is not the sole purpose of quotas.

Despite the entry of more women in politics, challenges remain for women once elected. Some men continue to hold sexist attitudes towards the presence of women in public office. Women are often not given responsibility for the so-called 'hard' portfolios such as finance, the budget, foreign affairs and defence. Rather, women continue to hold portfolios where there is perceived to be 'little risk', such as culture, women, youth and sports.

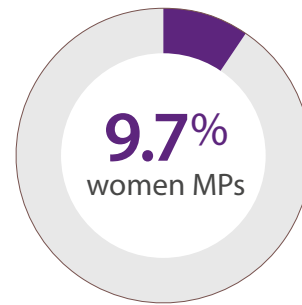


Mrs Isabelle Bearune (left) and Magalie Tingale (right), New Caledonia.

Bougainville

Adopted TSM for Bougainville: **RESERVED SEATS**

Number of seats: 41
Date of last election: 2015
Number of women currently elected: 4 (or 9.7%)
Electoral system: Limited Preferential Voting (LPV)
TSM: 3 reserved seats



How does it work?

The 2004 Constitution of the Autonomous Region of Bougainville provides for a House of Representatives of 41 members. Thirty-three members are directly elected under a majoritarian electoral system, three seats are reserved for women, three seats are reserved for ex-combatants, one seat is for the (non-elected) Speaker and another is for the President.

The first elections under this Constitution were held in 2005. Twenty-five women stood as candidates to the three reserved seats. No women contested any of the 33 'open' seats. Two general elections later (in 2015), 23 women contested the reserved seats, and 11 contested open seats. Josephine Getsi, one of the 11 candidates, was successful in being elected to an open seat, making a total of 4 women in the current House of Representatives.

How was it designed and implemented?

The Bougainville Peace Process followed a decade long conflict (from 1988 to 1998). To draft a new constitution, a Constitutional Convention was established in 2004. Three women, each representing a political region (North, South and Central) were included in the Convention.

The new Constitution established an autonomous parliament elected under a

new electoral system. In recognition of the significant contribution made by both women and combatants in the conflict, seats were reserved for each. Women had previously been nominated to provincial assemblies in Bougainville, and the constitutional drafting process provided opportunity to take this further and enshrine women's participation at the national level.

Lessons learned

1. **Women's contributions to the peace process in Bougainville during and after the conflict have served as a catalyst to change social perceptions of women as decision-makers.**

Women promoted dialogues for peace, encouraged their sons and husbands to put down the guns, and resolve issues through peaceful means. It challenged traditional understandings of gender roles and promoted more positive attitudes to inclusive political participation.

"Women were pulling their sons and husbands by the ear to tell them to stop fighting."

Simon Pentanu, Speaker of the House of Representatives, ARB

2. **Reserved seats in Bougainville have served, not only as an entry point for women in politics, but as an opportunity for women to contribute to a wider range of policy areas.**

The 2015 elections proved that the Bougainville electorate had become more accepting of women in politics when 11 women ran as candidates for open seats, one of whom was ultimately elected: Josephine Getsi. This election however required concerted effort and forward planning. Reaching out to the political party and seeking information on how to run helped significantly. Identifying

key people to help mobilise support, organising transportation for the campaign, securing venues through personal networks, and family support were all essential for Ms Getsi.

"I was determined to contest an open seat. I felt I was able to make a valuable contribution to Bougainville and I wanted to improve service delivery and quality of life in my region. I had worked for over 30 years as a primary school teacher as well as working with women and was well known and connected in the society. Others around regarded me as a good candidate and encouraged me to run. I had the confidence and audacity to be bold and contest."

Josephine Getsi, Member of House of Representatives, ARB

Having women in parliament has enhanced these women's experience in developing policy and legislation across a wide range of policy areas. Significantly, women in Bougainville have been able to contribute to the peace and security agenda. In 2013, Bougainville adopted a National Action Plan under the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

"Without special measures in Bougainville, women would continue to struggle to enter politics and to demonstrate their efficiency and capability in the parliament. Women who have entered have proven their worth and have made a valuable contribution." Rose Pihei, Director, Bougainville Women's Forum and former Member of Parliament

3. With sufficient will from the political leadership, action can be taken to ensure the parliament is an enabling environment for women's participation, empowerment and leadership.

Promoting gender equality outcomes in parliament requires the commitment and support of all members of parliament – men and women. Parliament must be a 'safe space' where women and men can raise issues that adversely impact on women and girls, men and boys. In Bougainville, there are plans to review and amend existing laws that may discriminate against women and girls. The Speaker is also keen to promote partnerships between men and women and ensure male parliamentarians are champions of gender equality.



Mr Simon Pentanu, Speaker of the Bougainville House of Representatives.

Vanuatu

Adopted TSM for Vanuatu: **RESERVED SEATS (Municipal Elections)**

Port Vila elections

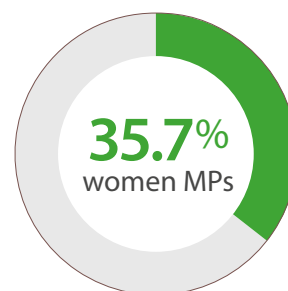
Number of seats: 14

Date of last election: 2014

Number of women currently elected: 5 (or 35.7%)

Electoral system: Proportional Representation;
First Past the Post for the Reserved Seats

TSM: 3 reserved seats



Luganville elections

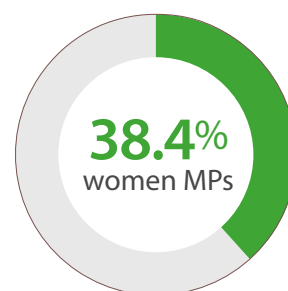
Number of seats: 13

Date of last election: 2015

Number of women currently elected: 5 (or 38.4%)

Electoral system: Proportional Representation;
First Past the Post for the Reserved Seats

TSM: 3 reserved seats



How does it work?

The Municipalities (Amendment) Act No. 11 of 2013 requires that in each ward, a seat is reserved for women. All other seats in the ward are general seats and may be contested by men and women. While general seats are contested

under a proportional representation system, reserved seats are contested by a first past the post system. This provision is considered a temporary measure and will be in place for four terms, or 16 years.

How was it designed and implemented?

The Gender Election Report of 2010 conducted by the Department of Women's Affairs concluded that a principal factor in the under-representation of women in Vanuatu in national, provincial and municipal level governments was traditional attitudes towards women's role in public life.

Legislated gender quotas were considered a specific remedy to women's poor political representation. In 2012, a seven-member Women in Shared Decision Making (WiSDM) coalition was created, composed of representatives from the Vanuatu Electoral Office, the Attorney General's Office, the University of the South Pacific and the Department of Women's Affairs (DWA). DWA was the secretariat and main driver for the coalition to lead the strategic lobbying and legislative review. The Australian Government's

Pacific Leadership Programme and other development partners supported the coalition. In June 2013, a policy paper was developed, and used to lobby the Prime Minister and other Ministers to support an amendment to the Municipality Act to allow for a 30 to 34 percent quota for women in municipal councils.

The 2014 elections in Port Vila were the first time the amendment was implemented and saw the election of five women. At this election, two ballot papers were designed: one for the general seats, and another for the reserved seats. As the cost of printing two sets of ballot papers proved prohibitive, the amendment to the Municipalities Act was again revised in 2015. This amendment stipulates that electors may only vote once (requiring only one ballot paper). Voters now have a choice of voting only for general seats, or voting for both the general and reserved seats.

The new amendment was implemented during the Luganville Municipal Council elections in July 2015. Five women were elected, out of a total 13 councillors, including one woman on a

general seat. In that ward, two women are the community's representatives (that is, one on a reserved seat, and one on an open seat).

Lessons learned

1. Coalition building is key in devising an appropriate measure and garnering support from the political elite.

Champions are essential in making real change. The Women in Shared Decision Making coalition was a strong, effective champion because it included a range of expertise and was able to work together.

2. Flexibility is important when implementing a measure that has unintended consequences.

TSMs need to be sustainable. Measures that are too expensive will inevitably be disregarded or not implemented well. When the Vanuatu Electoral Office realised how expensive the 2013 amendment was to administer, a new amendment was proposed that would still ensure the spirit of original amendment was met.

3. Implementing TSMs at the municipal (or local) level of government may be an effective starting point to increase women's political participation.

Starting at the local level was intended as an 'education tool', to begin to show the electorate that women have a significant contribution to make. It was, however, also considered the easiest level of government to implement such a measure because a higher proportion of voters at the local level are literate. With the success of the measure at the municipal council level, discussions have begun on amendments to legislation at the provincial and parliamentary levels.

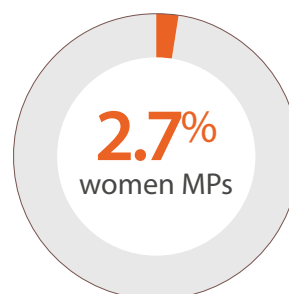


Mr Charles Vatu, Principal Electoral Officer, Vanuatu.

Papua New Guinea

While no electoral gender quotas are currently in place in Papua New Guinea, two models have been proposed: **RESERVED SEATS (2010-2)** and **LEGISLATED CANDIDATE QUOTAS (2015)**

Number of seats: 111
Date of last election: 2012
Number of women currently elected: 3 (or 2.7%)
Electoral system: Limited Preferential Voting (LPV)



How does it work?

In 2011, the Equality and Participation Bill, a bill to amend the Constitution to allow 22 reserved seats for women – one for each province – was passed by 72 votes to two. However, in 2012 the amendments to the Organic Law, upon which the Equality and Participation Act were contingent, failed to pass the parliament. The TSM was not implemented.

Papua New Guinea's Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission completed its review of the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates in April 2015 and presented its findings to Cabinet. Among the Commission's proposals is a requirement that ten percent of all political parties' candidates be women.

How was it designed?

In an attempt to encourage an increased participation of women in parliament, a diagnostic was undertaken in 2011 to investigate the results of the previous election in which 109 women candidates had run, but only one woman – Dame Carol Kidu – was elected. The diagnostic looked at the dynamics of networking organisations at the community level and what measures could be implemented to ensure women's election in the future.

United Nations agencies provided technical advice, analysis of various TSM models used internationally, and a legal team who drafted

the law with MPs and legislative council. The non-governmental organisation PNG Women in Politics was employed to work on the ground and write a policy paper, presenting the case for 22 reserved seats for women. Each province would have two seats in Parliament – one reserved for a woman, and one for the Governor. Between 2009 and 2011, the NGO implemented an extensive media campaign, including a road show around all the provinces.

Dame Carol Kidu, the sole woman elected to Parliament at the time, proposed and sponsored the Equality and Participation Bill in 2011 to amend the constitution to enable the creation of the reserved seats.

Lessons learned

1. Clearly defining the representational mandate of women on proposed TSMs is important in securing support and passage of quota legislation.

It has been suggested that a key challenge in securing support for the reserved seats was in the details. What would women on reserved seats do? Who would their constituency be? How would this position differ to that of the Governor and what would her relationship to the Governor be? Confusion surrounding these issues may have made it more difficult for MPs to accept the proposal.

“People did not really know what temporary special measures were. All they knew was that women wanted to come in on 22 reserved seats. We need to advocate our message better.” Anna Solomon, Secretary for Community Development, PNG

2. Reconsidering the electoral system and the role of political parties may also lead to an increased representation of women in politics.

The gender sensitivity of political parties could be improved in PNG. There are only a few women in party structures, meaning the number of women they nominate for election is also low. There is therefore scope to improve the participation of women within parties. A ten percent candidate quota is currently being considered to ensure political parties are more democratic. The PNG registry is also looking at the electoral system. A study is currently being undertaken to consider a proportional representation system.

“We need to encourage more women to run. If you can plan this ministry, then you can contest an election.” Dr. Alphone Gelu, Registrar of Political Parties, PNG

3. It is important to have a gender equality champion on the floor of the Parliament.

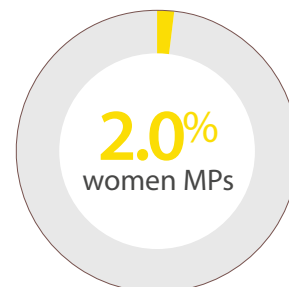
The promotion of women's greater representation requires the support of a broad range of actors, but law makers – men and women – are ultimately responsible for enacting reforms. The support of men and women on the floor of the chamber is therefore key. Identifying gender equality champions, and working with them to lobby other members, can be a successful strategy.

“Three women were elected because of civil society's advocacy. We also had male champions, including ministers.” Margaret Lokoloko, Conference Delegate, PNG

Solomon Islands

While no electoral gender quotas are currently in place in Solomon Islands, a model has been proposed: **LEGISLATED CANDIDATE QUOTA**

Number of seats: 50
Date of last election: 2014
Number of women currently elected: 1 (or 2%)
Electoral system: First Past the Post



How does it work?

In July 2013, the Political Parties Integrity Bill was introduced in Parliament, with the aim of developing a strong, viable and transparent political party system to ensure stable government in the Solomon Islands. Included in its provisions was a requirement that, subject to demand by women for places, at least ten percent of a party's candidates must be women. Parties could claim SBD\$10,000 to cover the campaign costs of each woman elected as an MP, and an administration fund of SBD\$20,000 would be payable annually to parties for each of their MPs. The Bill was highly controversial, for reasons other than the provisions relating to women, and was eventually withdrawn in October for further consultation.

The select committee to which the Bill was referred thought that the issue of women in

politics should be addressed in its own separate piece of legislation. A suggestion was made to reserve a certain number of seats for women. The committee acknowledged and supported the idea of bringing women into the Solomon Islands' Parliament, but said that the political will and motivation of male politicians was required.

In the nine national general elections held since Solomon Islands gained political independence in 1978, only three women have won a seat in parliament. This compares to 308 male MPs. Between 1980 and 2010, a total of 93 women candidates ran for office compared to 2,504 men. In the same period, the total number of votes cast for women candidates was 30,000 compared to more than a million votes for male candidates.

How was it designed?

Strong policy commitments have been made towards women's empowerment and gender equality. The National Policy for Gender Equality and Women's Development has, as a priority outcome, "equal representation of women and men in decision making and leadership" and a 10-point strategy was developed by the Ministry of Women, Youths, Children and Family Affairs (MWYCFA) to improve women's participation in decision-making and leadership, including a provision

for affirmative action.

The Women in Shared Decision Making Coalition (WISDM) was formed as a collaborative effort between government, women's NGOs, development partners and volunteers. All work on TSMs was coordinated by the WISDM. WISDM was asked to undertake widespread consultations in the community on the proposed candidate quota, across the country.

Lessons learned

1. TSMs are most effective when they are (and are seen to be) context-appropriate.

In conducting consultations with the community, it became apparent that national leaders did not understand how the TSM would work under the current electoral system. TSMs were seen as a foreign concept applicable internationally, but not in the Solomon Islands. CEDAW, often used as an entry point for TSMs, was understood by the wider electorate as a foreign instrument that did not apply to Solomon Islanders.

In a society with deeply entrenched perceptions as to a woman's place in public life, consultations may be where TSMs derive their legitimacy, but they can also work against the acceptability of the measures.

"During the TSM campaign, the voice against us was the loudest. A sound enabling environment was not enough to convince our leaders that TSMs are an approach to fast track women's equal political representation in politics."

Ethel Sigimanu, Permanent Secretary, MWYCFA, Solomon Islands



Mrs Ethel Sigimanu, Permanent Secretary for Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs, Solomon Islands.

2. Support for TSMs should be broad-based and target men, particularly male Ministers.

The Minister who drives the TSM campaign in parliament wields considerable influence. Supporting that Minister with research and analysis in support of the proposition and including him or her in discussions from the conceptual stage are critical. Whole of government support for TSMs also helps, so that all Ministers could see the value of having more women in parliament. Confining discussions to experts and women means that there is insufficient buy-in from those who have the ability to make changes. Men must be included at all stages.

"CSOs need to mobilize male champions to increase women's political participation."

Josephine Teakeni, Voice Blong Mere, Solomon Islands

Conclusion

The two-day Pacific Regional Conference on Temporary Special Measures intended to provide its participants with more detailed information about the precise nature of the TSMs in place in Pacific countries and territories, the process by which they were designed and implemented, and the lessons learned in that process.

Hearing these case studies, the conference participants identified a range of useful recommendations that could be applied to those countries and territories still reluctant to adopt such measures. It is evident from the discussion that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to implementing TSMs. In fact, the most successful cases have been those where the TSM suits the local context (e.g. Samoa), and where their implementers are able to make amendments to increase efficiency and still achieve a positive outcome for women (e.g. Vanuatu).

TSMs are temporary in nature. They are intended as a corrective measure that will eventually, no longer be required. The election of a woman on an open seat in Bougainville in 2015 demonstrates the intent and effectiveness of quotas. It is hoped that women will be able to demonstrate what they can, and should, contribute to public decision-making, and that on this basis, voters will in time choose women on the merits of their candidacy.

It is clear that the obstacles to women's election to parliaments in the Pacific are significant – some might say more acute than in other regions of the world. The playing field is far from level. This being the case,

TSMs present a valuable opportunity to give women an even chance of winning, and contributing to politics, as is their right.

The following recommendations are those raised during the conference in the course of debate. While there is clearly no defined path for all countries and territories in the Pacific, there are some common factors that can help in the promotion of women in politics. In implementing any of these recommendations, countries and territories are able to seek assistance from the international community – be it donors, the United Nations, or the international parliamentary organisations – that all stand ready to assist. Annex 1 presents a list of additional resources that might be useful.

Recommendations for guaranteeing inclusion

1. Action is required

- * The adoption of electoral gender quotas requires the commitment of the political leadership.

"Ideas without action are just empty words. Actions not based in ideas are often wasted effort. Our job is to combine actions and words."

Roy Trivedy, UN Resident Representative, PNG

- * Quotas should be seen as just one among a number of reforms required to achieve gender equality.

- ✳ More work is required with political parties. Political parties can become more transparent about how they select candidates for election, and become more inclusive in the way they allocate internal leadership positions, so that women are also promoted. Political parties always have the ability to implement their own party targets or voluntary quotas, without the need for legislation.

“Political parties are completely ignoring the status of women, and are not giving them an equal opportunity to contest.”

Dr Alphone Gelu, Registrar of Political Parties, PNG

2. Tailor made is best

- ✳ TSMs are most effective when they are (and are seen to be) context-appropriate.

“It is about the application of a model that is suitable for us. You have to work very closely with the electoral commission and your legal staff have to be on board to understand what is. Whoever I have to convince has to accept that it can be done, and how it can be done.”

Lord Vaea, Member of Parliament, Tonga



Hon. Baklai Temengil, Palau's First Woman Cabinet Minister (right) and Lord Vaea of Tonga (left).

- ✳ Reconsidering the electoral system and the role of political parties may also lead to an increased representation of women in politics.

“It's time to stop talking about this. The ball is in the court of the political leadership – but that does not mean we have to sit and wait. The challenges are real for women to be present in the political arena. We are looking at electoral reforms – we believe they will help us increase the number of women.” Salote Vui bureta Radrodro, Member of Parliament, Fiji

3. Value women's role in public life

- ✧ Women elected on TSMs have allowed for a positive public debate on the role of women in political leadership

"I felt that it was important to have the discussion and bring the ideas to the table. If we keep talking about it, people will believe."

Jerrlyn Uduch Sengebau Senior, Senator, Palau

- ✧ Imposing a quota provides women the opportunity to demonstrate they have the necessary experience to be in politics.

"One of the greatest challenges for women to engage in politics is 'the eye of others': how women are perceived in society, specifically in our Kanak society. Women have traditionally been in the shadow of their husbands and their clans. [But with the Parity Law], we are seeing women in their own light." Hon Isabelle Béaruné, Member of Congress, New Caledonia

- ✧ Society as a whole is responsible for eliminating sexist attitudes and gender-based stereotypes.

"We need courage, stories, strategy, and we must continue to talk about it." Mrs Baklai Temengil, Minister for Community and Cultural Affairs, Palau

- ✧ Women's contributions to peace processes during and after the conflict have served as a catalyst to change social perceptions of women as decision-makers.

"Men cannot ignore the role that women played in the peace process. Through that involvement, women found a voice."

Simon Pentanu, Speaker, Bougainville

4. Use leadership positions to implement reform

- ✧ Reserved seats provide women an entry point for women in politics. Once there, women have the opportunity to contribute to a wider range of policy areas.

"We women don't know our capability; someone has to point it out to us. Now we need to point it out to other women!"

Veena Bhatnagar, Member of Parliament, Fiji

- ✧ With sufficient will from the political leadership, action can be taken to ensure the parliament is an enabling environment for women's participation, empowerment and leadership.

"Women who are sitting in important places, we need to play our part."

Ruth Liloqula, Political Parties Commission of Solomon Islands

- ✧ It is important to have a gender equality champion on the floor of the Parliament.

"You cannot underestimate the importance of champions to make real change in a country that has a lot of cultural diversity."

Charles Vatu, Principal Electoral Officer, Vanuatu

5. Create partnerships with men

- ✳ Support for TSMs should be broad-based and men should be targeted, particularly male Ministers.

"We will continue to advocate until TSMs are firmly established in Vanuatu. An election will be held in 2016 and we will be expecting women to win." Alfred Moah, Member of Parliament, Vanuatu

- ✳ Coalition building is key in devising an appropriate measure and garnering support from the political elite.

"When we women speak with one voice, we don't realise how loud that voice can be." Anna Solomon, Secretary for Community Development, PNG

- ✳ Clearly explaining the provisions and the intentions of a temporary special measure is important in securing support.

"MPs were concerned about the power sharing – what would the woman MP on a reserved seat do? Who would she represent? The roles needed to be differentiated clearly – 'this is a woman's representative in the province, not the governor. She would support the governor, but would not be a subordinate to the governor. She would have equal rights with all the other MPs.'" Julie Bikubiku, UNDP PNG

6. Think strategically; rethink if necessary

- ✳ Implementing TSMs at the municipal (or local) level of government may be an effective starting point to increase women's political participation.
- ✳ Flexibility is important when implementing a measure that has unintended consequences.

Annex 1: Useful resources

Fiji Women's Forum, 2014. *Public Perceptions of Women in Leadership*. Suva, Fiji.

International IDEA, 2006. *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. A Revised Edition*. Stockholm, Sweden.

International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union and Stockholm University, 2010. *Global Database of Electoral Quotas for Women* [at www.quotaproject.org] and *Atlas of Electoral Gender Quotas*. Stockholm, Sweden.

International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics [at <http://www.iknowpolitics.org/en>]

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IPU, 2012. *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice*. Geneva, Switzerland.

OSCE ODIHR, 2014. *Handbook on Promoting Women's Political Participation in Political Parties*. Warsaw, Poland.

NDI and UNDP, 2012. *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation*, New York, USA.

UN, 2005. *Women and Elections: A Guide to promoting the participation of women in elections*. New York, USA.

UNDP and UN Women, 2015. *Inclusive Electoral Processes: A Guide for Electoral Management Bodies on Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Participation*, New York, USA.



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