

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

with
WIN WOMEN
STRENGTHEN POLITICAL PARTIES



GLOBAL ACTION PLAN

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WIN WITH WOMEN: STRENGTHEN POLITICAL PARTIES

The world is wasting a precious resource today. Tens of thousands of talented women stand ready to use their professional expertise in public life; at the same time, they are dramatically underrepresented in positions of political leadership around the world.

Political parties—the gateways to political office—are the key to advancing women's full participation in the political process. It is not enough for parties to establish women's wings or place women at the bottom end of party lists; they must develop real avenues for women's leadership roles.

On December 9-10, 2003, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) convened in Washington, D.C. an international working group of women political party leaders from 27 countries to identify how best to establish mechanisms within political parties that enhance opportunities for women. The gathering, called the 2003 Global Forum, “Win with Women: Strengthen Political Parties,” sought to establish bridges women can cross to make a difference in the futures of their countries.

The Forum examined political party structures that have encouraged more active leadership roles for women, candidate recruitment and training programs, successful outreach efforts, fundraising and communication opportunities, and avenues for influencing government policies. From this study, the Forum participants developed a “Global Action Plan” of recommendations that will benefit both women and political parties, which stand to gain from more inclusive organizations with wider appeal.

The Global Action Plan, which follows, is unique in its exclusive focus on political parties. Women's role in democratic processes is vital to the reform, renewal and modernization of political parties. We encourage parties to take genuine reform steps to increase women's leadership opportunities as outlined in the Global Action Plan. By offering practical recommendations that parties can adopt to promote women's participation, the Global Action Plan can mark the beginning of a reform effort to make women's leadership a priority. It can assist the efforts of political parties seeking to establish more representative, credible organizations.

On December 10, International Human Rights Day, the 36 initial signatories publicly launched the Global Action Plan and committed themselves to advancing the Plan in their parties and countries. By publicizing and distributing the Plan, we hope to increase the number of signatories and further the momentum of the “Win with Women” initiative.

Political parties and civic organizations can affirm their commitment to the Global Action Plan by visiting our website at www.winwithwomen.ndi.org. We look forward to your active participation and partnership in this important effort.



Madeleine K. Albright
NDI Chairman

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WIN WITH WOMEN: STRENGTHEN POLITICAL PARTIES

As political party leaders, we are committed to vibrant democratic development and to strong political parties. We believe that the meaningful inclusion of women is critical to achieving these goals. Accordingly, we affirm the need for political parties to become more inclusive, transparent and representative by expanding political opportunities and leadership roles for women. Political parties are unique organizations that aggregate popular interests and seek government office to promote policies that address those interests. They are also crucial training grounds for future government leaders and represent critical avenues for advancing equal rights and opportunities for women in society.

Many political parties today are undertaking needed reform efforts to address growing challenges, including public apathy, credibility questions and relevance to people's concerns. Women's political participation is critical to these advancements. Some political parties are working diligently to increase the role of women as voters, party leaders, activists and candidates for elective office. We salute those party leaders who support us; their leadership is key to the success of this effort. Globally, however, equality continues to be a distant goal. In many countries and parties, women remain largely excluded from decision-making. In some countries, women are denied the right to vote and stand for election. While women comprise over 50 percent of the world's population, they constitute only 15 percent of the positions in national governments.

As political party leaders, we are determined to work within our parties to address barriers that

discourage women's full political participation. We are also committed to establish a global political culture supportive of our efforts, through partnerships with civil society and work with the media. Our parties must continue and accelerate efforts underway to reach out to women voters; recruit and train women as political party leaders, activists and candidates; provide resources to women candidates; and ensure that female and male candidates are treated equally. Political parties must also educate citizens regarding the importance of equality between men and women in the public sphere.

At the same time, increased women's participation also plays a key role in efforts to fight corruption and increase political stability in society, as well as enhance the credibility and continuity of political parties. We also believe that women's participation will strengthen the accountability, transparency and integrity of political parties. Recent studies show that corruption decreases as the number of women participating in politics and society increases. The more women participate in political life—as voters, political party leaders or government officials—the more public policy reflects women's concerns and perspectives.

We support three crucial documents that set an international standard for defining equality between women and men, and advocating equal treatment in political and public life: the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the UN Beijing Platform for Action and UN Security Council Resolution 1325. As we unite to discuss removing barriers to full participation, we will focus on the following themes:

1

Removing restrictions on women's political participation, including restrictions on women's suffrage and candidacy.

- Repeal all restrictions that do not apply equally to women and men with regard to voting or standing for elections, unless they are temporary measures that promote women's enhanced political participation.
- Establish a policy of zero tolerance of all forms of political violence, especially violence and harassment against women voters, candidates and party activists.
- Ensure the physical safety of women party activists, candidates and elected officials by creating safe havens where female politicians and their families can retreat if threatened.
- Create mechanisms that support and protect women once they gain political visibility or office. Provide women with training in how to respond to personal attacks in the media and/or attacks on family members. Develop networks to assist with rapid responses to such incidents.

2

Increasing the number of women elected officials at the national, provincial and local levels.

- Incorporate the promotion of women candidates into the official policy of political parties. Encourage women to compete for office at the national, regional and local levels by creating strategic plans to recruit, train and support women candidates.
- Recruit women candidates to run for public office in urban and rural locations.
- Consider appropriate mechanisms to elevate women candidates and elected officials, including placing women high on party lists and running candidates in winnable districts. Quotas, in certain circumstances, can play an important role, particularly where women are virtually shut out of the political system.
- Commit meaningful financial support to women candidates. Female and male candidates who are similarly situated regarding their potential for election should be furnished with equal access to party resources.
- Provide specialized campaign skills training targeted at women's needs including policy development, debating techniques, networking, advocacy, public speaking, leadership, media, grassroots organizing, strategic planning, confidence building and fundraising. Include training on message and media that helps women appear confident, clear and well-prepared.

- Maintain a database of women qualified for elected and appointed political positions.
- Assist women candidates with developing skills in traditionally male dominated areas, such as budgeting and foreign affairs, so that they are equipped to deal with all policy matters.
- Establish mentoring programs that allow senior-level, national and international role models for women aspirants, candidates and newly elected officials. Encourage women and men to mentor emerging women leaders particularly on the issue of promoting women's representation both inside and outside the party.
- Recognize windows of opportunity for increasing women's representation in such areas as political transitions, peace processes, electoral reform processes, etc. Women leaders should take advantage of these opportunities to promote reform.
- Where possible, use international instruments and conventions as tools to build domestic support for increasing women's representation and participation.
- Build strong relations with civil society organizations to support advocacy campaigns that promote women's representation.
- Educate journalists on the importance of women in politics and governance.
- Support women candidates in their search for non-traditional and creative methods of communication in situations where they are confronted with structural obstacles to media access, such as state-owned media outlets.

- Support the efforts of women candidates to seek training outside of parties and to identify organizations that share their values and can assist them in the delivery of their message.

3

Ensuring that political parties include women in meaningful leadership positions and in meaningful numbers.

- Ensure that women are represented in a meaningful manner in internal party decision-making bodies and party leadership positions.
- Develop advocacy plans that promote a critical mass of at least 30 percent for women's representation in political parties. Ensure that women are listed in winnable positions on candidate lists and that they are represented in leadership positions and on decision-making bodies of parties.
- Address gender issues in party platforms and manifestos. Work with party leaders—both men and women—to discuss issues that connect to the concerns and priorities of women voters.
- Educate party membership on the importance of including women in positions of political leadership.
- Establish an equal opportunity committee (a monitoring and implementation body) that verifies that party bylaws addressing equality between men and women are observed. Men and women should serve on the committee in roughly equal percentages.

- Consider internal quotas, for a specific and agreed upon timeframe, to increase women's participation at all levels of the party.
- Adopt democratic and transparent rules in party constitutions and bylaws and ensure their implementation. Promote transparency in the candidate selection process to establish clear and understandable selection criteria.
- Provide training and financial support to women's party branches, wings or commissions, which should serve as forums for women to contribute substantively to party policy and procedure, party leadership and candidate selection. They should also offer opportunities to discuss issues of concern, mentor, network, and build critical policymaking and advocacy skills for women rather than act as token women's representation in the party.
- Analyze electoral systems and legislation to understand their impact on women's political participation. Develop plans to address barriers identified through constitutional, legislative and regulatory reform.
- Work to increase women's political credibility and viability by encouraging partnerships between women party members and party leaders.
- Intensify voter outreach to women by using the party platform to develop messages for and about women. Develop an information bank in party headquarters to store material about women's voter outreach initiatives.

4

Encouraging greater participation of women in government decision-making and advocating for legislation that enshrines the full equality of women and men.

- Advocate for the appointment of more women to cabinet-level positions and other high government offices. Identify women with policy expertise for high-level government positions and encourage them to develop relationships with both men and women in support of their potential appointments.

- Diversify portfolios of women ministers so that they are not limited to social issues.
- Develop training programs, including leadership skills training, to prepare women to fulfill their roles as government representatives.
- Create incentives for women to seek positions in government service, and promote women within the leadership structures of civil service, ministries and government agencies.
- Form women's caucuses in legislative bodies to work on issues and in coalitions across party lines.
- Promote legislation enshrining the full equality of women, including prohibiting discrimination against women in hiring and promotion within government service.
- Establish, strengthen and fund a women's office in each department, ministry or agency to develop action plans and legislative proposals that consider women's needs.
- Develop and employ national budgeting mechanisms that ensure government agencies are adequately funded to promote and address initiatives focused on women.
- Track and disseminate data on women's participation in public office on the national, provincial and local levels (e.g., through report cards on the number of women in government office). Assign a government agency or department to maintain the information and take action annually to improve the statistics. Governments should also be responsive to independent assessments by nongovernmental organizations on this issue.
- Educate citizens about the importance of women in government service through the media and other civic education tools.
- Create legislation to provide for child care, elder care, family care and other policies that support women working in government agencies.
- Partner with non-governmental organizations to educate women leaders and build coalitions for legislative initiatives.
- Create mechanisms in government to measure and address the "digital divide" between men and women.

As political party leaders, we commit to continue our advocacy for increased women's participation and to work with other party leaders—both men and women—to ensure that our parties do everything possible to break down barriers to women's participation.

INITIAL SIGNATORIES

Madeleine K. Albright, Global Forum Host, Former U.S. Secretary of State and Chairman of the National Democratic Institute (*USA*)

Nazma Akhtar, Convener of the Central Mahila Jubo League of the Awami League (*Bangladesh*)

Zainab Bangura, Founder and Chair of the Movement for Progress and former Presidential Candidate (*Sierra Leone*)

Aicha Belhadjar, National Secretary for Women's and Family Affairs of the Movement for a Peaceful Society (*Algeria*)

Soumaia Benkhaldoun, Member of the House of Representatives (*Morocco*)

Winnie Byanyima, Member of the National Assembly (*Uganda*)

Maria Eugenia Campos, Advisor to the Governance Ministry (*Mexico*)

Indranie Chandarpal, Member of the National Assembly and Secretary General of the Women's Section of the People's Progressive Party (*Guyana*)

Fanta Mantchini Diarra, Member of the National Assembly and Founder and Vice President of the National Congress for Democratic Initiative (*Mali*)

Téninké Dioubaté, Member of the National Executive of the Union of Republican Forces (*Guinea*)

Gefarina Djohan, Deputy Secretary General of the National Awakening Party (*Indonesia*)

Geraldine A. Ferraro, Former Member of Congress and former Vice Presidential Candidate (*USA*)

Lourdes Flores Nano, Vice President of the Christian Democrat and People's Parties International, President of the Christian Popular Party, President of the National Unity Alliance and former Presidential Candidate (*Peru*)

Sarita Giri, Director of the Center for Women in Politics and Spokesperson of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party Central Committee (*Nepal*)

Slavica Grkovska, Member of Parliament and Central Committee Member of the Social Democratic Union (*Macedonia*)

Temí Harriman, Member of the House of Representatives (*Nigeria*)

Julissa Hernández, Coordinator of the Unit for Civil Society Relations of the Cabinet (*Dominican Republic*)

Tolekan Ismailova, Executive Director of the Democratic Development Foundation and Executive Director of Civil Society Against Corruption (*Kyrgyzstan*)

Aminata Faye Kassé, President of the Senegalese Council of Women (*Senegal*)

Karolina Leakovic, Secretary for Public Relations and Secretary General of Women's Forum of the Social Democratic Party (*Croatia*)

Maria Leissner, Ambassador to Guatemala (*Sweden*)

Supatra Masdit, President of the Center for Asia-Pacific Women in Politics (*Thailand*)

Audrey McLaughlin, Former Member of Parliament and former Leader of the New Democratic Party (*Canada*)

Beatriz Merino Lucero, Prime Minister (*Peru*)

Samia Moualfi, Member of Parliament and Central Committee Member of the National Liberation Front (*Algeria*)

Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck, Minister of State, Member of Parliament and President of Liberal International, (*Belgium*)

Cynthia Ximena Prado Quiroga, Gender Secretary of the New Republican Force (*Bolivia*)

Kane Nana Sanou, Secretary for External Relations of the Movement for the Independence, Renaissance and Integration of Africa (*Mali*)

Tioulong Saumura, Member of Parliament (*Cambodia*)

Mu Sochua, Minister of Women's and Veterans' Affairs and Deputy Secretary General of FUNCINPEC (*Cambodia*)

Alice Sumani, Minister of Gender and Community Services and Member of the National Assembly (*Malawi*)

Fauzia Wahab, Member of the National Assembly and Central Coordinator of the Human Rights Cell of the Pakistan People's Party (*Pakistan*)

Jeanne Claude Wilkinson, Member of the National Assembly (*Guinea*)

Chitra Lekha Yadav, Deputy Speaker of the House of Representatives (*Nepal*)

OBSERVERS

Barbara Haig, Vice President of Programs, Planning and Evaluation (*National Endowment for Democracy*)

Maha Muna, Programme Manager and Officer in Charge of the Governance, Peace and Security Unit (*UNIFEM*)

Gita Welch, Leader of the Democratic Governance Group (*United Nations Development Programme*)

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to civic and political leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions. NDI works with democrats in every region of the world to build political and civic organizations, safeguard elections, and promote citizen participation, openness and accountability in government.

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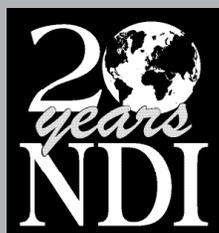
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