



Australian Government

AusAID

Office of Development Effectiveness

# Women in politics and aid effectiveness: an aid to evaluation of MDG3

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*This paper discusses Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 3 to 'Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women'. It examines the appropriateness of the sole indicator for political progress, the number of women elected to national political office, in the context of a future ODE evaluation around MDG3.*

*The paper discusses the range of concepts discussed in MDG 3 commentary, empowerment, leadership and governance, and the challenges of effectiveness reporting, to suggest creative, constructive and meaningful reflections in the context of the Asia Pacific region, and the low levels of women's representation.*

*The decision that political representation was an accurate data base to measure the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women is examined in detail, with specific country cases demonstrating that figures do not reflect this as an accurate measure. The reality for women who run for office in male environments is exposed, and questions are asked about the ethics of seeing this as the only outcome for evaluation.*

*Finally, suggestions are made which encourage more flexibility of approach to capture successful interventions across a range of meaningful activities that are more relevant for the region, and better related to the diversity of women's roles in leadership, empowerment and governance.*

## Women in politics and aid effectiveness

Aid is always political. Leadership is political. Gender is political. Policy-making is political. Allocative decisions are political. Where power lies and how it is used or abused is always political. Power can operate with different dynamics: it can be power over, the usual dynamic associated with political leadership. It can also be power for, power to, and power with. While one of these three may be the dynamic sought by aid donors in the international agreements they sign on to, it is not often the

experience of those who are the grassroots populations targeted by programs. There can be exceptions, but finding large numbers of programs where hitherto powerless women have their lives transformed verges on futile. Power is amorphous and shifting, but is consistent in its manifestations of gender oppression.

None of these comments are new to AusAID. For example, in 2009 the Annual Review of Development Effectiveness reported:

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<sup>1</sup> This think piece has been commissioned by the Office of Development Effectiveness, however the views and opinions expressed in this paper are those of the author only.

‘The problem might be technical; the solution is always political’<sup>2</sup>. The ODE commissioned review of Australian support to broader public sector reform and how it links to improvements in service delivery identified that the Australian aid program tends to focus on finding technical problems and solving them, rather than considering political realities and the needs and capacity of different stakeholders. However, the analysis emphasized that the constraints are rarely solely technical; they are also political – not in the narrow sense, but covering ‘all the processes of conflict, cooperation and negotiation in taking decisions about how resources are to be owned, used, produced and distributed’.<sup>3</sup> It follows that ‘...developmental processes are profoundly political, since development (whether economic, social or political) is fundamentally about changing or improving the way resources are used and distributed’.<sup>4</sup> Improvements in service delivery need to be based on political realities and the needs and capacities of different stakeholders.<sup>5</sup>

## Empowerment

MDG 3 to ‘Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women’ has one indicator for political progress – the number of women elected to central parliamentary office. Various words are used around this framing – leadership, empowerment, political, governance – a sort of amorphous grab bag where commentators scramble to make some sense of a meaningless output, for both the donor and partners in most countries, in the MDG paradigm. Just what is it that you say in a region of the worst data on the planet – the Pacific? Indeed, in circumstances where it was difficult to imagine trends getting any worse after the calamitous figures reported in the SPC Beijing + 15 report,<sup>6</sup> things have got worse. In Samoa and the Cook Islands the number of women shrank in the 2011 elections.

**Table 1 – Women in selected Pacific parliaments**

| Country Name    | Date | Number of seats in parliament | Percentage of women in parliament | Number of women in parliament |
|-----------------|------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Cook Islands    | 2010 | 24                            | 12.5%                             | 1                             |
| Kiribati        | 2008 | 46                            | 4.35%                             | 2                             |
| Nauru           | 2010 | 18                            | -                                 | 0                             |
| Niue            | 2011 | 20                            | 5%                                | 1                             |
| PNG             | 2007 | 109                           | 0.9%                              | 1                             |
| Samoa           | 2011 | 49                            | 4.08%                             | 2                             |
| Solomon Islands | 2010 | 50                            | -                                 | 0                             |
| Tokelau         | 2008 | 20                            | -                                 | 0                             |

<sup>2</sup> Chairman of Papua New Guinea’s National Strategic Plan Task Force, Professor David Kavanamur, at a National Research Institute seminar on subnational governance, Port Moresby, 8 September 2009.

<sup>3</sup> A Leftwich, Bringing agency back in: politics and human agency in building institutions and states, synthesis and overview report of Phase One of the Leaders, Elites and Coalitions Research Programme (LECRP), research paper 06, 2009, p. 10, viewed May 1, 2011, [http://www.lpdlec.org/ftp/index-list.php?openpath=/Public+Folder/LECRP+Publications+\(Phase+One\)/Research+Papers](http://www.lpdlec.org/ftp/index-list.php?openpath=/Public+Folder/LECRP+Publications+(Phase+One)/Research+Papers)

<sup>4</sup> Leftwich, p 11.

<sup>5</sup> Annual Review of Development Effectiveness 2009; *Improving basic services for the poor*, Office of Development Effectiveness, AusAID, Canberra, 2010 viewed May 1, 2011, <http://www.ode.aisaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/arde2009.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> SPC, Beijing +15 Review of Progress in Implementing Beijing Platform for Action: Noumea (2010). I was one of two lead researchers and wrote, amongst others, the women in political life sections of the report.

|         |      |    |       |   |
|---------|------|----|-------|---|
| Tonga   | 2009 | 33 | 3.57% | 1 |
| Tuvalu  | 2008 | 15 | -     | 0 |
| Vanuatu | 2008 | 52 | 3.8%  | 2 |

The numbers of women in parliament is not a reflection of ‘empowering women’ as we shall see. This indicator does not reflect the full spectrum of gender equality and ‘empowerment’ of women and girls. The MDGs are a narrow and minimalist focus for women’s empowerment and women’s leadership. There are many human rights desired by women so that they might take a full part in civil and political life on conditions of equality<sup>7</sup>, for example, the right to be free from violence and the right of access to information, and this will vary from country to country, and culture to culture, and from community to community.

## Leadership

If women were asked what being empowered might mean to them, they may speak about promoting ‘leadership’. These are both problem concepts. Some ‘leaders’ get elected to an office. In my experience, and in academic research, this is not what women mean. Far too much leadership promotes itself, exercises power over, does not spring from a genuine process where disempowered people promote one of their resilient genuine community representatives. Alice Pollard’s doctoral thesis is very instructive in reading of this process<sup>8</sup> and how it works, as is extensive doctoral research conducted in Vanuatu in 2010.<sup>9</sup>

The Asia Pacific region has had ‘leadership’ programs for the politically disenfranchised for decades. At their best these operate as a time out from the never ending pressures and demands on genuine leaders, for regional networking, to realize and recognize they are not alone, to hear stories of movements to promote rights or to stop rights being even more trammled, which give them ideas for their own struggles, and they rest a little, get nurtured, and are reinvigorated. ‘At their best’ is also a commentary on who gets invited, and who does the inviting. It is not unusual in the Asia Pacific region to see the same old figures that have captured the nation state space of always being the one selected.

Sometimes this is nepotistic; sometimes it is highly strategic and manipulative. In the absence of women in parliament, being on the National Council of Women, for example, is often the best way to access power and resources, and also to abuse these. There are unequal power relations between different groups of women, as well as between men and women. In these contexts it is also important to remember that many of these organizations are dependent on a national budget line for support, and Governments reminding them that their funding will be cut if they step out of line easily threaten these ‘dependent’ women. There are exceptions to this: in 2009 – 2011 women in both Kiribati and Tonga have cast that aside on the issue of violence against women. They were supported by significant research in Kiribati and led by one brave woman in Tonga. Over the past three decades, there has been some improvement in this, but it is still in evidence, dependent on the experience and subtlety of the donor funding the program, and the knowledge of the desk officer.

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<sup>7</sup> See many Articles in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): [http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en](http://treaties.un.org/pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-4&chapter=4&lang=en) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW): <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

<sup>8</sup> Pollard, Alice; Painaha: gender and leadership in 'Are'Are society, the South Sea Evangelical Church and parliamentary leadership: Solomon Islands: a thesis submitted to the Victoria University of Wellington in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 2006

<sup>9</sup> Thomas, Adrina. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. University of Waikato, New Zealand.

AusAID's Pacific Leadership Program, established in 2008, aims to strengthen leaders, emerging leaders and leadership practice in Solomon Islands, PNG, Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga. The focus is beyond state leadership, working with leaders from a range of sectors – including youth, church, private sector and civil society – who were chosen for their influence in Pacific society and for their role in nurturing and modeling leadership. The Program maintains a strong focus on gender across these sectors. It is easy for the Program to collect sex-disaggregated data, but what will that tell us? The MDGs and Aid Effectiveness discourses then invite us to measure its specific impact in improving women's participation and influence in decision-making roles across all sectors. A more constructive approach might be to ask the women who are selected what they want from the program, and to accept that some features I have outlined 'at their best' above, may well be the most important for that leader to carry on their work.

## Governance

'Governance' is a word with real potential in this discussion, and an area where there is significant funding and expenditure by both multilateral and bilateral donors. What is governance presumed to be, and what relationship does 'women's political participation' have to the prevalent use of this term in a wide expanse of policy sectors, especially in the development context? Shouldn't we be asking questions about this treatment? What are the broader aspects of democratic governance? Where are women a central part of the program? Where are they silenced, or treated peripherally, or omitted entirely? What are the implications of this treatment for 'women's political participation'? For example, the UNDP governance programs support policy assistance, citizen participation, decentralization, urban/rural development, public administration reform and anti corruption. Most of this space is controlled and dominated by men, and most of the counterparts in any of these programs, unless there is a 'women's empowerment' cross cutting component, will be male. To what extent are these programs, in and of themselves, supporting the separation of gendered spaces?

In these programs, a focus on the governance of state trading corporations, which have Boards frequently chaired by a Cabinet Minister, is noticeably absent. We can only conjecture about why this is the case. The 'hands off' position from national state leaders may reflect their representation of the country's national interest, under pressure to privatize, particularly significant mineral, energy or forestry resources. This ethical political stance might well go hand in hand with an understanding that state trading corporations frequently involve millions of dollars of investment, for example national airlines, which have advantageous conditions of travel for Members of Parliament and advantages for their families. They may control access to major media outlets, for example national radio or television corporations. Appointments to these Boards are political, and appointments to the senior management roles in these organizations frequently follow decade long patterns in being nepotistic. Women have the right to equal 'political participation' as Directors of state trading organizations. These are powerful positions, and women are overwhelmingly excluded from these political appointments.

Commissions, which address electoral, legal and human rights issues, often extending into economic, social and cultural rights, are highly political appointments and positions in any country, including those of the donors. So there is sensitivity around the field of governance. Yet there seems to be a complete absence of material on the appointment of women to Boards and Commissions, and no focus in respect to these potential alternative indicators for MDG 3. Ministers and Members of Parliament appoint and are appointed to these. This is not best practice of course, and much of it is corrupt, and I am not suggesting for one moment that there are no corrupt women in such organizations. But these bodies are frequently highly powerful, with millions of dollars of investments and operating capital, and many with very wide policy and strategic planning mandates which effect large populations.

Some of these bodies are state trading organizations being readied for privatisation, whether it is an ideological political policy, or because the international financial institution pressure is such that it has to be done. But where are the voices of women? Many of these restructuring possibilities have significant consequences, for example, in the privatization of water services, where there is an extensive gender difference in approach. Where and when are women appointed to these governance bodies, in what numbers, and in which sectors? Can we see any pattern in the increase in numbers of women appointed when numbers of women in parliament rise? Do we see any pressure from women activists to increase the numbers of women in this form of governance?

Governance occurs at all levels of society. Local government, school boards, NGO sector boards, religious groups, political parties, rural water supply and sanitation management, arts and culture organizations, trade unions and more, all have machineries of governance. Country ownership of 'governance' should be seen as democratic ownership, not government or parliamentary ownership. Decades of feminist research have established the importance of women's leadership in the governance and management of rural water supply schemes, for example, as the time saved by keeping systems going has the most impact on their lives as mothers, carers, subsistence farmers and gardeners, and on the lives of their households, but this message is still lost in the practice on the ground. AusAID has reported that in significant programs on water supply, only 28 per cent of small community managed water schemes were functional, and for the most part, costs recovery was poor.<sup>10</sup> Women need to know how to fix the pump, women need to control the rules around usage, women need to be equally in control of decisions made on fees, and especially on what happens to those fees.

Some AusAID personnel do understand the gendered difference in consultation between men and women. A story from the Highlands of Papua New Guinea shows this. A group of women were asked: what were the three most important requirements to support kids at school, and what they thought the men's group would say? The women said running water, sanitation blocks and security. They thought the men would say double classrooms, libraries and teacher houses. This is what the men said. The men also thought the women would say double classrooms, libraries and teacher houses. (Focus Oct-Dec 2008, p. 12)

## Effectiveness

Effectiveness is not a technical politically neutral term. It is necessary to be very clear what we mean by this term. A little history is important. Women's groups were not at the table in the development of the Paris Principles, and the ways of operationalising these was gender blind. 'Civil society and other actors' is a problem generic. Generics are always a problem for women and girls, and experience shows that specificity is needed just to get a toe-hold, or to retain the gender perspective inserted by a desk officer with knowledge, through to the final sign off of any program document by senior officials. The Accra Agenda for Action made a modicum of progress in recognizing gender, human rights and environmental sustainability as part of the framework.

Effectiveness is about power: it's a political process not a technical one. It requires will, commitment, information, resources, capacity, training, ownership, transparency and accountability – and that's just for the donor partner! It requires the direct participation of gender leaders with significant experience, both from inside the agency and from the community, from the outset of any idea – from the initial framing. It's about justice, not good will. It requires that gender equality and women's rights are explicit in every sector.

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<sup>10</sup> op.cit. ODE *Improving basic services for the poor*, p.54

## Case study

In the RAMSI Gender and Governance Program in the Solomon Islands 2007-2011, I worked with Dr Alice Pollard on a number of initiatives. One of our terms of reference was to provide 'mentoring for women in the public service'. With the support of our Machinery of Government RAMSI staff, we began work on the only book ever, on women in the Solomon Islands.

The process involved recruiting the soon to retire sole woman Public Service Commissioner to conduct life story interviews, with the only woman who had ever been a Member of Parliament, the woman Clerk of the House of Parliament, and the women who had reached the senior positions of Permanent Secretary or Deputy Permanent Secretary in the Solomon Islands Public Service. The process also involved engaging a member of staff of the Ministry of Women to write an introductory chapter for the book on women in public life in the Solomon Islands.

It seemed obvious to the team that a book which told the stories of the women who 'were the first', would have a shelf life of 30 years, if not longer. The need for such a record became obvious as we searched for any information on the first woman who had been elected to the Legislature during the transition to independence. We could manage three paragraphs after extensive searching, and those were on her schooling and university success abroad, and the election results. It raised a truly basic question, about how women can aspire to leadership when they and their forebears are hidden from his/story.

What might have been the usual paradigm expectations for outputs and outcomes for the publication of 'Being the First'? Women promoted in the Public Service? Women elected to political office in the general elections? The immeasurable externality of women empowered by telling and reading the stories? The pride and excitement that at last women were visible as leaders?

None of those involved could have anticipated that every chapter would be run weekly in the major newspaper; that radio and television documentaries would be made. We hoped for use of the book in the development of school curricula, and this is reported to be happening. A proposed outcome for copies of the book to be in every secondary school library did not happen, as personnel in the team changed and this was not followed up and completed. The significant numbers of cartons of the book has been extremely popular; a year later only two cartons remain, and it will effectively go out of print. A gender conscious initiative at this point would be to ensure its availability as an e-book for very little additional cost.

It is also important to note that the AusAID monitoring and evaluation adviser, and the 'Machinery of Government' leadership and team, understood implicitly the iterative and relational nature of potential inter-generational outcomes this 'output', which could easily be crudely measured by women interviewed, books published and the successful launch on 8 March 2010.

In addition, young women from other Pacific nations are now investigating how they can create the same visibility for their pioneer leaders, through the same book process. When we ask how leadership training and mentoring in policy arenas might be maintained beyond the life of discrete activities, a book of this nature delivers this outcome.

Lessons from other contexts are relevant. Does the strategy have ongoing relevance, and has there been sufficient time to show results? Don't be afraid that outcomes may be inter-generational. If the community was fully participative in the original scoping, and if women 'leaders' and 'governance practitioners' are engaged in the 'politics' of every stage of the program, and in particular in the initial design of the priority outcomes from their point of view, there will be on going capability and sustainability to see those outcomes.

## Women and political participation<sup>11</sup>

By 2008 15 per cent of parliaments had reached 30 per cent women members, the target set in the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) and in the MDGs.<sup>12</sup> Twelve of these were in so called developed nations, OECD members of the DAC. Australia was not amongst them.

In Africa where the most 'developing' countries have reached this target, there is no evidence to suggest that significant changes have resulted. Key changes have occurred when the country's leader is a woman, as in Liberia and Mozambique, or when a significant political space has been created by a woman of high international profile, in the case of Tanzania, creating space for others to move into. In other parliaments where women are few in number, such as Ghana, there have been more significant legislative gains with a vibrant active women's movement. Large numbers of women in elected office have not translated into significant legislative and resource gains. In this region women have gained reserved seats in post conflict constitutional arrangements, and the political activities of women in the immediate post conflict period have been critical to their access to power.

Many feminist researchers are concerned with finding regional patterns, implications that might be duplicated by following a similar path, strategies that might be replicated systematically to deliver similar outcomes. Political science rarely delivers patterns. As Krook found in her research on quotas, different variables have different effects, and causal factors operate in very different ways, in different contexts and cases. The complex and contingent nature of politics prevents prediction, to a very large extent because of the different actors.<sup>13</sup>

As noted earlier, women's parliamentary representation is a blunt and fairly meaningless indicator for MDG 3. This point is made in the following case studies.

## Figures are not the whole story

### Rwanda

In Rwanda the proportion of women parliamentarians went from 17.1 per cent in 1988, to 25.7 per cent in the transition period, to 48.8 per cent in 2003. In 2008 the proportion of women in Rwanda's lower house reached 56.3 per cent. This was the first single or lower house in history where women hold the majority of seats. Since seizing power in 1994, the Rwandan Patriotic front (RPF) has created a Ministry of Gender, organized women's councils at all levels of government, and instituted an electoral system with 30 per cent reserved seats for women. The 2004 National Land Policy and the 2004 Organic Land Law and Succession Law entrenched women's equal land rights in the land registration process.<sup>14</sup> Yet the dramatic rise in women's participation is paralleled by the increasing authoritarianism of the government. With increasing numbers of women MPs, women's ability to influence policy has actually decreased. There are still disappearances, a lack of press freedom, corruption, nepotism and racial hatred

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<sup>11</sup> Significant parts of this discussion were part of a paper written by the author in 2010 for IRDC: see <http://idc.bnc.idrc.ca/dspace/bitstream/10625/43896/1/130393.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> Rwanda, Sweden, South Africa, Cuba, Iceland, Argentina, Finland, Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Angola, Costa Rica, Spain, Belgium, Costa Rica, Spain, Andorra, Belgium, New Zealand, Nepal, Germany, Ecuador, Belarus, Uganda, Burundi, Tanzania, Guyana.

<sup>13</sup> Krook Mona Lena: Candidate gender Quotas: A Framework for Analysis. [www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/generalconference/marburgpapers](http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/events/generalconference/marburgpapers)

<sup>14</sup> In Pursuit of Justice: 2011-2012 Progress of the World's Women: UN Women 2011, N.Y. 41.

and distrust.<sup>15</sup> The numbers of women in parliament make an interesting 'benefits' selling point for diplomats when these issues are raised.

## Iraq

The clause in Iraq's new constitution required 25 per cent of the national assembly to be female. However, women are fearful of venturing outside their homes; they fear appearing in public and even hesitate to wear lipstick. 'Women's lives changed as Iraq was transformed from a largely secular state living under a dictator to a sectarian state living under fear'.<sup>16</sup> Another writer comments 'despite vigorous women's activism, Iraqi women have been disempowered – reduced to instruments of political agendas and symbols of communal indifference'.<sup>17</sup> One of the main strategies in reconstruction in Iraq is 'democratic promotion', an urgent response to rebuild state and civil society infrastructure. In this activity women's NGOs implement democracy training workshops, seminars, and conferences. The curriculum of these courses is similar around the world, limited to the promotion of political representation and participation, and not to the promotion of social and economic equality, with social justice and human rights for all as a focus. One of the outcomes of this democratic promotion agenda is the marginalization and the exclusion of opposition activism, in particular that of women's groups who challenge the content and focus. Work by El-Kassem suggests that women NGOs that participate exhibit signs of professionalism and are not politicized by a feminist or human rights analysis, weakening the women's movement as a whole. El-Kassem compares the Independent Women's forum, a US based NGO involved in promoting this agenda in Iraq, with Iraq Women's Will, a women's organization that actively resists such an agenda.<sup>18</sup> I have heard significant testimony recording this difference.

## Ghana

Ghana has only 20 women Members of parliament (9 per cent). For women who wish to contest for public political office, it involves cultural obstacles, such as resistance from husbands and families and society at large. Winning primaries requires a great deal of money. Yet there have been considerable gains in Ghana. The women's ministry is one of eight agencies which cross cut all ministries and agencies in the policy process. The women's movement has focused on family planning, domestic violence, and women's rights to abortion, health and childcare. Parliament has passed the Domestic Violence Act, Human Trafficking Act and the Children's Act. Here there have been substantial legislative, budgetary and strategic gains without large numbers in parliament.

Ghana had a referendum in 1992, which passed in support of a democratic system, and had the first free and fair elections in 2001, so it shares a history of emergence from war with many other countries on the Continent, a number of which have quotas for women. But there are differences. Parliamentary numbers of women actually reduced from 25 in the last election. But there is less corruption: the TI Index position of 69 is among the best on the Continent. There are comparatively higher literacy rates for women and girls. There is more transparency and accountability in the parliamentary process. The press is free. What might explain this? I hypothesize that it is because Accra is the regional hub for multilaterals.

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<sup>15</sup> Burnet, Jennie E, (2008). Gender balance in the Meanings of Women in Governance in Post Genocide Rwanda. *African Affairs*, 107/428, 361-386

<sup>16</sup> Ahmed, H. (2006). Women in the Shadows of Democracy. *Middle East Report*, 36(239), 24-26

<sup>17</sup> Al-Ali, N. and Pratt, N. (2006). Women in Iraq: Beyond the rhetoric. *Middle East Report* 36(239) 18-23

<sup>18</sup> El-Kassem, N. (2008). The pitfalls of a 'democratic promotion' project for women of Iraq. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 27(2), 129-151



The outside world is close at hand and watching. Women in Ghana know how to use access to these organisations, and know how to use their own system. Of all the countries in the region I have studied, this is the only one where I uncovered targeted activity to push for more women to be appointed to Boards, Commissions and other such public offices.

## Which discourse is the most successful strategy?

### Namibia

In Namibia there has been the emergence of a unified women's movement around electing more women to political office. This movement had its origins in March 1996, in a workshop held by sister Namibia for NGOs, political parties and elected women at all levels of government to discuss ways of increasing women's representation in politics. The workshop participants decided to draft the Namibian Women's Manifesto. One of its seven aims was a 50 per cent quota for women on party lists that were also zebra lists. In 2000, the Namibian Women's Manifesto Network formally launched a 50/50 campaign. They have held many workshops, meetings, and marches, distributed thousands of pamphlets, collected thousands of signatures and have popularized a bill. Such countrywide mobilization and unity around a women's issue was unprecedented in Namibia. Women MPs largely supported the call for equal representation.<sup>19</sup>

There has been very strong support across the board for this but the discourse is interesting. It reveals many women are claiming political roles based on their social status as wives and mothers and representing women's interests. This approach is also found in Asia and the Pacific. It has also been useful in Latin America and in the Middle East at times, as it can be used to persuade men that 'nothing serious or threatening' about a re-distribution of power or resources is going on. It's just women's business and they wouldn't be interested. Some feminists challenge this approach. Women MPs should not only represent women's interests, but also address other issues differently from men. Yet it is also clear that many elected women do not share this viewpoint. Even if they do agree, they frequently don't have the analytical skills, or the staff and time, to be so engaged in everything.

The lesson here seems to be to let the women concerned determine the discourse, though they will all have to endure the taunts that, faced with both potential paths – and others – to office, many men will delight in the disagreement.

## Being a candidate

There is something cruel and blissfully ignorant at the same time, of the selection of women's successful election to parliamentary office as the sole MDG 3 political measurement. The resilience and courage required to run for parliamentary office can be unimaginable. In the words of the Convention on Torture, it can, in fact, qualify as 'cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment'. We have to be very sure we know what we are asking of women candidates who run for electoral office. Consider, for example, the descriptions from the South Asian Regional Conference on Violence Against Women Politics meeting in November 2008 in Islamabad, Pakistan -

*The gender insensitive masculine political culture of the region has made it impossible for the women politicians to survive, unless they come from political backgrounds, have strong political connections or adopt the strategy of male politicians... Politics ensures status and is a*

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<sup>19</sup> Bauer, G. (2004). 'The hand that stirs the pot can also run the country': Electing women to parliament in Namibia. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 42 (4), 479 – 509.

*lucrative source of income and power over which men hold control... In Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka women voters and politicians have been subject to a full range of atrocities during elections and the electoral process. Rape, misbehavior and physical abuse are rampant against women, both voters and candidates. Many communities also consider a woman to be of 'bad character' if she participates in politics and runs for elections. Men, women and society have used character assassination as a tool to violate women politicians, forcing many to quit their career. The meeting noted 'None of the international instruments have provisions to create a gender sensitive, safe and secure space for women to participate actively in politics'.*

## **Malawi**

The difficulty of running in Malawi is described as an environment where women are frequently lacking in political experience, resources, education and connections.<sup>20</sup> Finding time for community responsibilities and multiple gender roles, productive, reproductive labour and community work is especially challenging, so is balancing home life and professional life. The interviews with women who had stood outlined a grueling experience. Political participation can be dangerous for women. Respondents referred to cultural beliefs that women being exposed to public activities would lead to immoral behavior. Wives would cheat on men, wives wouldn't grant men the respect that was due, wives would engage in prostitution if they joined politics. In many cases, husbands forbade their wives to run as they were threatened by the possibility that their wives would interact with other men. There was a serious social stigma on women who left household responsibilities. Those who had been elected to office commented on sexual harassment, verbal abuse, sexual comments, and pressure for sexual favours. Women in positions of power were perceived as loose. One reported being asked how much she cost for sex and where she could meet for a drink. Negative attitudes were held by community members generally and male colleagues in particular. There was resistance, rejection, sabotage, lack of acceptance and opposition from both men and women. There was a widespread perception that women in key leadership slept their way to the top. The cultural attitudes demeaned women leaders with jealousy, mud-slinging, and general discrimination. The media reproduced stereotypes of women as ineffective leaders. Women MPs reiterated that they had to be twice as clean as men, that they had to shout to be heard or to work twice as much as male colleagues to be recognized. One interviewee spoke of gender-unfriendly work environments, unfamiliar language and rules, a lack of training and experience or adequate support. There were other day-to-day obstacles, like a lack of restrooms and childcare facilities.<sup>21</sup>

## **Tanzania**

In Tanzania female MPs and civil society leaders describe a patriarchal culture, a lack of resources available to women and biased party nominations as the most serious barriers to winning constituency seats. Male-dominated culture and tradition restricted women candidates. In many communities they cannot go out after dark, and much campaigning and information-gathering was conducted at night. Bars and nightclubs were off-limits. The media were also biased against female candidates and often demonized and infantilized them. Low income was also a major problem. The majority of women interested in running for parliamentary seats could not afford even the deposit that had to be paid in cash to the returning officer in the constituency for nomination forms.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Tiessen, Rebecca. (2008). Small victories but slow progress. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 10:2,198-215.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> Mi Yung Yoon: Special Seats for Women in the National Legislature: The Case of Tanzania. *Africa Today* 55.1 (2008) 61-86.

## Asia

Asia traditionally has had slow gains in numbers of women in parliament. Leadership and high profile women in India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan did not 'make space' for a woman's agenda in the manner of the current leaders of Mozambique or Liberia. Election campaigns are marred by violence, and it is dangerous to be a woman candidate. Access to power is closely controlled by patriarchs in political parties and women are hard pressed to make any impression on these.

### Bangladesh

In Bangladesh a number of negative socio-cultural assumptions affect governance roles. The traditional assumption that women should stick to domestic work is very obvious and women do not have much of a 'public world or space to move in'. Ninety per cent of rural women are illiterate. The political environment commonly includes corruption, a fundamental lack of sensitivity to a democratic political culture, violence, killing, booth capturing, buying of votes, proxy votes, vote riggings and election fraud. Criminals are usually employed in aggressive electioneering tactics and are given a political shield. Transparency International reports that there is no precedent in Bangladesh to suggest the proper disclosure of election expenditure and a code of conduct and ethics for politicians receive minimal attention from the country's administrative and legal bodies.<sup>23</sup>

### Indonesia

The first woman President of Indonesia did not believe in the capacity of women to work in parliament or in senior positions. When the movement for a women's quota of seats in parliament was gaining publicity, momentum and support, Megawati Soekarnoputri said that asking for a quota would only show unrealistic progress on the part of women. She said, 'Enacting the quota means creating new discrimination against men.'<sup>24</sup> In 2003, she changed her position and hoped that more women would participate in the political world. She claimed that small numbers of women in politics were due to a lack of promotion by political parties.

No women sat on the Boards of political parties as of 2004. An important thing to remember about Indonesia is that in the past, members of Dharma Wanita, which is female civil servants and wives of civil servants, and Dharma Pertiwi, the organization of wives of military personnel, weren't allowed to join political parties, so there were thousands of women who had an educational background or an organizational experience who weren't able to join political parties until 1999, and, of course, it takes a considerable period of time to establish oneself in that situation.

In the decade following Beijing, Indonesia saw its first woman party leader, first woman faction leader in Parliament, first deputy speaker of the People's Consultative Assembly, and the first Agriculture Minister. Outside of the formal government realm, women were active in organized opposition to the Suharto regime, protested against the continuing dominance of the military in social and political life, against price rises of basic commodities and against state-sanctioned religious and ethnic intolerance. They organized demonstrations, facilitated inter-faith prayer sessions, were arrested for political activism, published and disseminated political newsletters, founded political organizations and advocated political reform.

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<sup>23</sup> Begum, Afroza. Politics in Bangladesh: Need for a Reconceptualisation of the Politico-legal Approach to Mitigate Women's Disadvantaged Positions in the Parliament. 2009, *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 44, 2, pp 171-198.

<sup>24</sup> Siregar, Wahidh Zein Br. Parliamentary Representation of Women in Indonesia: The Struggle for a Quota. *Asian Journal of Women's Studies*, Seoul, September 30, 2005, Vol 11, Issue 3, p.3 26.

Women had never made up more than 13 per cent in the Indonesian National Parliament. In 1999, 45 women were elected out of a total number of 500 members. It was no surprise in these circumstances, and with a women head of state, that a women's movement for a quota emerged. To achieve gender representation for women in the parliaments, activists identified the following strategies: a quota for women; political education and training for women; strengthening women's networks; preparing a database of potential women MPs; and working closely with the media. Working with IDEA, the activists assumed that the quotas would increase women's representation in a short time and that Indonesian women didn't want to wait any longer. The quota was also supposed to compensate women for being discriminated against in Indonesian political life.

Women activists met with leaders of the political parties. Party leadership gave undertakings to the women activists and commitments that they would reserve between 20 and 30 per cent of their positions for women candidates. These commitments were not honored. Men in political parties did not want to lose their privileged positions. There were only four women out of the total of 42 members in the special committee working to draft the law on political parties, and this number made it impossible for them to adopt bargaining positions. Women activists and women legislators also had no agreement about their proposals, and male legislators worked very hard to publicize any disagreements between them. In the end the 30 per cent quota stated, 'Every political party in the elections may propose candidates for members of the national, provincial and local parliaments for each electoral district, with consideration for at least 30 per cent of women's representation.' There was no guarantee provided in the law – no Costa Rican type penalty – that made it mandatory for political parties to give women a 30 per cent quota.

In the elections of April 2004, most political parties did not fulfill the 30 per cent quota. Most female candidates were placed in non-winnable positions in the lists. Only 13.3 per cent of all 1183 female candidates were placed in the first or second positions on the party lists. There was no guarantee that candidates would be elected even if they were first or second. To ensure success for women candidates it was also necessary to field them in first and second positions in districts where their political parties had voter support and were sure of winning. Party leaders, mostly male, had the power to decide the list.<sup>25</sup> The percentage of women in the Indonesian Parliament is now less than it was when the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action was signed. In 1997 women occupied 12.6 per cent of the lower or single house seats in Indonesia. In 2005 it was 11.3 per cent.<sup>26</sup>

## Vietnam

In Vietnam the law provides for equal participation of women in politics. In 2009 there was only one woman in the Politburo, and one Vice President and several ministers and vice ministers were women. There have certainly been some major changes for women in the 45 years since the end of the Vietnam War, in particular in literacy and life expectancy. But societal discrimination is deeply ingrained. Equal pay provisions are not enforced, domestic violence is common, and there is a significant forced prostitution market. Vietnam is a one party state, and the party controls the Vietnam Women's Union. The Union has a broad agenda, and in the new economic approach of the country, is very engaged in micro credit schemes.<sup>27</sup> Very few women hold key positions in the Communist Party, and male leaders are described as lacking the political commitment to change this. There are other women NGOs active in the

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<sup>25</sup> Siregar, Wahidh Zein Br, Parliamentary Representation of Women in Indonesia: The Struggle for a Quota. Asian Journal of Women's Studies, Seoul, September 30, 2005, Vol 11, Issue 3, p.36.

<sup>26</sup> Davies, Sharyn Graham. Women in Politics in Indonesia in the Decade Post-Beijing. 2005, UNESCO, pp 231-242.

<sup>27</sup> [www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/womensit/vn](http://www.onlinewomeninpolitics.org/womensit/vn). Retrieved November 17 2009.

human rights field, but the party controlled Union is not about to lead a major political action in this context.<sup>28</sup>

While Vietnamese women were leaders of the Peace talks following the war, these occurred before even the first world conference of women in Mexico City in 1975, and so Vietnam does not offer a case study for post conflict and constitutional gains. In the 2007 election the country registered a slight decrease in women representatives to 127 (25.8 per cent) in a quota free system. Prior to this election there were debates about the use of CEDAW's Special Temporary Measures to legislate for a women's quota, but no changes to electoral law were made.<sup>29</sup>

### **The Pacific**

In the Pacific the 'first past the post' electoral system has had an adverse impact on the number of women elected into parliaments. In most of the region, women face entrenched discrimination from chiefs and other traditional power systems, and lack of support from mainstream political parties. With so few women in leadership positions it can be difficult for women to find mentors and role models to help them navigate the political system. Raising campaign funds and developing campaign strategies can also be disproportionately challenging for potential women candidates.

There is a need for effective education for voters. Many in the Pacific – and some with good reason – do not believe the ballot is secret, and intimidation and vote buying flourishes in such an atmosphere. There is a lack of financial support to effectively mobilize women and sustain efforts to increase women's participation in decision-making. In some parliaments, individual parliamentarians receive large amounts of money annually as constituency development funds; the money is ostensibly for their constituencies but is often used to support vote buying. Where male MPs and candidates have access to large amounts of financial and other resources, coupled with kinship ties and traditional tendencies towards male leadership, women may be unable to compete in elections in any realistic sense. Some capable women leaders are also reluctant to leave well-paid, secure jobs to run for elections.

There are some significant customary restrictions on women seeking parliamentary seats in the Pacific. For example, in Samoa parliamentary candidates must be matai (customary leaders), and some village customs prevent women from being matai.

In Tonga, nine seats are reserved for nobles; a title only men are allowed to hold. In 2010 new electoral laws increased the number of 'People's Representatives' from nine to seventeen. Although this change increased the proportion of parliamentary seats open to women candidates, none were elected. But record numbers of women stood, a 'gain' lost to the MDG 3 blunt measuring instrument.

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<sup>28</sup> [www.wedo.org/learn/library/media-type/pdf/vietnam-women-in-politics](http://www.wedo.org/learn/library/media-type/pdf/vietnam-women-in-politics). Retrieved November 18 2009.

<sup>29</sup> In 2007 post conflict Timor Leste, where voluntary political party quotas are in place, women won eighteen (27.7%) seats following an unsuccessful attempt to use the CEDAW TSM provision.

## The Pacific and the use of the CEDAW Special Temporary Measures process

### Papua New Guinea

In March 2009 the Papua New Guinea Government tabled a motion in Parliament to use an existing constitutional provision that allowed the appointment of three members to the national Parliament, as a mechanism to appoint three women to Parliament. The motion was defeated, with the government and opposition unwilling to support the appointment of women to reserved seats. Subsequently the PNG National Leaders' Summit agreed to a proposal by the Government and Administrative Reforms Task Force to introduce elected reserved seats for women in Parliament. PNG's 21 Provincial Governors agreed that there should be an additional seat in each province for women alone to contest, plus a seat representing the National Capital District. Together those changes would have resulted in 22 reserved seats for women. In early 2010 the National Executive Council approved a Bill to reserve 22 elected seats for women and the Bill was then tabled in Parliament. The Bill did not gain a two-thirds majority.

Despite the fact that the first attempt to use constitutional provisions to allow three women to be nominated to parliament until the 2012 elections was unsuccessful, the attention that this drew to the issue of women's representation and ensuing public and parliamentary debates paved the way for the Women's Bill on *Equality and Participation Law 2010* and the National Executive Council (Cabinet) Submission. Parliament took charge of the Bill in May 2010 which by the end of the year had not been re-introduced for discussion and voting due to internal political unrest and a 'vote of no confidence' in the government. As of August 2011, the fate of the Bill which is captive to the vagaries of the parliament and the political system, is still to be determined.

### Solomon Islands

In Solomon Islands a temporary special measures taskforce worked on introducing ten reserved seats for women for the 2010 elections. However, the Prime Minister claimed that he did not have the numbers in his Cabinet or Parliament to pass the legislation. There was no political leadership exercised on the issue by any of the all-male Parliament.

### Tonga

In Tonga in 2009, the newly formed NGO 'Tongan Women's National Congress' developed a submission for reserved seats for women in Parliament, which it submitted to the Constitutional and Electoral Commission considering reform of the Constitution and electoral laws. The final report of the commission, however, did not include a recommendation for reserved seats.

The MDG report for the Pacific would report a complete failure in respect of political participation, but in each of these cases large numbers of women were mobilized behind female leadership. What does an evaluation report in such a context? A failure? Furthermore, it seems to me that in each case a single woman, or women in PNG and Solomon Islands (Tonga has not ratified CEDAW), as action under CEDAW's Optional Protocol, could initiate a 'communication', having exhausted their domestic legal remedies. If such action were to be taken, would anything of any political note be recorded as having happened in the context of MDG 3?

### Furthermore in the Pacific

In Solomon Islands, women have been elected to the provincial governments in Isabel (2), Rennell and Bellona (1), Makira (1) and Western (1), with no women in the national Parliament. Although these are still token numbers and women are grossly under-represented even in local government, it is important for any discussion of political participation to include and consider these sub-national levels and to analyze the differences and relative impacts they may have, all currently lost in MDG 3.

In Cook Islands, women hold between 30 and 50 per cent of directorships on government boards and committees. In Tuvalu, women's representation in the senior public service and statutory boards is approximately 20 per cent. Kiribati has had a female Vice President. Nauru's Ambassador to the UN is a woman and the Chief Secretary (Head of Public Service) is also a woman. In Tonga no women were elected to the Assembly, but one woman was appointed to Cabinet: Ministers sit in Parliament and have a vote on all legislation, and are therefore considered as MPs for the purposes of this table. None of these are considered relevant for MDG 3.

In Bougainville, following the end of a 20 year conflict, a new constitution and electoral system were devised for the newly autonomous region. Three seats in the new legislature were reserved for women to be elected directly by the people. Both women and men are allowed to vote for all seats. Prior to the dissolution of Parliament in 2010, one of the women MPs was Deputy Speaker and one was a Minister. In the last election women stood, even if unsuccessfully, for general seats as well, yet this important advance is lost in the MDG framework.

### Making progress on MDG 3

AusAID has many reviews and reports that demonstrate a comprehension of the challenges and problems in the subject of this paper. The organization knows that 'progress is often not monitored or sustained, especially when AusAID is working in an environment that is not conducive to promoting gender equality',<sup>30</sup> or that 'gender mainstreaming in aid activities ... overall was largely peripheral and rarely influenced the strategic direction'.<sup>31</sup> As a consultant working for (Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands) RAMSI, I have experienced monitoring and evaluation frameworks, which attempted to work on the cutting edge of best practice gender frameworks, in trying circumstances. In the absence of data, the reviews did not encourage a record of meaningless outputs, abstracted from the program intent, but narratives about the extent to which women are being disadvantaged, and how the program was engaging with this reality.

AusAID has a solid gender policy,<sup>32</sup> including commitments to equal participation of women in decision making and leadership, including in fragile states and conflict situations,<sup>33</sup> and to improving the participation of women in decision making and leadership, both at the political and community levels,<sup>34</sup> both quite sufficient to cover all points made in this paper.

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<sup>30</sup> Op cit: ODE (2009) p. 52.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid p. 51.

<sup>32</sup> *Gender Equality in Australia's Aid Program – why and how*: AusAID Canberra March 2007 Viewed May 1 2011  
[http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender_policy.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> op cit. p 2.

<sup>34</sup> op cit. p 14

#### AWID's Theory of Change is based on the understanding that:

- Change is non linear, the result of many different actions and circumstances, both intentional and unintentional.
- Change aimed at empowerment and social justice is political, implies changes in power relations and therefore involves tensions, struggle, and conflict.
- Power is complex and has different dimensions:
- Visible power is about rules, structures and policies that serve certain people over others, or processes that exclude certain groups from decision-making.
- Hidden power is about processes where a wide range of people are represented but only few have influence and set agendas.
- Invisible power is about how meaning is being shaped, how situations and circumstances are framed and establishes what is considered 'normal' or acceptable.
- Success is the result of many different actors and influences and therefore the ability of individuals and groups to contribute to each other's successes.

The challenge lies in making more creative and constructive use of evaluation opportunities in respect of MDG 3. There is already a comprehensive matrix of questions across themes one and two of the appendices of *Gender Equality in Australia's Aid program – why and how*.<sup>35</sup> I can appreciate that there may well be resistance at posts to collecting such textured data. A major advance would be to select appropriate questions/ sections for each situation. What needs to be appreciated is that one size simply doesn't fit all, and any evaluation of MDG 3 cannot expect the same framework to be useful in Indonesia and Laos, or in Papua New Guinea, East Timor and Samoa.

In extensive work conducted over 18 months recently, and working with all the organizations and networks that received significant grants from the Dutch MDG 3 fund, as well as other donor agencies and women's organizations, AWID<sup>36</sup> has researched the challenges of monitoring and evaluation in women's rights work. A highly useful wiki is now accessible (see website) which outlines the strengths and weaknesses of 30 different frameworks currently used, including logical frame approaches, results based management, theory of change frameworks, contribution based frameworks including outcome mapping and participatory approaches, gender analysis frameworks, systems and complexity thinking, advocacy analysis, network analysis, various hybrids, and tools and indicators.

At the end of all this work, there were some key insights, which are worth consideration. A gender evaluation should be appreciated by all engaged, including agency staff, as a learning exercise, not a performance test. Multiple frameworks, tools and methods are more effective. Both qualitative and quantitative techniques should be used, with no dependency on one more than the other. Participatory approaches should be legitimized and valued. Success in 'holding the line' is frequently the outcome that could be best achieved, but it is important to record reversals. Assessing contribution rather than attribution to change is a better practice. Evaluation systems should be flexible and adaptable, and suitable for the organizational architecture. Capacity, resources and time frames need attention. Finally, creating and investing in databases is good practice.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> AusAID Canberra March 2007 Viewed May 1 2011. [http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender\\_policy.pdf](http://www.ausaid.gov.au/publications/pdf/gender_policy.pdf)

<sup>36</sup> Association for Women's Rights in Development: [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org)

<sup>37</sup> Batiwala and Pittman: *Capturing Change in Women's' Realities: a critical Overview of current M&E Frameworks and Approaches*, AWID 2010 at [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org)



As a way to approach any future evaluation by ODE of MDG 3, I have developed a series of questions, which flow from this paper, are consistent with AusAID's gender policy, and respond to AWID's research insights (see Appendix 1). These are examples of what direction might prove constructive in the context of many and very different partners, and very different circumstances. They are not a total and comprehensive list, but are indicative, and could be used selectively and appropriately in the forthcoming process. For example, where AusAID has a major program on water and sanitation, or in education, a selection of 'governance' questions would be a sensible reflection of women's political leadership.

In Samoa, the influence of one particular woman MP for over 20 years, in various Cabinet posts, has seen changes in laws, processes and practices which differentiate that country's experience. This might be a focus.

A focus on women's roles in governance of the agencies, and state and private sector boards, is a valuable approach to women's political leadership; the outcomes attributable to women's leadership in public sector roles may be another.

The selection of one or two issues as a focus across the Asia Pacific region is not an evaluation strategy I would recommend, because of the extreme differences between nation states. I believe a better approach would be to seize on one or two different questions about women's political participation and leadership for different countries. The selection should focus on the explanatory potential of the question to reflect a positive or negative trend, as opposed to a comparative output data exercise, in a sector or sectors with substantial AusAID engagement and investment, where the feedback loop offers constructive input to the continuing program.

## Appendix 1: Potential evaluation questions reflecting AusAID's gender policy

Posts might select several main foci, which reflect on women and politics.

- What have been sustainable outcomes in the context of women and leadership?
- What focus on women's leadership and governance is an integral part of NGO engagement?
- In respect of results and outcomes across sectors, which claim gender engagement: Whose targets are they? Which partner/community determined them? Who in the community owns them?

### Parliament

- In the past year what legislation has promoted gender justice? What role did women play to reach this outcome?
- Which Members of Parliament represent women's interests in Parliament through questions in the House, introduction of bills, or passage of legislation into law? Can we determine what happens to make that possible?
- What forms of induction to office are offered to women politicians, and what are their major needs for resources and support to better represent women?
- How many women in parliament would introduce bills if they had access to drafting experience?
- How well do women MPs know their parliament's standing orders and use this knowledge in the House?
- What is the relationship, if any, between the numbers of women parliamentary representatives, the capacity to change and enforce laws, and to gain resources for issues of women's human rights and development, and the place of the country on Transparency International's (TI) Corruption Index.

### Women's engagement and parliament

- How many sectors of the women's movement know how to, and regularly, make submissions to a select committee hearing or a parliamentary public inquiry?
- How often do the sectors of the women's movement raise petitions for presentation, and draft questions for oral or written answer to give to women MPs?
- How often does the movement target a group of men MPs?
- Have women across the country mobilized on a particular issue – for example, violence against women? What tactics and strategies have they used, and how and why has this movement of women demonstrated an increase in political participation?

### Political parties

- What positions do women hold in political parties?
- Are there women's sections which don't have the same voting strength or power in the party?

- Are women on the selection committees, the Executive boards, the Disciplinary Committees, and/or in other key party positions?
- Do women in reserved seats use leverage within the political party system to advance women in the party, and/or to make substantial policy gains?
- How might it be possible get women who have experience in reserved seats to move to constituencies?

### **Governance**

- What do 'governance' programs actively embrace and are women central in all of them, or just a silo in some of them?
- What analysis has been done of appointments to government Boards, Commissions, Tribunals, and Agencies, and what proportion of the membership of these are women?
- What is the role of women in governance of the commons (communally owned land, forests, water resources etc)?
- In which negotiations or programs concerning the commons have they been prominent, or excluded from equal participation?
- In sector programs, for example water, sanitation or education, what governance roles are community women playing?

### **Other leadership issues**

- Where are women taking space in international affairs and nation state delegations in accordance with Article 8 of CEDAW? (See Appendix 2).
- How does the 'space making' impact of those women who participate in leadership programs translate into increased political participation at all levels?
- What are the lessons from the outcomes of the combined efforts of women in parliament and women's NGOs in working for the inclusion of women's rights agendas in constitutional revisions.
- What can we learn about unsuccessful attempts to use temporary special measures and introduce a quota, in terms of the increased success of women candidates?
- On what issues, if any, have women leaders been seen to promote women's rights?
- What tactics and strategies might women activists use in future not to lose the possible opportunity to have women political leaders engage on women's issues?
- What regional activity is in evidence on UN Resolution 1325, and other UN resolutions, which are related to situations of women in post conflict situations?
- What trends are there in women holding senior positions in the public service, and what specific different outcomes might be attributed to their leadership?

## Appendix 2: MDG 3, ODE and the Article 8 opportunity

Article 8 of CEDAW states: 'States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations'. Any future ODE process provides a dynamic opportunity to ask this question both of the agency itself, the multilaterals which receive one third of its annual budget, and of its development partners. In each case, where are women taking space at the international tables? Where are women in delegations enabled to make/take decisive actions? To what extent does an increase of women in political and executive positions change the composition and the policy content of international delegations to key conferences? Are women still confined to particular 'sectors' in this context? The failure of the MDGs and the Paris Principles to address the particular and specific interests of women is a reflection of the few women's voices at the table, and the blunt measurement instrument is a further reflection of this.

The absence of women at these tables means time and effort needs to be spent for years in the tedious vigilance of stopping even worse things happening, or looking for small opportunities for initiatives, as opposed to creating constructive space for engagement for different outcomes. How might fulfillment of Article 8 move capacity from reaction to initiation? When does the donor take equal gender teams to bilateral negotiations? Might that be a good example to set?

### The author

**Dr Marilyn Waring** is known internationally for her groundbreaking work in political economy, development assistance and human rights, and for her classic work, *Counting for Nothing - what men value and what women are worth*. In New Zealand she is a distinguished public intellectual, a leading feminist thinker, and an environmentalist. She served three terms in New Zealand's parliament after election at the age of twenty-three. Professor Waring works in the Institute of Public Policy at AUT University, focusing on the supervision of post graduate theses. She has been a Member of the Board of the Reserve Bank of New Zealand, the Councils of Creative New Zealand and Massey University, the QEII National Trust, the Institute of Judicial Studies, and is a member of the Boards of the Association of Women in Development (AWID) and the Canadian Index of Well Being.

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