

Federal States of Micronesia

General information

- **Population:** 115,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 14
- **Number of women:** 0
- **Percentage of women:** 0%
- **Term Length:** Four Senators elected from the 4 States serve 4 year terms and 10 members from single member constituencies serve 2 year terms
- **First-Past-The Post**
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2011 (if 4 year terms), 2009 (if 2 year terms)
- **Number of Constituencies:** 14
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 1
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 0
- **Special Provisions:** Each State has one member elected to represent the whole state. Article 9(11) of the Constitution also provides for States to set aside one of its seats for a traditional leader, in lieu of one representative elected on the basis of population. If this were done, then the number of congressional districts would be reduced and reapportioned accordingly.²⁹

The current electoral system reflects the fact that the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a federation. Four seats in the National Congress are reserved for the States – one seat for a Senator from each state – and there is also provision in the Constitution to set aside a seat for a “traditional leader”. It is understood that no such seats have been reserved to date.

Significantly, no women stood for election in 2007 and very few women have stood for election historically. FSM does not currently have any political parties. Taking into account the lack of a party system and the first-past-the-post electoral system, the only option for temporary special measures is the creation of reserved seats for women. In December 2008, a Bill was introduced into the Congress that attempts to make provision for four reserved seats for women, one to represent each of the States. Significantly, the Bill was sponsored by Speaker Isaac Figir and Vice Speaker Resio Moses. This and other options for reserved seats are outlined below.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a set number of additional seats in the Congress reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 14 members of Congress. The constituencies for the additional seats could be the four State-wide constituencies that currently elect the four Senators (as has been proposed), thereby increasing the size of the Congress to 18, with women representing 22.2% of elected members. Alternatively, the whole of FSM could be used as a single “at large” constituency to elect women members.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum of 4 women in the Congress.



Does not require any existing members of Congress to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



Financial cost of four additional Members of Congress could be significant, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women members of Congress.



Based on the historically small number of women candidates, it is not clear that sufficient women will nominate for elections to reserved seats.

Consideration may therefore need to be given to filling reserved seats by appointment, if this option is chosen, at least as an interim measure.



Create new multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women

Currently, the State of Chuuk is divided into 5 single-member constituencies and the State of Pohnpei is divided into 3 single-member constituencies. Consideration could be given to amending the electoral law to create multi-member constituencies to replace the current single-member constituencies in these two larger States. Thus, the State of Chuuk would have one constituency which would elect 5 members of Congress and the State of Pohnpei would have one constituency which would elect 3 members of Congress. A number of seats in each multi-member constituency could then be reserved for women. The remaining smaller States of Kosrae and Yap would continue to return one member who could be a man or a woman. This system would result in a minimum of 3 women elected as constituency members, representing 21.4% of Members of Congress.

| State | Number of seats in the constituency | Proposed number of seats reserved for women | Minimum % of women elected |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Chuuk | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| Pohnpei | 3 | 1 | 30% |
| Kosrae | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| Yap | 1 | 0 | 0% |
| Total | 10 | 3 | 33% |

Advantages



No additional costs of adding new members to Congress.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of reserved seats is agreed upon.



All voters in multi-member electorates would be represented by both men and women.

Disadvantages



Only two of the four States would be guaranteed to have female representatives. However, this problem could be overcome if the option discussed above, to create 4 State-based elected reserved seats, was implemented alongside this option.



The change from single member to multi-member electorates represents a significant change to current electoral laws and could take some time to implement.



Larger constituencies could reduce the existing close relationship between Members and their constituents.



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:



Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they received in their constituency, even if they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. If FSM moved to multi-member constituencies for Chuuk and Pohnpei, then under the “most voted” method, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.



Indirect election by the Congress or other elected bodies, such as the four State legislatures.



Direct appointment by the President or Congress itself, following an open and participatory selection process.

Fiji Islands

General information

- **Population:** 882,000
- **Total number of legislators:** House of Representatives - 71 members; Senate 32 members
- **Number of women:** 8 elected in the Lower house and 5 appointed to the Senate (in the 2006 Parliament)
- **Percentage of women:** 12.6%
- **Term Length:** 5 years
- **Electoral System:** Alternative Vote for Lower House and by appointment to the Upper House
- **Date of Next National Election:** Unknown
- **Number of Constituencies:** Communal constituencies - 23 for Ethnic Fijians, 19 for Ethnic Indians 3 for other groups and 1 for Rotuman Islands. There are also 25 multi ethnic open seats.
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 1
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 13
- **Special Provisions:** The Senate is an appointed House 14 senators are appointed by the Great Council of Chiefs, 9 by the Prime Minister, 8 by the Leader of the Opposition and 1 by the Council of Rotuma.

In December 2006, the democratically elected Government was replaced following a military coup. An Interim Government, led by coup leader Commodore Bainimarama as Prime Minister, was formed shortly after and continues in power. At the 2007 Forum Leaders Meeting, the Interim Government committed to hold democratic elections in March 2009, but the Interim Government has since indicated that the elections would be delayed. At the time of writing, it is not clear when democracy will be restored in Fiji.

Nonetheless, the restoration of democracy in Fiji, whenever it does occur, provides an opportunity to include some form of temporary special measures in the electoral system. Throughout the last decade or so, consideration has been given to reforming Fiji's electoral and voting system. In 1997, the Alternative Vote system replaced the First-Past-The-Post system that had been used since Independence. Notably, the introduction of a proportional representation electoral system could lead to an increase in the number of women in Parliament, as could the introduction of multi-member constituencies, particularly if a gender quota was also adopted. If there is no change to the electoral system in Fiji, then the options for temporary special measures to increase the gender balance in Parliament include reserved seats for women and the use of political party quotas.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats to the Lower House

Fiji is one of the few countries in the Pacific which has two Houses of Parliament. The Lower House is a fully elected body, while the Upper House is a fully appointed body. Consideration could be given to creating additional seats in the Lower House reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 71 seats in the Lower House, as shown below:

| Number of additional seats | Size of Lower House | Minimum % women in Lower House |
|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| 14 | 85 | 16.5 |
| 16 | 87 | 18.3 |
| 18 | 89 | 20.2 |
| 20 | 91 | 22.0 |
| 22 | 93 | 23.7 |

If 14 seats were reserved for women, they could be designed to represent each of Fiji's 14 provinces. However, using the provinces as constituencies could be difficult because provinces are of unequal size and population, so that the principle of "one vote, one value" would not apply in all cases. Alternatively, a set number of women could be elected from each of the four administrative districts or a nation-wide constituency could be created and women could be elected "at large" by all voters.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement, following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.



Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



Designing constituencies for the women-only seats could be complicated.



The financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats in the Lower House

If it is not acceptable to increase the existing number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to creating a set number of women-only seats and reducing the current number of open seats accordingly. This option is complicated by the fact that Fiji already has reserved seats (called communal seats) for different ethnic groups. Thus, Fiji has 23 seats reserved for Ethnic Fijians, 19 reserved for Ethnic Indians, 3 reserved for Other Groups and 1 reserved for Rotuman Islands. There are then 25 multi-ethnic open seats.

Consideration would need to be given to whether seats would only be reserved for women from the 25 multi-ethnic open seats, or whether a different configuration of reserved seats could be made in the communal seats that would accommodate women's representation. For example, each set of communal seats could be required to include a set number of reserved seats for women. In terms of numbers, the table below shows the different options for reserving seats for women in the 71 member Lower House. Notably, to reach the threshold of 30% women's representation, 21 seats need to be filled by women.

| Number of seats reserved for women | Size of Lower House | Minimum % women in parliament |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 8 | 71 | 11.3 |
| 12 | 71 | 16.9 |
| 16 | 71 | 22.5 |
| 21 | 71 | 29.5 |

Advantages



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages



Deciding on the formula for reserving seats within the current constitutional framework, which already has reserved communal seats, could be complicated and highly contentious.

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries could be time-consuming and complicated.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Create multi-member constituencies with reserved seats

At present, Fiji has 71 single-member constituencies. However, consideration could be given to creating larger multi-member constituencies, and then reserving a set number of seats for women, as shown below.

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

Multi-member constituencies would need to be drawn up taking into account the current different electoral boundaries for Fiji's communal and open seats. For example, multi-member constituencies may need to be designed for communal seats and separate multi-member constituencies may be designed for open seats. If this option was adopted, the current Alternative Vote System would need to be reconsidered.

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.
- ✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost, if the number of MPs remains the same.
- ✿ Multi-member constituencies may provide opportunities for racial and religious diversity amongst elected members.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries and amending the Constitution and/or electoral legislation could be time-consuming and complicated.
- ✿ There would be implications for the representative relationship between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Appoint women to reserved seats in the Senate

As noted earlier, Fiji is one of the few countries in the Pacific which has two Houses of Parliament. While the Lower House is a fully elected body, the Senate is a fully appointed body. In accordance with the Constitution, 14 senators are appointed by the President on the advice of by the Great Council of Chiefs, 9 on the advice of the Prime Minister, 8 on the advice of the Opposition Leader and 1 on the advice of the Council of Rotuma. A simple approach to increasing the numbers of women in the Fiji Parliament would be the appointment of women to a certain percentage of the seats in the Senate, for example, a minimum of 30% of the 32 existing seats. This would result in an increase in the number of women in the Senate from the present 5 to at least 10 women.

Ideally, the Constitution would be amended to enshrine the inclusion of women, so that it is legally enforceable. However, even in the absence of legislation, the Great Council of Chiefs, Prime Minister and Opposition Leader could all be encouraged to commit to using their nomination powers to appoint a minimum of 30% women into Senate. So for example, the Great Council of Chiefs could nominate 4-5 women, the Prime Minister could nominate a minimum of 3 women and the Opposition Leader could nominate 2-3 women resulting in minimum of 9-11 women or 28-34% women.

Advantages



The Senate already uses an appointment process.



Relatively quick and easy to implement, if the current appointing bodies voluntarily agree to use their appointment powers to promote gender balance in the Senate.

Disadvantages



The voters cannot choose all the women who will represent them in the Parliament.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:



Direct election though a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they received in their constituency, even if they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. If Fiji moved to multi-member constituencies, then under the “most voted” method, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.



Indirect election by the Lower or Upper House or other elected bodies at the local or provincial level.



Distribution to political parties in proportion to their overall share of the national vote or the number of seats won.



Direct appointment to the Lower House by the President or Parliament itself, following an open and participatory selection process.



Direct appointment to the Senate by the President, on advice.

POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS



Introduce party quotas under the current electoral system

Within the Pacific, Fiji is probably the country with the strongest party system, with the two major parties Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua and the Fiji Labour Party accounting for 80% of the votes at the 2006 election. This means that the introduction of party quotas by these two parties has the potential to significantly increase the number of women in the Parliament. To successfully implement a party quota, parties would have to nominate and support an agreed percentage of women candidates in winnable seats. In addition, there would need to be an enforcement mechanism to ensure that the political parties complied with the quota.

In reality, a single party could decide on its own to adopt a voluntary party quota. However, it is more likely that, to have a real chance of working effectively, this option would require the major parties to agree to amend their rules to introduce a candidate quota and set an agreed target such as 30%, so as to create a level

playing field for the parties. If such an agreement was not forthcoming, consideration could be given to developing legislation to mandatorily require parties to introduce political party quotas.

Advantages

- ✿ If voluntary, a party quota does not require a lengthy process of legislative change.
- ✿ No additional seats would need to be created, so no additional costs would be incurred.
- ✿ No changes to electoral boundaries or the electoral system are required.

Disadvantages

- ✿ There is no guarantee that the women nominated by parties will get elected if the community is reluctant to vote for women, if winnable seats for women cannot be readily identified or if political parties do not provide adequate campaign resources for women candidates.
- ✿ Parties need to be well organised, stable and disciplined to implement party quotas successfully.
- ✿ It can take a number of electoral cycles to implement the quota if male MPs or candidates are not willing to create opportunities for women to be nominated



Introduce a proportional electoral system with party list quotas

It has been suggested over the years that Fiji could consider introducing a Proportional Representation electoral system, with either an open or closed list. As discussed in Part 1, an Open List system means that although parties develop lists of candidates and can order them as they choose, the voters still have the right to choose their preferred candidates if they wish. In a Closed List system, the voters can only choose the party they prefer and then the party lists are used to identify which candidates have won seats.

If Fiji decides to implement a new proportional representation system, consideration could be given to including a political party quota for women. A political party quota means that each party list would have to specify a minimum number of female candidates, placed in a particular order. For example, it could be required that party lists alternate between male and female candidates. Notably, both Open and Closed Lists will usually result in the election of more women. However, only Closed Lists can guarantee that the election outcome reflects the lists proposed by the parties. For this reason, if Fiji decides to implement a proportional representation electoral system, consideration should be given to introducing “zipper-style” Closed Lists rather than Open Lists, in order to increase the likelihood of women being elected in greater numbers. It should be acknowledged however, that some would argue that Open Lists are more democratic because they allow people to make their own choice of candidates.

Advantages

- ✿ The introduction of a proportional representation electoral system with party quotas for women, in a country like Fiji which has strong parties, is very likely to result in an increase in the number of women in Parliament.
- ✿ The introduction of a proportional representation electoral system offers opportunities to promote gender balance while still being sensitive to the need for racial and religious balance.
- ✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost if the number of MPs remain the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries and amending the constitution and/or electoral legislation could be time-consuming and complicated.
- ✿ There would be implications for the representative relationship between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them.
- ✿ A radical overhaul of the electoral system would require considerable voter education to be effective.
- ✿ Men would be less likely to get elected if they were below women on their party list.

Kiribati

General information

- **Population:** 94,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 46 seats (44 elected, 2 appointed)
- **Number of women:** 3
- **Percentage of women:** 6.5%
- **Term Length:** 4 years
- **Electoral System:** Two Round System
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2011
- **Number of Constituencies:** 23
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 7 single member constituencies, 11 two member constituencies and 5 three member constituencies
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 2
- **Special Provisions:** Two members of the Parliament are appointed - the Attorney General and an appointed Banaban representative from Rabi Island Fiji.

Kiribati has adopted an electoral system whereby two-rounds of voting are undertaken. In single member districts, if no candidate secures 50% of the vote, then there is a second round run-off between the top two candidates. In the multi-member electorates, voters may cast votes for up to the full number of vacant seats available. However, to be elected, candidates need only 25% or more of the vote, and if a second round of voting is required then the candidate with the highest number of votes wins.

Notably, political parties are becoming increasingly prominent, but they are still largely centred around the leader of the party. In the 2007 election, four parties won seats – the Boutakaan Te Koaua (26), Maneaban Te Mauri (7), Maurin Kiribati (8) Tabomoa (5).³⁰ Although the party system in Kiribati is regarded as informal, the existence of parties increases the options available to promote more women in the Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu (Parliament). The options available to increase the number of women in the Parliament include creation of reserved seats for women and use of political party quotas.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 46 seats in Parliament as shown below:

| Number of additional seats | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 | 50 | 8.7 |
| 6 | 52 | 11.5 |
| 8 | 54 | 14.8 |
| 10 | 56 | 17.9 |
| 12 | 58 | 20.7 |
| 14 | 60 | 23.3 |

The additional seats could be created to represent each of the three main groups of islands, the Gilberts, Phoenix and Line Islands. Alternatively, the whole of Kiribati could be used as a single “at large” constituency to elect women members.

Advantages

- ✿ Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.
- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.
- ✿ Does not require any existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



An increase in the number of seats in the Parliament may lead to the view that Kiribati would be over-governed, with 46 MPs already representing a population of approximately 94,000 people (1 MP per 2,043 people)



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

If it is not considered acceptable to increase the existing number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to converting some existing seats into reserved seats for women. Kiribati currently has 16 multi-member constituencies and 7 single-member constituencies. Consideration could be given to amending existing electoral legislation to reserve some of the seats in existing multi-member constituencies for women. This option could be adopted without boundary changes, but it would only apply to the 16 existing multi-member constituencies. Reserving some seats in existing multi-member seats could produce the result shown below:

| Number of constituencies | Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women per constituency | Total number of reserved seats | Minimum % of women elected |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Five | 3 | 1 | 5 | 33% |
| Eleven | 2 | 1 | 11 | 50% |
| Seven | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 44 | - | 16 | 35% |

This option would guarantee that a minimum of 5 women would be elected from the three-member electorates and 11 women would be elected from the two-member constituencies. This would result in a total of 16 women being elected, or a minimum of 35% in the Parliament. However, this number could increase depending on how many of the single member constituencies were won by women (women won three such constituencies in the 2007 election) and how many women won additional seats in the 16 multi-member constituencies. Consideration could perhaps be given to trialling this option in the five 3-member constituencies as a strategy to gradually gain support for the concept of reserved seats.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.



All voters in multi-member constituencies will be represented by both men and women.



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Only those voters in the multi-member electorates would be guaranteed female representatives.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Create additional new multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women

As the option above identifies, Kiribati already has some multi-member constituencies which could be used to reserve seats for women. However, a more comprehensive option would be to change electoral boundaries so that all constituencies in Kiribati are represented by two or more members. In every constituency, a set number of seats could then be reserved for women. This would ensure a more consistent approach to the use of reserved seats and provide the opportunity for all constituencies to be represented by both men and women. The table below shows how this option could be used to increase the number of women in Parliament, depending on the number of members in the constituency and the number of seats reserved for women.

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.
- ✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries could be time-consuming and complicated.
- ✿ Redesigning constituencies could have implications in terms of the representative relationship between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

- ✿ Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.
- ✿ Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they received in their constituency, even if they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of multi-member constituencies, under the “most voted” method, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.
- ✿ Distribution to political parties in proportion of their overall share of the national vote or the number of seats won.
- ✿ Indirect election by the Parliament or another body, such as existing Local Councils.
- ✿ Direct appointment by the President, Mwaneaba ni Maungatabu or traditional leaders, following an open and participatory selection process.

POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS

The introduction of political party, or candidate, quotas is another option that could be used to promote gender balance in Parliament. In the 2007 election, In the 2007 election, four parties won seats – the Boutakaan Te Koaua (26), Maneaban Te Mauri (7), Maurin Kiribati (8) Tabomoa (5).

It is unlikely that an individual party would introduce a gender quota voluntarily if the party leadership believes that the electorate will choose independent male candidates or opposition male candidates over their own women candidates. To work effectively, this option would require all political parties to voluntarily agree to amend their rules to introduce a candidate quota, so as to create a level playing field

for all parties. If such an agreement was not forthcoming, consideration could be given to developing legislation to mandatorily require parties to introduce candidate quotas.

Because of the somewhat complicated electoral system in Kiribati, party quotas would need to be designed to take into account that some constituencies are single-member and some are multi-member, specifically:

- In the 16 single-member constituencies, a percentage quota could be introduced requiring a set percentage of all candidates to be women;
- In the multi-member constituencies, if parties intend to nominate more than one candidate then they could be required to nominate at least one man and one woman.

Recognising that historically only a small number of women have nominated for elections, it may be that initially party quotas could be set to require 10-15% of candidates to be women, rather than 30% as is more often the case in other countries. Over time, a higher party quota could be implemented. Alternatively, quotas could initially be implemented by requiring parties to include a minimum number of women candidates on their candidate lists for the five three-member constituencies only. Over time, consideration could be given to implementing a party quota to cover all seats.

Advantages

- ✿ If voluntary, a party quota does not require a lengthy process of legislative change.
- ✿ No additional seats would need to be created, so no additional costs would be incurred.
- ✿ No changes to electoral boundaries or the electoral system are required.

Disadvantages

- ✿ There is no guarantee that the women nominated by parties will get elected if the community is reluctant to vote for women, if winnable seats for women cannot be readily identified or if political parties do not provide adequate campaign resources for women candidates.
- ✿ Parties need to be well organised, stable and disciplined to implement party quotas successfully.
- ✿ It may take a number of electoral cycles to implement the quota if male MPs or candidates are not willing to step down to create opportunities for women to be nominated.

M

arshall Islands

General information

- **Population:** 56,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 33
- **Number of women:** 1
- **Percentage of women:** 3%
- **Term Length:** 4 years
- **Electoral System:** First-Past-The-Post in single constituencies and Block Voting in multi-member constituencies
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2011
- **Number of Constituencies:** 24
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 19 single member and 5 multimember
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 3
- **Special Provisions:** None

The Marshall Islands Parliament, known as the Nitijela, has 33 Senators. An upper house, called the Council of Iroij, consisting of Marshallese traditional leaders, discusses all Bills that go before the Nitijela and can request seven days to deal with Bills that touch on custom, tradition and land rights, but the Council has no veto powers. Since self-government, the Marshall Islands has had four presidents (the first of whom dominated politics for thirty years). Two main parties have emerged and competed in recent elections, namely the Ailin Kein Ad Party and the United Democratic Party.

Marshall Islands has only had a handful of women parliamentarians, usually no more than one in each Parliament. However, in the 2007 elections, the number of women candidates doubled and at the local level elections 30% of candidates were women. The options available to increase the number of women in Parliament include the creation of seats reserved for women and the use of party quotas.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS






Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 33 seats in Parliament, as shown below:



| Number of additional seats | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5 | 38 | 13.2 |
| 6 | 39 | 15.3 |
| 7 | 40 | 17.5 |
| 8 | 41 | 19.5 |
| 9 | 42 | 21.4 |
| 10 | 43 | 23.3 |

The additional seats could be created to represent specific geographical areas of the Marshall Islands, like the major Ralik and Ratak island chains. Alternatively, the whole of the Marshall Islands could be used as a single “at large” constituency to elect women members.

Advantages

-  Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.
-  Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.
-  Does not require existing Senators to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages

-  Financial cost of additional Senators could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women Senators.
-  An increase in the number of seats in the Parliament may lead to the view that Marshall islands would be over-governed, with 33 Senators already representing a population of 56,000 people (1 Senator per 1,697 people)



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

If it is not considered acceptable to increase the existing number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to converting some existing seats into reserved seats for women. Marshall Islands currently has 5 multi-member constituencies and 19 single-member constituencies. Consideration could be given to amending existing electoral legislation to introduce a quota to reserve some of the seats in existing multi-member constituencies for women. Reserving some seats for women in the 5 existing multi-member seats would guarantee a minimum of 6 women or 18% of parliamentary seats, as shown below

| Constituency | Number of seats in the constituency | Proposed number of seats reserved for women | Minimum % of women elected |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Majuro | 5 | 2 | 40% |
| Kwajalein | 3 | 1 | 33% |
| Arno | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| Ailinglaplap | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| Jaluit | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 19 constituencies | 1 (x19) | 0 (x19) | 0% |
| Total | 33 | 6 | 18% |

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.



Voters in multi-member constituencies would be represented by both men and women



No additional financial cost as the number of Senators remains the same.

Disadvantages



Only those voters in the multi-member electorates would be guaranteed female representatives.



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Create additional new multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women

As the option above identifies, Marshall Islands already has some multi-member constituencies which could be used to reserve seats for women. However, a more comprehensive option would be to change electoral boundaries so that all constituencies in Marshall Islands are represented by two or more members. In every constituency, a set number of seats could then be reserved for women. This would ensure a more consistent approach to the use of reserved seats and provide the opportunity for all constituencies to be represented by both men and women. The table below shows how this option could be used to increase the number of women in Parliament, depending on the number of members in the constituency and the number of seats reserved for women.

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

Advantages



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.



All voters would be represented by both men and women



No additional financial cost as the number of Senators remains the same.

Disadvantages



Redrawing electoral boundaries could be time-consuming and complicated.



Redesigning constituencies could have implications in terms of the representative relationship between Senators and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them.



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

- ✿ Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.
- ✿ Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they received in their constituency, even if they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of multi-member constituencies, under the “most voted” method, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.
- ✿ Distribution to political parties in proportion of their overall share of the national vote or the number of seats won.
- ✿ Indirect election by the Nitijela, Council of Iroij or another elected body at the local level.
- ✿ Direct appointment (upon advice), by the President, Premier, the Nitijela, or the Council of Iroij, following an open and participatory selection process.

POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS

The introduction of political party quotas is another option that could be used to promote gender balance in Parliament. In the early days following Independence, there were no formally organised political parties in the Marshall Islands. However, in the last five years or so, two main parties have emerged and competed in recent elections, namely the Ailin Kein Ad Party and the United Democratic Party.

It is unlikely that an individual party would introduce a gender quota voluntarily if the leadership believes that the electorate will choose independent male candidates or opposition male candidates over their own women candidates. To work effectively, this option would require all political parties to voluntarily agree to amend their

rules to introduce a political party quota, so as to create a level playing field for all parties. If such an agreement was not forthcoming then consideration could be given to developing legislation to mandatorily require political parties to introduce candidate quotas for women.

Recognising that historically only a small number of women have nominated for elections, it may be that initially party quotas could be set to require 10-15% of candidates to be women, rather than 30% as is more often the case in other countries. Over time, a higher party quota could be implemented. Alternatively, quotas could initially be implemented by requiring the two parties to include a minimum number of women candidates on the lists for the five multi-member constituencies only. Over time, consideration could be given to implementing a party quota to cover all seats.

Advantages

- ✿ If voluntary, a party quota does not require a lengthy process of legislative change.
- ✿ No additional seats would need to be created so no additional costs would be incurred.
- ✿ No changes to electoral boundaries or the electoral system are required.

Disadvantages

- ✿ There is no guarantee that the women nominated by parties will get elected if the community is reluctant to vote for women, if winnable seats for women cannot be readily identified or if political parties do not provide adequate campaign resources for women candidates.
- ✿ Parties need to be well-organised, stable and disciplined to implement party quotas successfully.
- ✿ It can take a number of electoral cycles to implement the quota if male Senators or candidates are not willing to create opportunities for women to be nominated.

Nauru

General information

- **Population:** 10,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 18
- **Number of women:** 0
- **Percentage of women:** 0%
- **Term Length:** 3 years
- **Electoral System:** Modified Borda Count
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2011
- **Number of Constituencies:** 8
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** Between 2 and 4
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 1
- **Special Provisions:** None

Nauru has not historically had strong, formal structures for political parties. Candidates typically stand as independents. In 2003, the Nauru First party was successful in elections and continues to have members sitting in Parliament. However, fifteen of the eighteen members of the current parliament are independents. Due to the smallness of the country, alliances within the Government are often formed on the basis of personal connections rather than common ideologies.

There has only been one woman elected to Parliament in the history of independent Nauru, although in the 2007 and 2008 elections the number of women candidates dramatically increased and two women came close to election. It is also notable that women were relatively successful in being elected to the Constitutional

Convention in 2007, suggesting that women in Nauru are ready to take on the role of parliamentarians. In light of the large number of independents in the Parliament, the only option available to increase the number of women in the Parliament is the creation of seats reserved for women.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 18 seats in Parliament as shown below:

| Number of additional seats | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 | 20 | 10.0 |
| 3 | 21 | 14.3 |
| 4 | 22 | 18.2 |
| 5 | 23 | 21.7 |
| 6 | 24 | 25.0 |

For example, if 6 reserved seats were added, this would ensure a minimum of 25% of women in Parliament. The additional reserved seats could be created to represent specific geographic constituencies in Nauru or, in light of the relatively small size of the electorate, a single island-wide constituency could be used and the women could be elected “at large” by all voters.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.



Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



Financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



An increase in the number of seats in the Parliament may lead to the view that Nauru would be over governed, with 18 MPs already representing a population of only 10,000 people (1 MP per 556 people).



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

If it is not considered acceptable to increase the existing number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to converting some of the existing seats into reserved seats for women. Nauru currently has 8 multi-member constituencies. Consideration could be given to amending existing electoral legislation to reserve some of the seats in existing multi-member constituencies for women. Reserving some seats in existing multi-member seats could produce the result shown below:

| Number of constituencies | Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women per constituency | Total number of reserved seats | Minimum % of women elected |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 7 | 2 | 1 | 7 | 50% |
| 1 | 4 | 1 or 2 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| Total | 18 | - | 8 or 9 | 44% or 50% |

This means that if one seat was reserved for women in each of the seven 2-member constituencies and one or two seats were reserved for women in the sole 4-member constituency, Parliament could include between 44% and 50% women.

Advantages

- ✿ Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.
- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of reserved seats is agreed.
- ✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Recognising that few women have historically run for election, it may be difficult initially to find sufficient numbers of women candidates to contest the 8 or 9 seats proposed to be reserved for women.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Create one constituency for the whole island and reserve a set number of seats for women

In Guam, an island with approximately 40,000 voters, a single whole-of-island constituency is used for all seats. There are no specific electorates for different seats, such that all members are elected “at large” from the entire population. Although a more radical option, taking into account the fact that Nauru is currently involved in a comprehensive constitutional review process, consideration could be given to changing the electoral system so that a single island-wide constituency is used. If this option were implemented in Nauru, a certain number of seats could then be reserved for women (and increased or decreased over time, as necessary).

| Number of Seats Reserved for women | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 | 18 | 11.1 |
| 3 | 18 | 16.6 |
| 4 | 18 | 22.2 |
| 5 | 18 | 33.3 |

Advantages



Relatively easy to implement as part of the current constitutional reform process.



A larger pool of potential women candidates would be available from the whole island.



It is a more flexible option whereby a smaller number of seats could be reserved initially and the number of seats increased over time once more women candidates were prepared to stand for election.



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages



Agreeing and enacting amendments to electoral laws and/or the Constitution could be complicated.



The representative relationship between MPs and the 14 clan groups that currently elect them would be weakened.



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:



Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats.



Indirect election by the Parliament or another elected body at the local level, such as the District Councils.



Direct appointment by the President or the Parliament, following an open and participatory selection process.



Niue

General information

- **Population:** 1,200
- **Total number of legislators:** 20
- **Number of women:** 4
- **Percentage of women:** 20%
- **Term Length:** 3 years
- **Electoral System:** First Past the Post in 14 village constituencies and Block Vote for 6 common roll island-wide positions
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2011
- **Number of Constituencies:** 15
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 14 single member constituencies and 1 island-wide six-member constituency
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 0
- **Special Provisions:** None

The 2008 national elections were very encouraging for women candidates. Three women were elected from the island-wide constituency, including two new women members. The woman who was re-elected was from one of the single-member village constituencies. As Niue has a First-Past-The-Post electoral system and no political parties, the only option available to increase the number of women in the Parliament is the creation of seats reserved for women.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

The very small population of Niue at 1,200 precludes consideration of any option that requires the addition of reserved seats for women, over the current 20 seats in Parliament. Currently, Niue has one 6-member island-wide constituency. While women have demonstrated their ability to win these island-wide seats in an open contest, consideration could nonetheless be given to reserving 3 of these existing 6 seats for women. This would ensure that three elected members will always be women and would guarantee a minimum of 15% women in Parliament.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of reserved seats is agreed.



All voters would always be represented by both men and women.



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages



There would be three fewer seats for men to contest.



Increase the number of seats in the current island wide multi-member constituency and reserve more of these seats for women

Consideration could be given to revising the current electoral system to require more members to be elected from the single island-wide constituency and to then introduce a quota to reserve seats for women. Currently, 6 members are elected from the island-wide constituency and 14 members are elected from single-member village constituencies. Some of these constituencies have less than 20 voters. Consideration could be given to decreasing the number of village constituencies, and then increasing the number of members elected by the entire island by a similar amount to retain the same total number of seats.

For example, the number of village constituencies could be decreased by 6, from 14 to 8 seats, and the island-wide constituency increased by 6, to become a 12-member constituency. Even without reserving seats for women, it is likely that more women would be elected if this option were implemented, because women candidates would have a good chance of being amongst the 12 members elected based on 2007 election results. However, to guarantee that a minimum of 30% women are elected, a quota could still be applied reserving this percentage of seats for women.

Advantages

- ✿ A larger pool of potential women candidates would be available from the whole island.
- ✿ No additional financial cost as the number of seats in Parliament remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Amendments would be required to electoral laws and/or the Constitution.
- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries could be a time-consuming and complex process.
- ✿ Redesigning constituencies could have implications in terms of the representative relationship between MPs and the 14 village communities that currently elect them.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

- ✿ Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.
- ✿ Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of multi-member seats, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.
- ✿ Indirect election by the Parliament.
- ✿ Direct appointment by the Premier or the Parliament, following an open and participatory selection process.



P_{alau}

General information

- **Population:** 22,000
- **Total number of legislators:** House of Delegates - 16 members; Senate - 9 members (to be increased to 13 members at the 2008 elections)
- **Number of women:** 2 elected to the Senate
- **Percentage of women:** 6.9%
- **Term Length:** 4 years
- **Electoral System:** First-Past-The-Post
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2012
- **Number of Constituencies:** 16
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 1
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 0
- **Special Provisions:** None

Palau's National Congress, the Olbiil Era Kelulau (OEK), is one of the few legislatures in the Pacific which has two Houses. The House of Delegates (Lower House) has 16 members, which are elected from 16 single-member constituencies. These constituencies represent Palau's sixteen States. Following the 2008 elections, the Senate (Upper House) now has 13 members (increased from 9 members, after a reapportionment process that is undertaken every 8 years) who are elected by the general voting population at large, creating a 29-member Congress.

Two women were elected to the Senate in the 2008 elections, prior to this time only one woman had been elected to Congress in Palau.

The First-Past-The-Post electoral system, single member constituencies in the Lower House and the lack of any political party system reduces the options for the implementation of temporary special measures to the creation of reserved seats of some kind. Notably though, under the Palau Constitution, members of the Congress are term-limited. They can only serve for 3 terms or a maximum of 12 years, after which they must vacate their seat for at least one election. This compulsory turnover of members offers a unique opportunity to introduce temporary special measures with less resistance from sitting members.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional reserved seats for women in one or both Houses of Parliament. For example:



Four additional reserved seats could be created for the House of Delegates. The 16 States could be combined into four new larger constituencies for voting purposes and each constituency would then each elect one woman.



A number of reserved seats could be created in the Senate, which acts as one, large multi-member constituency comprising the whole of Palau. Just as voters elect Senators from a list of candidates now, so too could they elect women into reserved seats from a list of women-only candidates.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Congress, once the number of seats is agreed upon in the Upper and Lower Houses.



Does not require existing members of Congress to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



The financial cost of additional Members of Congress could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women Members of Congress.



An increase in the number of seats in the Congress may lead to the view that Palau would be over-governed, with 29 members already representing a population of only 22,000 people (1 Congressperson per 759 people)



Convert a set number of existing seats in the Senate to elected women-only seats

If adding new seats to either or both Houses of Congress is not considered a financially feasible option, then upon the expiry of the constitutionally limited term of sitting Members of Congress, an agreed minimum number of existing seats could be converted to reserved seats for women.

This option is most feasible for implementation in the Senate. In the House of Delegates the 16 seats are based on the 16 States and extensive changes would be required to electoral boundaries and current State-based voting patterns. In the Senate however, a number of the existing 13 nation-wide seats could be reserved for women relatively easily, with the result as shown below.

| Number of seats reserved for women | Size of Senate | Minimum % women in Senate |
|------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------|
| 2 | 13 | 15.4 |
| 3 | 13 | 23.0 |
| 4 | 13 | 30.8 |

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Congress, once the number of reserved seats is agreed.



All voters would always be represented by both men and women.



No additional financial cost as the number of members of the Senate and House of Delegates remains the same.

Disadvantages



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest. However, the implementation of this option could be synchronised with expiry of the three terms allowed for Senators

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:



Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of Senate voting, where a single 13-member constituency is used, the “most voted” method would mean that the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.



Indirect election by the Congress or the 16 State Parliaments.



Direct appointment by the President, State Governors, Council of Chiefs or the Congress itself, following an open and participatory selection process.

Papua New Guinea

General information

- **Population:** 6.3 million
- **Total number of legislators:** 109
- **Number of women:** 1
- **Percentage of women:** 0.9%
- **Term Length:** 5 years
- **Electoral System:** Alternative Vote
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2012
- **Number of Constituencies:** 109
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 1
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 34
- **Special Provisions:** The Constitution envisages the appointment of three members to the national Parliament. Two women are also to be appointed to Local Government Councils and 1 woman is to be appointed to each of the 19 Provincial Councils. The local level government Motu Koita Assembly in Port Moresby has two reserved seats where women are elected by women-only voting.

Papua New Guinea has a national Parliament with 109 members. In the 2007 elections, a total of 102 women candidates nominated, but only one (the incumbent Dame Carol Kidu) was elected. The failure to make any progress over a number of years has reinforced calls in Papua New Guinea for the introduction of some form of temporary special measure.

Notably, while s.55(1) of the PNG Constitution explicitly recognises the equality of all citizens, sub-section 2 specifically accepts that “subsection (1) does not prevent the making of laws for the special benefit, welfare, protection or advancement of females, children and young persons...”. This clause means that the introduction of temporary special measures to promote women in the legislature will be legitimate within PNG’s constitutional framework. The Alternative Vote electoral system, single member constituencies and an increasingly stable political party system means that options to increase the number of women into Parliament include election to seats reserved for women and the use of political party quotas.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 109 seats in Parliament as shown below:

| Number of reserved seats | Size of Parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|--------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 11 | 120 | 9.1 |
| 21 | 130 | 16.2 |
| 31 | 140 | 22.1 |
| 41 | 150 | 27.3 |

As the table above indicates, in order to reach the level of a guaranteed minimum of 30% women in Parliament, a very large number of seats would have to be created. However, with a population of 6.3 million people, it is worth noting that PNG currently has a ratio of one MP per 57,798 people. This is very much higher than any of the other Pacific Islands Forum member countries, excluding Australia. By comparison, the Solomon Islands has a ratio of one MP per 10,780 people, while in the Cook Islands the ratio is one MP per 687 voters.

Depending on the number of reserved seats that were to be added to the Parliament, a constitutional amendment may or may not be required:



Reserved seat options under the existing Constitution

The Constitution currently provides for a possible increase in the total number of members of Parliament from 109 to a maximum of 120. Any additional increases beyond that number would require a constitutional amendment. The addition of up to 11 reserved seats for women is therefore possible under the existing Constitution. Under this option women would be guaranteed a minimum of 9.1% of seats in the Parliament.

The additional seats could be reserved for women with constituencies based on the four regions within PNG. Given the differing regional populations, the 11 seats could be allocated as follows:

- Southern region, including National Capital District (NCD) – 4 seats;
- Highlands region – 3 seats;
- Mamose – 2 seats;
- PNG Islands – 2 seats.



Reserved seat options requiring amendment to the constitution

As noted above, there is currently a constitutional restriction on the maximum number of seats permissible in the PNG Parliament. If the number of seats is to be increased to more than 120 members, then a constitutional amendment is required.

Already in PNG, it has been suggested that consideration could be given to adding 20 reserved seats to Parliament, with one woman elected from each province, plus the National Capital District. This would result in women comprising 15.5% of an enlarged Parliament of 129 members, well below the 30% target. It would require 40 reserved seats, or 2 women from each province and the NDC, to bring the minimum percentage of women in the Parliament closer to this target, at 26.8%.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement, though the process will become more complex if an amendment is required to the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.



Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained

Disadvantages



A large number of reserved seats that would need to be added to reach a target of a minimum of 30% women in Parliament.



The financial cost of additional MPs could be very high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

If it is not acceptable to increase the current number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to converting some existing seats into reserved seats for women. Currently, of the 109 members in Parliament, 20 MPs are also Provincial Governors. Under s.17(2) of the Organic Law on Provincial Governments and Local Level Governments, the person who is elected from each provincial electorate automatically becomes the Provincial Governor. When reforms to provincial level government were undertaken in the 1990s, it was recommended that the role of Provincial Governor and Provincial MP be separated and that Provincial Governors no longer sit in the Parliament. The recommendation was not implemented but there has been recognition that if the seats held by the Governors became available, they could be reserved for women. This option would ensure that women would comprise a minimum of 18.3% of the Parliament.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation to prevent Provincial Governors from holding a seat in the national Parliament.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament.



All voters would be represented by both men and women.



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages



The Provincial Governors would lose their seats in the national Parliament.



Create new multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women

PNG currently has 109 single-member constituencies. Consideration could be given to amending the electoral law to create multi-member constituencies to replace these current single-member constituencies. This would require a major overhaul of electoral boundaries. A number of seats in each multi-member constituency could then be reserved for women, as shown below:

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of reserved seats is agreed.
- ✿ Almost all voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries could be time-consuming and complicated, if a large number of constituencies are to become multi-member.
- ✿ The strong traditional cultural relationships that currently exist between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them could be threatened if constituency boundaries are enlarged.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

- ✿ Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.
- ✿ Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats.
- ✿ Distribution to political parties in proportion of their overall share of the national vote or the number of seats won.
- ✿ Indirect election by the Parliament, the 19 Provincial Governments or the 297 Local Level Governments.
- ✿ Direct appointment by the Governor General, Prime Minister, or the Parliament (see details of process underway to appoint women to Parliament), following an open and participatory selection process.

APPOINTMENT OF WOMEN AS NOMINATED MEMBERS

Section 101(1)(c) of the PNG Constitution currently recognises that the membership of the national Parliament can include “not more than three nominated members, appointed and holding office in accordance with Section 102 (nominated members).” Section 102 then prescribes that “...Parliament may, from time to time, by a two-thirds absolute majority vote, appoint a person (other than a member) to be a nominated member of the Parliament.”³¹

Section 110(1)(c) is not specifically directed at establishing appointed seats for women. Nonetheless, the current drafting of the provision means that it can be utilised to appoint three women to parliament. In November 2008, the PNG Cabinet endorsed a proposal to use s.101(1)(c) to appoint women to Parliament. The process commenced in December 2008, with a call for expressions of interest from women. It is proposed that applications will be assessed by a screening panel representing a broad spectrum of society and chaired by the National Council of Women. The names of six women recommended for appointment would then be considered by the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition, who would also be provided with the entire list of all women who lodged an expression of interest. The Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition would then make the final selection. Finally, the names of the three women to be nominated for appointment would go before Parliament where a two-thirds majority is required to endorse them for approval. At the time of writing some questions had been raised regarding the constitutional validity of the appointment process, indicating that care will always be needed when legislation is used to create reserved seats.

The appointment of three women to nominate seats in the National PNG Parliament is considered to be an interim measure, prior to the introduction of a number of reserved seats for the 2012 election.

Advantages



Appointment is a relatively quick and easy option, if an appointment process follows the provisions set out in the Constitution.



Capable, experienced women who do not have the resources or existing skills to successfully contest an election will have an opportunity to serve the community and gain political leadership experience.

Disadvantages



If the appointment process is not sufficiently participatory and does not allow for public input, the public may view the women appointed to Parliament as less representative of and accountable to the community.



The voters cannot choose the three women who will represent them in the Parliament

POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS

PNG has a fluid political party system and the parties generally lack effective mass organisation or common party ideology. Political parties are mostly locally or regionally based. The passing of the Organic Law on Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates in 2001, which provides for the registration and control of political parties, in fact resulted in the profusion of parties with 34 contesting the 2007 election (although that number was down from 44 at the 2002 election). In the 2007 elections, 21 parties won seats. Despite the large number of parties, independent candidates still made up 53% of candidates at the last election. The National Alliance Party won a majority of seats (27) and subsequently formed a coalition with other parties and independent candidates comprising a total of 88 MPs.

The strength, stability and increasing national organisational base of the National Alliance Party, which fielded 91 candidates at the last election, suggest that consideration could be given to introducing a voluntary or mandatory party quota. This option would require parties to nominate a minimum percentage of women candidates for election. While not as successful as the National Alliance Party, Pangu, People's Progress Party, New Generation Party, PNG Party, and the People's Party all fielded in excess of 60 candidates.

To successfully implement a party quota, the major parties would have to nominate and support an agreed percentage of women candidates in winnable seats. In addition, there would need to be an enforcement mechanism to ensure that the political parties complied with the quota.

It is unlikely that an individual party would introduce a gender quota voluntarily if the leadership believes that the electorate will choose independent male candidates or opposition male candidates over their own women candidates. To work effectively, this option would require all political parties to agree to amend their rules to introduce a candidate quota so as to create a level playing field for all parties. If such an agreement was not forthcoming, then consideration could be given to developing legislation to mandatorily require parties to introduce political party quotas.

Advantages

- ✿ If voluntary, a party quota does not require a lengthy process of legislative change.
- ✿ No additional seats would need to be created, so no additional costs would be incurred.
- ✿ No changes to electoral boundaries or the electoral system are required.

Disadvantages



There is no guarantee that the women nominated by parties will get elected if the community is reluctant to vote for women, if winnable seats for women cannot be readily identified or if political parties do not provide adequate campaign resources for women candidates.



Parties need to be well-organised, stable and disciplined to implement party quotas successfully.



It can take a number of electoral cycles to implement the quota if male MPs or candidates are not willing to create opportunities for women to be nominated.

Samoa

General information

- **Population:** 180,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 49
- **Number of women:** 3
- **Percentage of women:** 6.1%
- **Term Length:** 5 years
- **Electoral System:** First-Past-The-Post in single constituencies and Block Voting in multi-member constituencies
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2011
- **Number of Constituencies:** 43
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 37 single-member constituencies and 6 two-member constituencies
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 4
- **Special Provisions:** There is a separate roll for electing 2 people who represent "individual voters" (non-ethnic Samoans). Although there is universal suffrage, only matai (chiefs) are able to sit in the Parliament.

Samoa has retained many of its traditional governance structures. It is understood that traditional governance systems may make Samoa a difficult jurisdiction in which to introduce temporary special measures, which could appear to threaten these traditions. However, at the launch of the Samoan Branch of the Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians in mid-2008 the Speaker of the House, Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiatua said it was time for Samoa to take the political participation of women seriously³² and he has suggested that consideration should be given for the creation of two member constituencies to be represented by a man and a women.³³

Currently, matai (chiefs) are elected by consensus from within the fono (council), which is made up of extended family and village(s). A matai can represent a small family group or a great extended family that reaches across islands. It has been estimated that there are some 25,000 matai and that women comprise approximately 5% of these. Currently, only matai can be elected to the national Parliament (Fono). This means that the potential pool of female candidates is approximately 1,250 matai. At a foundational level, it may be useful to consider whether constitutional reforms could be enacted to remove the requirement that all candidates must be matai, so that the options for promoting women in Parliament which are outlined below could be utilised with a bigger pool of potential women candidates.

Samoa uses a First-Past-The-Post electoral system and has one dominant political party, the ruling Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) and a number of smaller parties. If consideration were to be given to some form of temporary special measures in Samoa, then the options include reserved seats for women and the use of political party quotas.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in the Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 49 seats in Parliament, as shown below:

| Number of seats reserved for women | Size of Parliament | Minimum % women in the Parliament |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 6 | 55 | 10.9 |
| 8 | 57 | 13.5 |
| 10 | 59 | 16.9 |
| 12 | 61 | 19.6 |
| 14 | 63 | 22.2 |
| 16 | 65 | 24.6 |

The additional reserved seats could be created to represent specific geographical areas, such as the two major islands of Savai'i and Upolu, or a set number of women could be elected "at large" by all voters from a nation-wide constituency. For example, if 8 seats were reserved in both Savai'i and Upolu, then women would comprise a guaranteed minimum of 24.6% of the expanded Parliament.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.



Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats, as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



The financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

Currently, out of 43 constituencies in Samoa, six constituencies elect 2 members. Consideration could be given to amending existing electoral legislation to reserve one of the existing seats for women in each of the six 2-member constituencies. However, this option would only provide a minimum of 6 women elected to the Parliament or 12.2% of the seats and would not provide national coverage in terms of women's representation.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages



Only six constituencies would be guaranteed to be represented by both men and women.



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Create new multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women

There are currently 35 single-member constituencies. Consideration could be given to amending the electoral law to create more multi-member constituencies to replace these current single-member constituencies, at least on the two big islands. The remaining smaller constituencies would continue to return one member who could be a man or a woman. A number of seats in each multi-member constituency could be reserved for women, as shown below:

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of reserved seats is agreed.
- ✿ Almost all voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries could be time-consuming and complicated, if a large number of constituencies are to become multi-member.
- ✿ Does not guarantee that all constituencies would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ The strong traditional cultural relationships that currently exists between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them could be threatened if constituency boundaries are enlarged.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

- ✿ Direct election though a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of multi-member constituencies, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.



Distribution to political parties in proportion of their overall share of the national vote or the number of seats won.



Indirect election by the Parliament or the Village Fonos.



Direct appointment by the Head of State, Prime Minister or Parliament, following an open and participatory selection process.

POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS

Samoa has one officially-recognised political party, the ruling Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP). Following the 2007 national elections, two political parties were represented in the Parliament – the HRPP held 32 seats and the Samoan Democratic United Party (SDUP) held 10 seats (while Independents held 7 seats). However, after several defections, by-elections and other changes, by mid-2008 twelve independent MPs, including most of the former members of the SDUP, and two former members of the HRPP announced the formation of a new political party. While the HRPP is still extremely strong and very stable, there is some instability amongst the minor parties operating in Samoa.

Taking into account the current political party context, consideration could be given to the introduction of voluntary party quotas, whereby a minimum percentage of candidates in seats currently held by the party or winnable by the party should be women. Given the dominance of the HRPP, their adoption of such a quota could create significant opportunities for women. In practice, this option would require political parties to actively recruit women matais and/or to encourage women with

leadership potential to achieve the position of matai in their community. Legislation to ensure that both men and women were equally eligible to hold the title of matai may be required.

While all parties should commit to a voluntary quota, in reality support from the HRPP is essential given its dominance in the Parliament. While the female-dominated Samoan Christian Party is small and did not win any seats at the last election it could be a good vehicle to lead the way in the adoption of party quotas. If political parties do not all agree to voluntary quotas, consideration may need to be given to passing legislation to make party quotas for women mandatory.

Advantages

- ✿ If voluntary, a party quota does not require a lengthy process of legislative change.
- ✿ No additional seats would need to be created, so no additional costs would be incurred.
- ✿ No changes to electoral boundaries or the electoral system are required.

Disadvantages

- ✿ There is no guarantee that the women nominated by parties will get elected if the community is reluctant to vote for women, if winnable seats for women cannot be readily identified or if political parties do not provide adequate campaign resources for women candidates.
- ✿ Parties need to be well-organised, stable and disciplined to implement party quotas successfully.
- ✿ It can take a number of electoral cycles to implement the quota if male MPs or candidates are not willing to step down to create opportunities for women to be nominated.

Solomon Islands

General information

- **Population:** 5,9,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 50
- **Number of women:** 0
- **Percentage of women:** 0%
- **Term Length:** 4 years
- **Electoral System:** First-past-the-post
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2010
- **Number of Constituencies:** 50
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** 1
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 7
- **Special Provisions:** None

Following the ethnic tensions in 2000, the Townsville Peace Agreement recognised the need for constitutional reform. Since 2000, there has been work done to progress the reform agenda and a Constitutional Congress was recently established to prepare a final draft constitution. The timeframe for the work of the Constitutional Congress is yet to be determined. Women's groups in Solomon Islands have already identified their desire to use the current constitutional reform process to look at the use of temporary special measures to promote more women in Parliament. In 2008, the Government also mandated the Constituency Boundaries

Commission to review the number of MPs currently elected to Parliament. This review may provide another opportunity to promote quotas for women's representation.³⁴ Notably, the latest People's Survey conducted by RAMSI provided evidence that the majority of the people in the Solomon Islands wish to see more gender equality in the governance structures of their country.

Twenty-four women contested the most recent national election in 2006. Despite being actively involved with the peace process, women still failed to win any seats in Parliament. Although seven political parties ran candidates in 2006, in total only 20 seats were won by party candidates. The remaining 30 seats were won by Independents. The independents have strengthened their position by forming themselves into a party known as the Association of independent Members. Although political parties do exist on paper, they are relatively weak and are usually based around personalities and/or a recognition that greater numbers will give members a stronger negotiating position when Government is being formed.

The existing First-Past-The-Post electoral system, single member constituencies and a weak political party system reduces the options for the implementation of temporary special measures to the creation of reserved seats

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in the Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 50 seats in Parliament, as shown below.

| Number of additional seats | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 | 54 | 7.4 |
| 6 | 56 | 10.7 |
| 8 | 58 | 13.4 |
| 10 | 60 | 16.6 |
| 12 | 62 | 19.3 |
| 14 | 64 | 21.8 |

In 2008, there were discussions within civil society regarding the possibility of reserving seats for women. One option that has been suggested by women's groups is the creation of 10 women-only reserved seats, based on each of the nine provinces of Solomon Islands, plus one from Honiara Township. This option would result in a guaranteed minimum of 16% women in Parliament. However provinces are not all equal in size. Four provinces cover an area of more than 4,000 square kilometres and three of those provinces also have populations of more than 60,000 people.³⁵

The creation of additional reserved seats based on provinces would mean that a small province like Rennell and Bellona, which has approximately 3,000 registered voters who currently all vote for only one MP, would double its representation in Parliament from 1 MP to 2 MPs.³⁶ This may be considered undemocratic in Solomon Islands national context.

One solution to this problem would be to increase the number of reserved seats in the more populous provinces, which would also increase the overall minimum number of women in the Parliament. Alternative options that distribute the reserved seats to larger provinces or groupings of provinces or which elect women “at large” from the whole of Solomon Islands could also be considered.

Advantages

- ✿ Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.
- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.
- ✿ Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained

Disadvantages

- ✿ The financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.

Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

If it is not acceptable to increase the existing number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to creating a set number of reserved seats for women and reducing the current number of open seats accordingly. This option would require electoral boundary changes. For example, if 10 seats were reserved for women, providing a minimum of 20% of women in Parliament, then boundaries would need to be redrawn to create 40 single-member constituencies for the remaining 40 open seats. Constituencies for the reserved seats for women would also need to be agreed upon. As discussed above, they could be based on the provinces, groups of provinces, or could represent the whole of Solomon Islands “at large”.

| Number of seats reserved for women | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in parliament |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5 | 50 | 10 |
| 10 | 50 | 20 |
| 15 | 50 | 30 |

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.
- ✿ No additional financial cost as the number of MP's remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries could be time-consuming and complicated.
- ✿ Existing constituencies would need to be enlarged, which would have implications in terms of the close representative relationship between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that currently elect them.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



Create multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women


In view of the current constitutional review, consideration could be given to introducing multi-member constituencies, whereby more than one person will be elected from each electorate. In the past, Solomon Islands has had some famous examples of women losing out in elections by only a handful of votes. Had multi-member constituencies been in place, even if those women had come second or third, they might have still been successful in winning a seat in the national Parliament. If multi-member constituencies were created, consideration could then be given to reserving a set number of seats in each constituency for women only, as follows:

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

There are already proposals in Solomon Islands to create some multi-member constituencies in those seats that currently have a relatively high population to provide a more equal level of representation. If some multi-member constituencies are created, the introduction of a reserved seat for women in these new constituencies could be used to trial this approach to promoting women in Parliament.

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.



✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women (if all electorates are changed to multi-member constituencies).

✿ No additional financial cost if the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries and amending the Constitution and/or electoral legislation could be time-consuming and complicated.

✿ The creation of bigger constituencies could have negative implications for the representative relationship that currently exists between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that elect them.

✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest, unless more seats were created at the same time as multi-member constituencies were created.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

✿ Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.

✿ Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. If multi-member constituencies are introduced, then the “most voted” women method would mean that in those constituencies, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.

✿ Indirect election by the National or Provincial Parliaments

✿ Direct appointment by the Governor General, Prime Minister or the Parliament, following an open and participatory selection process.



Tonga

General information

- **Population:** 99,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 33
- **Number of women:** 1 (by appointment)
- **Percentage of women:** 3.3%
- **Term Length:** 3 years
- **Electoral System:** First-Past-The-Post in single constituencies and Block Voting in multi-member constituencies
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2010
- **Number of Constituencies:** 5 (for commoners elections)
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** Between 1 and 3
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 0
- **Special Provisions:** There are two separate electors in Tonga – commoners and nobles. Each group elects 9 members of the Legislative Assembly. The remaining 15 seats in the Legislative Assembly are reserved for Cabinet ministers and the Prime Minister, who are appointed by the King.

The Kingdom of Tonga is a constitutional monarchy with 18 elected seats – 9 nobles and 9 People's Representatives – in the Legislative Assembly of 33 members, but is currently undergoing a major constitutional reform process to strengthen representative democracy. In July 2008, the Tongan Assembly passed the Constitution and Electoral Commission Act 2008, as the latest step in the reform process. The Act provides for the establishment of an independent Constitutional and Electoral Commission to consider reforms to a broad range of areas including the electoral system. The Commission is required to produce its report in 2009 so that the Government can respond to its recommendations prior to the 2010 election.

To date, there have only been four women elected to the Legislative Assembly since Independence, although one woman has been appointed by the King to serve in the current Cabinet. The only opportunities for women to enter Parliament are by appointment to Cabinet or through contesting the nine seats for the People's Representatives. The constitutional reform process offers an opportunity to create a new electoral system that will be generally more conducive to the election of women and/or to include temporary special measures that will guarantee a minimum number of women in the Parliament.

It is not clear what role political parties may have in the future in Tonga. Electoral laws require candidates to register for elections as individuals, not as members of a political party. Currently, a majority of the People's Representatives in the Assembly belong to the Human Rights and Democracy Movement. To date, parties have mainly existed as pressure groups – rather than vehicles for election or patronage – under the umbrella Pro-Democracy Movement.

Under the current constitutional and electoral arrangements in Tonga, the only temporary special measure which is practically available to increase the number of women in the Legislative Assembly is the creation of reserved seats.

REERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Create a set number of women-only reserved seats

The Legislative Assembly currently has 33 members. In light of the reform process, it is not clear how the size of the Assembly may change in the future and how many of the members will be elected rather than appointed by the King. However, it will increase women's opportunities for election to the Assembly if there was an increase in the number of seats that are available for "commoners" to contest, be they men or women.




A Commonwealth Parliamentary Association/UNIFEM consultation on Gender Equality held in Tonga in September 2005 recommended that the Government consider "[r]eserving six seats in the Legislative Assembly as a quota for women at least for the next three elections, to be reviewed after that time".³⁷ While this recommendation was not adopted, the concept of reserved seats has been the subject of considerable community debate and was supported by women's groups at that time. The proposal for six reserved seats was also included in one of the models for reform described in the Country Report on Tonga in the 2006 PIFS Report, "A Woman's Place is in the House: The House of Parliament".

Whatever is decided in terms of the composition of the Legislative Assembly for the next election, consideration could be given to requiring that a minimum number of seats are reserved for women. These could be in addition to the current 33 seats in Parliament, or some of the current 33 seats could be reserved for women as part of the broader reform process.


| Number of seats reserved for women | Size of Parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 6 | 33 | 18.2 |
| 10 | 33 | 30.3 |
| 4 | 37 | 10.8 |
| 8 | 41 | 19.5 |
| 12 | 45 | 26.6 |

Constituencies for the reserved seats for women could be drawn up so that women represented specific geographical areas such as the three main island groups of Tongatapu, Ha'apai and Vava'u, with at least 2 from the most populous Tongatapu and one from each of the other 2 island groups. Alternatively, the whole country could be considered as one constituency and women candidates would then be elected from a single national list.

Advantages

-  Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.
-  Reserved seats guarantee a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.
-  All voters would be represented by both men and women.

Disadvantages

-  If seats are added to the current Assembly, the financial cost could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.

Create multi-member constituencies incorporating reserved seats for women

The current electoral system is also being reviewed by the Constitutional and Electoral Commission as part of the reform programme. Consideration could be given to introducing multi-member constituencies throughout the country. Even without quotas, research has shown that where more members are elected from a constituency, it is more likely that women will be chosen by voters, because they then have the option to vote both for male and female candidates.

Tonga already has some multi-member constituencies. If multi-member constituencies are introduced across the whole of the country, the creation of a smaller number of larger constituencies would provide an additional opportunity to introduce elected reserved seats through the operation of a quota as shown in the table below.

| Options for reserved seats in multi-member constituencies | | |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Number of seats in the constituency | Number of seats reserved for women | Percentage of women elected |
| 2 | 1 | 50% |
| 3 | 1 | 30% |
| 4 | 1 or 2 | 25% or 50% |
| 5 | 2 | 40% |
| 6 | 2 or 3 | 30% or 50% |

If the three main island groups in Tonga, namely Vava'u, Ha'apai and Tongatapu, were considered as the basis for multi-member constituencies then there would be an even larger number of members per constituency, which would further increase the likely acceptance of some seats being reserved for women.

Advantages

- ✿ Guarantees a minimum number of women in Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed.
- ✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ No additional financial cost of adding new seats to Parliament if the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Redrawing electoral boundaries and amending the Constitution and/or electoral legislation could be time-consuming and complicated.
- ✿ The creation of bigger constituencies could have negative implications for the representative relationship that currently exists between MPs and the communities / villages / islands that elect them.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest if the size of the Parliament remains the same.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:



Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of multi-member constituencies, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.



Indirect election by the Legislative Assembly or other elected bodies at the local level.



Direct appointment by the King, Privy Council, the Prime Minister or the hereditary nobles, following an open and participatory selection process.



T

uvalu

General information

- **Population:** 9,800
- **Total number of legislators:** 15
- **Number of women:** 0
- **Percentage of women:** 0%
- **Term Length:** 4 years
- **Electoral System:** First-Past-The-Post in single constituencies and Block Voting in multi-member constituencies
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2010
- **Number of Constituencies:** 8 (one per island)
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** Nukulaelae has 1 member and the remaining 7 islands are represented by 2 members
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 0
- **Special Provisions:** None

There are no formal political parties in Tuvalu and election campaigns are largely based on personal/family ties and reputation. Since independence, there has been only one woman elected to the national Parliament, and few women choose to run as candidates. In the 2006 election, there were only two women candidates. More women have become involved at the local level of government, with women participating in the quarterly meetings of Falekaupule Assemblies and serving on various development committees in the Kaupule (Council) for each island.

The Country Report on Tuvalu included in the 2006 PIFS Report, “A Woman’s Place is in the House: The House of Parliament”, recommended that research be conducted on quotas for women in Tuvalu’s Parliament. Taking into account the nature of the electoral system and the absence of political parties in Tuvalu, the only temporary special measure which is practically available to increase the number of women in Parliament is the creation of reserved seats. Recognising the strength of the local governance system in Tuvalu, it may also be considered appropriate to implement temporary special measures for the local Falekaupule Councils as an initial step towards at the ultimate goal of promoting more women in the national Parliament.

RESERVED SEATS QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating a number of additional seats in the Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 15 seats in Parliament, as shown below.

| Number of additional seats | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2 | 17 | 11.8 |
| 3 | 18 | 16.6 |
| 4 | 19 | 21.1 |
| 5 | 20 | 25.0 |

Tuvalu has eight islands. The constituencies for the reserved seats could be based on groups of islands, depending on how many reserved seats were created. For example, two islands could together form a constituency to vote for 1 reserved seat. Alternatively, consideration could be given to establishing a single country-wide constituency to elect women into reserved seats. Taking into account the fact that few women have run in elections to date, it may be preferable to opt for a single country-wide constituency, to ensure that a sufficient number of women candidates are available to fill the reserved seats.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon



Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of open seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



The financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



An increase in the number of seats in the Parliament may lead to the view that the Tuvalu would be over governed, with 15 MPs currently representing a population of 9,800 people (1 MP per 653 people).



Convert a set number of existing seats to women-only reserved seats

If it is not considered acceptable to increase the existing number of seats in Parliament, consideration could be given to converting some existing seats into reserved seats for women. Tuvalu has eight islands. Seven of the islands currently elect 2 members to Parliament, while the smallest island elects only one member. Consideration could be given to amending existing electoral legislation to reserve one of the two seats in the seven 2-member constituencies for women. This option could be adopted without boundary changes. This option would guarantee a minimum of 7 women would be elected to the 15 member Parliament.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum of seven women in Parliament.



No additional financial cost as the number of MPs remains the same.

Disadvantages



There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.



One constituency would still not be guaranteed a women representative.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:



Direct election though a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.



Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. If a single country-wide constituency was used, the “most voted” method would mean that the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.



Indirect election by the Parliament or the Falekaupule Assemblies.



Direct appointment by the Governor General or Prime Minister, following an open and participatory selection process.

V anuatu

General information

- **Population:** 230,000
- **Total number of legislators:** 52
- **Number of women:** 2
- **Percentage of women:** 3.8%
- **Term Length:** 4 years
- **Electoral System:** Single Non Transferable Vote
- **Date of Next National Election:** 2012
- **Number of Constituencies:** 17
- **Number of Seats per Constituency:** Between 1 and 7
- **Number of political parties that contested the last election:** 28
- **Special Provisions:** None

Historically, the Single-Non-Transferable-Vote system in Vanuatu tended to result in a semi-proportional electoral system because there were a small number of parties contesting for seats. However, the trend towards a multiplicity of political parties means that Vanuatu's electoral system now operates more like that of other First-Past-The-Post systems in the Pacific, with large numbers of parties gaining a few seats each. The increase in the number of political parties has not resulted in more women candidates being nominated or elected.

In the 2008 election, 28 parties and 92 independents contested the election, creating a potentially unstable political situation. Only 18 women stood out of 349 candidates in the 2008 election. Of the female candidates, 12 stood for political parties and 6 ran as independents. Of the two women elected in 2008, one was returned and one was elected for the first time, and both were from provincial areas.

The lack of any increase in the number of women elected confirms the need to consider temporary special measures. The options available to increase the number of women into Parliament include the creation of reserved seats for women and the use of political party quotas.

RESERVED SEAT QUOTAS



Add a set number of new women-only reserved seats

Consideration could be given to creating additional seats in Parliament reserved for women. These seats would be in addition to the existing 52 seats in Parliament, as shown below:

| Number of additional seats | Size of parliament | Minimum % women in Parliament |
|----------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 4 | 56 | 7.1 |
| 9 | 61 | 14.6 |
| 14 | 66 | 21.2 |
| 18 | 70 | 25.7 |
| 22 | 74 | 29.7 |

Vanuatu has six rural provinces and three municipalities. One or two reserved seats for women could be introduced to represent each of these constituencies. If two seats each were introduced, 18 seats would be created in total and women could comprise up to 25.7% of the Parliament. However, using the provinces as constituencies could be difficult because the provinces are of unequal size and population, so that the principle of “one vote, one value” would not apply in all cases. Alternatively, a set number of women could be elected from a nation-wide constituency and women would be elected “at large” by all voters.

Advantages



Relatively quick and easy to implement following amendment to electoral legislation or the Constitution.



Guarantees a minimum number of women in the Parliament, once the number of seats is agreed upon.



Does not require existing MPs to give up their seats as the same number of seats will be retained.

Disadvantages



Financial cost of additional MPs could be high, depending on the number of additional seats created, as funding would be needed to cover the cost of the elections for the new seats, as well as ongoing salaries and allowances for the new women MPs.



Reserve seats for women in existing multi-member constituencies

Eleven of the current 17 electoral constituencies in Vanuatu are multi-member constituencies, with between 2 and 7 members. This electoral system was adopted to ensure fair representation of Anglophone and Francophone political groupings at independence. It can also be used to ensure fair representation between men and women.

Consideration could be given to reserving a set number of seats for women in each of the existing multi-member constituencies. In this way, up to three women could be elected from each constituency, depending on the number of members to be elected overall. As shown in the table below, the reservation of seats in this way would guarantee the election of 21 women or 40.3% of the seats in the legislature.

| Constituency | Number of seats in the Constituency | Proposed number of seats reserved for women | Minimum % women elected |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| Banks/Torres | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| Santo | 7 | 3 | 42.8% |
| Malo/Aore | 1 | - | - |
| Luganville | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| Ambae | 3 | 1 | 33.3% |
| Maewo | 1 | - | - |
| Pentecost | 4 | 2 | 50% |
| Malakula | 7 | 3 | 42.8% |
| Ambrym | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| Paama | 1 | - | - |
| Epi | 2 | 1 | 50% |
| Tongoa | 1 | - | - |
| Shepherds | 1 | - | - |
| Efate | 4 | 2 | 50% |
| Port Vila | 6 | 3 | 50% |
| Tanna | 7 | 3 | 42.8% |
| Southern Islands | 1 | - | - |
| Total | 52 | 21 | 40.3% |

If there was doubt about the appropriateness of this option, consideration could be given to trialling this option in the four constituencies which have 6 and 7 members.

Advantages

- ✿ No additional costs of adding new MPs to Parliament.
- ✿ All voters would be represented by both men and women in the multi-member constituencies.

Disadvantages

- ✿ Only 11 of 17 constituencies would be guaranteed to be represented by both men and women.
- ✿ There would be fewer seats available for men to contest.

Options for filling reserved seats

There are a number of options for filling seats reserved for women that could be considered including the following:

- ✿ Direct election through a process of “double balloting”. Voters would have one ballot for electing open seats and one women-only ballot for reserved seats.
- ✿ Direct election using the “most voted” method. This method involves distribution of the reserved seats to women candidates based on the overall number or percentage of votes they receive in their constituency even though they did not win. For example, women would contest the election under existing arrangements and votes would be counted for each candidate. Then, the women with the highest number of votes – even if they did not have enough votes to win an open seat outright – would be elected to the reserved seats. In the case of multi-member constituencies, the “most voted” women would replace the “least voted” elected men to fill the reserved seats.
- ✿ Distribution to political parties in proportion of their overall share of the national vote or the number of seats won.
- ✿ Indirect election by the Parliament or Provincial or Area Committees.
- ✿ Direct appointment (upon advice), by the President, Prime Minister, or the Parliament, following an open and participatory selection process.

POLITICAL PARTY QUOTAS

At the time of independence in 1980, party politics was polarised between two major parties, the anglophone Vanua'aku Pati and the francophone Union of Moderate Parties. Recent history has shown that the rise of independents, breakaway parties and new minor parties has significantly challenged the dominance of the two original major parties. While the ruling coalition was returned in the 2008 election, Vanuatu now has a fluid political party system with 24 parties contesting the recent national election.

Currently, 15 parties hold 48 seats and there are only 4 independent MPs.³⁸ Political parties will continue to be a critical part of the electoral process and could therefore play an important role in supporting women to win seats and enter Parliament through the adoption of gender quotas. To successfully implement a party quota, parties would have to nominate and support an agreed percentage of women candidates in winnable seats. In addition, there would need to be an enforcement mechanism to ensure that the political parties complied with the quota.

It is unlikely that an individual party, in government or in opposition, would introduce a gender quota voluntarily if the leadership believes that the electorate will choose independent male candidates or opposition male candidates over their own women candidates. To work effectively, this option would require all political parties to agree to amend their rules to introduce a candidate quota and set an agreed target so as to create a level playing field for all parties. If such an agreement was not forthcoming, consideration could be given to developing legislation to mandatorily require parties to introduce candidate quotas.

Advantages

- ✿ If voluntary, a party quota does not require a lengthy process of legislative change.
- ✿ No additional seats would need to be created, so no additional costs would be incurred.
- ✿ No changes to electoral boundaries or the electoral system are required.

Disadvantages

- ✿ There is no guarantee that the women nominated by parties will get elected if the community is reluctant to vote for women, if winnable seats for women cannot be readily identified or if political parties do not provide adequate campaign resources for women candidates.
- ✿ Parties need to be well-organised, stable and disciplined to implement party quotas successfully.
- ✿ It can take a number of electoral cycles to implement the quota if male MPs or candidates are not willing to create opportunities for women to be nominated.

A

nnex 1: Understanding Electoral Systems

In summary, electoral systems fall into two broad families:



Majority/Plurality: The person or persons with the most votes at the end of counting wins the seat. Usually constituencies only have one member, although in systems with multi-member constituencies, a number of candidates will get elected in each constituency. Majority/Plurality systems are used in 46% of countries in the world and are the most common electoral system used in the Pacific region. There are a number of variations of Majority/Plurality systems in operation in the Pacific, as described below, including First-Past-The-Post (FPTP), Block Voting (BV) and the Alternative Vote (AV).



Proportional Representation: The party which wins the most votes wins the most seats. Votes are translated into seats in a way that ensures parliamentary representation is largely proportional to each party's share of the overall votes in the election. So if a party gains 60% of the vote, it should win 60% of the seats to be won. This system is therefore considered fairer than First-Past-The-Post where no such direct relationship exists and parties can receive less votes than the opposition parties but still win a majority of the seats. Voters generally choose between lists of candidates put forward by political parties and campaigns tend to centre on political parties rather than candidates. There are usually a small number of disciplined political parties, and constituencies are almost always large and multi-member. Proportional representations systems are used in 36% of countries in the world and are used in the three Pacific French Territories.

There are some electoral systems that are a mixture of proportional representation and majority/plurality systems, such as the Mixed Member Proportional system used in New Zealand. There are also a few other systems that do not fit into either of the two major electoral system families, most notable in the Pacific, the Single-Non-Transferable-Vote used in Vanuatu and Modified Borda Count used in Nauru. However, both of these have some similar characteristics to majority/plurality systems.

Electoral systems that reduce the likelihood of one-on-one contests between male and female candidates are likely to improve the chances of women getting elected. For this reason, all proportional electoral systems and the majority/plurality system of Block Voting with multi-member constituencies are generally the most favourable for women. The First-Past-The-Post and Alternative Vote systems used most commonly in the Pacific are generally the least favourable to women.

First-Past-The-Post – Cook Islands, FSM, Palau, Solomon Islands

In this system, candidates run in a single district, electorate or constituency. Voters have a single vote for a single member and the candidate receiving the most votes is declared the winner. If there are a large number of candidates running, then the winner may succeed with a relatively small number of votes. This is the most commonly used system in the Pacific region and has been adopted by Cook Islands, FSM, Palau and Solomon islands. Of these countries, only Cook Islands currently has any women MPs.

First Past the Post and Block Vote – Niue, Samoa, Marshall Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu

Many Pacific countries have a mixture of single and multi-member constituencies and so have a mixture of electoral systems. For example, Samoa has a predominately First-Past-The-Post voting system, but as the population has increased in some of the constituencies, members have been added and so Block Voting (see Box 11 below) operates in these multi- member electorates. Countries with a combination of First-Past-The-Post and multi-member Block Voting systems include Samoa, Marshall Islands, Niue, Tonga, and Tuvalu. Three of these countries have women MPs, with Niue having 20% women, largely as a result of the Block Voting component of its electoral system.

Box 11: Block Vote – Guam

In this system, constituencies have more than one member and voters have as many votes as there are members to be elected. In these multi-member constituencies, the candidates with the largest number of votes win. Guam uses a block voting system and has one of the highest proportions of women MPs in any kind of plurality/majority system in the Pacific at 20%. In Thailand, the Block Vote was seen as having encouraged the fragmentation of the party system. Because it enables electors to vote for candidates of more than one party in the same district, members of the same party may be encouraged to compete against each other for support.

Single Non Transferable Vote – Vanuatu

In this electoral system, like First-Past-The-Post, voters have just one vote, but there are multiple members in each constituency. If political parties are strategic and disciplined in the number of candidates that they field and voters consistently support their party, then this system can achieve a reasonable degree of proportionality. For that reason, the Single-Non-Transferable-Vote has been called a “semi proportional” system. This system has the potential to elect women and in the past the few women who stood as candidates in Vanuatu were usually elected. However, in recent times, increasing numbers of political parties and male candidates have been standing for election, with very few women candidates. Party discipline has also broken down so that results are almost impossible to predict.

Alternative Vote – Fiji, Papua New Guinea

The Alternative Vote is intended to give an absolute majority to the winner and so avoid the problem of people being elected on only small percentages of the vote. It is also intended to avoid large numbers of wasted votes. Voters are given a single ballot and number their preferred candidates in order. This system is used in Fiji, where voters have to record preferences for 75% of candidates. In PNG, where voters list just their top three preferences. (Accordingly, in PNG this voting system is known as Limited Preferential Voting). If no candidate obtains a majority of votes on the first count (a minimum of 50% of votes cast + 1), the candidate with the lowest number of votes is eliminated and their preferences distributed to other candidates according to their ballot paper. This process of elimination and distribution of preferences continues until one candidate achieves a majority of votes. It had been hoped that the introduction of Limited Preferential Voting in PNG would assist in the election of women, but this proved not to be the case with only one woman elected again in 2007. The Alternative Vote system has been more successful in Fiji, where eight women were elected in 2006.

Box 12: Proportional Representation – New Caledonia, French Polynesia, Wallis & Futuna

In the Pacific region, all the French Territories, namely French Polynesia, New Caledonia and Wallis and Futuna, use a proportional representation electoral system, as is used in France. Countries. While these countries have now introduced a quota system following the French Parity Law, prior to this the number of women elected in New Caledonia and French Polynesia was still higher relative to other Pacific countries. The implementation of a party list quota resulted in New Caledonia and French Polynesia having the highest proportion of women MPs in the Pacific at 44.4% and 42.1% respectively. Fewer women are elected in Wallis and Futuna because of the very large number of political parties that contest the elections. Each party only receives a small proportion of the overall vote and so it is usually only the first candidate, who is generally male, who gets elected.

Two Round System – Kiribati

Kiribati has adopted a two round system, in which there are usually single member districts and the winner is required to secure an absolute majority of votes. If a majority of votes is not achieved after the first round of voting, a second round run-off vote is held between the top two candidates. Notably, Kiribati also has some multi-member electorates. In these electorates, a 25%, rather than 50%, threshold must be crossed to win the first round.

Modified Borda Count – Nauru

This system is unique to Nauru. As with the Alternative Vote system, voters rank candidates in order of preference, but in the Modified Borda Count system, all preferences are counted immediately to determine the winning candidate. First preferences count as a full vote, second preferences as half a vote, third preferences as one third of a vote and so on.

E

ndnotes

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