

FORUM: Special Conference on Securing and Advancing Democracy 1

QUESTION OF: Strengthening the voice and visibility of women in elections

SUBMITTED BY: Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

CO-SUBMITTERS: Bulgaria, Somalia, Chad, Pakistan, Namibia, Bahrain, Sudan, Mozambique, Honduras, Trinidad & Tobago, Turkey, Kuwait, Tanzania, Estonia, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bolivia, Peru, Human Rights Watch, Botswana, Chile, Norway.

SPECIAL CONFERENCE ON SECURING AND ADVANCING DEMOCRACY,

Reaffirming the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,

Stressing that the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women adopted by the UN General Assembly on the 18 December 1997 upholds women's right to participate in public

Concerned that women still only hold less than 25 % of parliamentary seats worldwide with only three countries securing 50 % of parliamentary seats to women,

Recognizing the prevalence of engrained obstacles to women's equal rights and participation in elections, including gender stereotypes, psychological and traditional barriers, and inequalities in education, training and resources,

1. Endorses the creation of programs in local communities struggling with strengthening the voice and visibility of women in elections which will help eradicate gender discrimination in politics by;
 - a) Establishing women's rights groups that will allow for women to have a safe space to talk about issues regarding human rights of voting and running for a position in the government which will have sessions that teach:
 - i. Self-defense
 - ii. Debate lessons in leadership
 - iii. Public Speaking
 - b) The creation of separate women's educational institutions funded by the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, which will foster the development of women leaders in their nations through different levels of education such as:
 - i. Primary schools
 - ii. Secondary schools
 - iii. Universities/Colleges
 - c) Giving internship opportunities and promoting community programs that foster leadership skills, especially for young girls;
2. Strongly encourages the Member States to work alongside the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees), OHCHR (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights) and World Bank to increase women's education by providing educational infrastructures:
 - a) Deploying volunteer teachers from The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
 - b) Supplying sufficient and adding to existing classrooms by asking for help from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
 - c) Providing, from the World Bank, abundance of learning materials for instance textbooks and high-quality teachers;
3. Requests member states to help women to be good political candidates by:
 - a) Giving internship opportunities for young women to learn from experience
 - b) Promoting community programs that foster leadership skills, especially for young girls;

4. Emphasizes the creation of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) about the upcoming election and encourages women to come out and vote during national elections and protection of women through:
 - a) The creation of PSAs that will be constantly used every time before a national election takes place which will encourage the safety of women and voting done by women
 - b) An online moderator mandated by the United Nations to make sure that these PSAs are implemented at least 10 days before elections through:
 - i. Newspapers
 - ii. Television
 - iii. Online Articles
 - iv. Social media
 - c) Analysis of relevant statistics in all UN countries in order to measure the severity of the countries' situations in order to determine to where the PSAs should be targeted;
5. Encourages member states to adopt voter outreach strategies targeting women, which include:
 - a) Planning education campaigns for instance, on how to register or how to vote and encouraging women to participate in elections, as well as dispelling cultural myths that might dissuade women from participating in the electoral process
 - b) Using the media (such as advertisements and posters) to portray women in active electoral roles rather than passive roles (as was done in Nepal)
 - c) Tailoring certain outreach programs to audiences other than women, for example targeting men about women's participation in countries where there are cultural or societal barriers to women's participation;
6. Urges politicians to close the ranks between women and men in lack of knowledge and political awareness among the majority of women:
 - a) Women politicians should assist other women who want to get into politics about how to have a successful political career through means such as but not limited to:
 - i. Viewing expert policy recommendations which will help them get a sense of how political work is done
 - ii. Politicians should put women into a position which will require them to have an active role in politics with this implementation they will be experienced in politics women will learn how to accommodate oneself in politics, as good as men are doing and in addition to that they will see how the land lies in politics
 - b) Emphasizing to both genders and the whole of society actively that sustainability in the development of politics can only be achieved when there is gender equality and can be ensured by the help of UCLG-MEWA promotes the active participation of women in local, regional, national and international decision-making processes as a precondition of democracy and development in politics;
7. Strongly suggests that all member nations, with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), adopt the following measures:
 - a) Conduct an in-depth study to determine the gravity of the political imbalance between male and female in that country regarding the following aspects:
 - i. The percentage of women in government and participation in elections
 - ii. The opportunities for education on political topics granted to both genders
 - b) The causes for limited female participation in political affairs
 - i. Using the findings of these studies to target the reasons specific to the region and thereby
 - ii. Spreading the awareness of the female right to vote and combatting its oppression
 - iii. Ultimately awakening political interests in women;
8. Recommends the mitigation of 'family voting', referring to the situation in which the heads of family influence other family members in how they cast a vote via:

- a) Ensuring poll workers do not allow direct collusion between family members, (by only allowing one voter at a time in isolation booths and issuing ballot papers one at a time)
 - b) Educating voters on their right to secrecy, especially among vulnerable populations such as women and illiterate voters;
9. Encourages all nations to consider implementing a quota or reservations for a minimum number of seats for female candidates on a short term basis;
10. Encourages the integration of comprehensive education into the schools curricula which will discuss gender stereotypes subsequently cultivating critical thinking skills and hence replacing the blunt acceptance of these stereotypes through the means of:
- a) Personal, social, Citizenship and Health Education (PSCHE) lessons,
 - b) Open discussions and seminars,
 - c) Workshops,
 - d) The hosting of women in political jobs in order to entertain:
 - i. Speeches,
 - ii. Answers to questions by girls considering such a career.