



Table of Contents



5 FOREWORD	6 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	7 ABBREVIATIONS	8 PREFACE
9 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY	15 CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT AND POLITICS	15 2.1 GLOBAL REVIEW	20 2.2 AFRICAN REVIEW
23 2.3 GLOBAL INTERVENTIONS AND OBSERVED PROGRESS IN SOME AFRICAN COUNTRIES	29 CHAPTER 3: WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY AND THE DOUBLE BIND DILEMMA	30 3.1 WOMAN IN DIPLOMACY: GLOBAL REVIEW	32 3.2 WOMEN IN DIPLOMACY: AFRICA REVIEW
33 3.3 THE DOUBLE BIND DILEMMA	39 CHAPTER 4: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN KENYA	50 CHAPTER 5: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN RWANDA	55 CHAPTER 6: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA
63 CHAPTER 7: WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN ZIMBABWE	72 CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION	77 BIBLIOGRAPHY	81 ABOUT THE AUTHORS

List of Tables

Table 2.1(a)	World and regional averages of women in parliaments, 1995 and 2018	15
Table 2.1(b)	Female heads of government or state as at January 2018	16
Table 2.1(c)	Women leaders in the United Nations as at January 2019	19
Table 2.2(a)	African women representation in parliaments as at November 2018	22
Table 2.2(b)	Women in lower or single houses after parliamentary elections in 2017	23
Table 2.3	MDG 3 Progress in Kenya, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and South Africa	24
Table 3.1(a)	List of female foreign ministers as at September 2018	31
Table 3.2(a)	Percentage of women ambassadors/high commissioners in selected African countries, May 2018	33
Table 4:1	Women representation in the National Assembly in Kenya 1963 – 2017	42
Table 4.2	Participation in key decision-making positions by sex 2015 – 2016	46
Table 5.1	MDG 3 targets and indicators in Rwanda	53
Table 6.4	South African women representation in international political leadership	62

List of Figures

Figure 2.1	Percentage of women in Parliament	15
Figure 2.2	Female heads of state or government by 31 March 2019	17
Figure 3.1	Proportion of female heads of mission in selected countries	32
Figure 6.1	Bill of Rights provisions for gender equality in South Africa	56
Figure 6.2	Female workforce representations across organisations	58
Figure 6.3	Representation of women in the South African Parliament, January 2019	59
Figure 7.2	Status of both genders in public leadership positions, Zimbabwe	67
Figure 7.3	Non-corporate sectors, 2013	68

Foreword



This book is a fine contribution to the literature on women in development in general, and women in diplomacy in particular.

It captures the perspectives of women practitioners in diplomacy, working as they are in Canada, a country with a track record in the promotion of gender rights and equality in both its domestic and foreign policy priorities.

Canada's new Feminist Foreign Policy, unveiled in 2017 has resonated around the world with remarkable sympathy as major countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, the Federal Republic of Germany and France promptly responded by designating women, Ambassadors to Canada for the first time.

The book also comes after the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, the Honourable Chrystia Freeland, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, Ms. Federica Mogherini, co-hosted the Women Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 21 and 22 September 2018 in Montreal, Canada, to discuss among other issues, women's empowerment, political participation and leadership.

I sincerely commend and congratulate the authors of this important book. Their voices and vision are powerful pointers to the onward march of African women in conquering power, championing and contributing to the causes of peace, progress and prosperity in the world.

The insights and inspiration to be derived from this topical publication are both refreshing and rewarding. Readers will do well to remember with Marcel Proust that: "The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new landscapes, but in having new eyes".

Anu'a-Gheyle Solomon Azoh-Mbi
(Cameroon High Commissioner)



Co-authors: High Commissioner Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo,
Ambassador Jane Kerubo, Ms Shakilla Umutoni and
Ambassador Florence Chideya

Acknowledgements



This book celebrates and shines a light on African women within the context of gender considerations in general in as much as it relates to their empowerment potential and matters diplomatic.

The authors are highly appreciative of the number of people who displayed their interests in one way or the other. From the onset, the authors derived special benefits from a number of quarters, however, special thanks to:

- The late Professor Pius Adesanmi, former Director of the Institute of African Studies, Carleton University Ottawa, Canada, who took a great interest in the topic. His enthusiasm in collaborating with the authors on the Conference on 18 May 2017 led to the idea to delve deeper into the topic of gender in diplomacy and the implications thereof.
- Dr Wangui Kimari, who diligently assisted with the literature review related to the general empowerment of women.
- The Ottawa-based African Group of Ambassadors and High Commissioners with the active collaboration of the network of the African Women Diplomatic Forum (AWDF).

- The former Ambassador of the Republic of Ethiopia, Her Excellency Birtukan Ayano Dadi, who was at the helm and provided the requisite liaison with Carleton University.
- The Dean of the Diplomatic corps, High Commissioner of Cameroon, His Excellency Anu'a-Gheyle Solomon Azoh-Mbi, who readily reviewed the manuscript.
- Vidal Chavannes and Marilyn Farquharson, who painstakingly reviewed the fine content of the manuscript.
- Public Diplomacy at Dirco, South Africa for the design and layout

All these efforts resulted in this book.

Many thanks also go to the authors' respective governments for providing the necessary information upon request. While the authors acknowledge the assistance received from various people and groups, they take full responsibility for the contents of the publication. Any shortcomings in the book are by no means the fault of anyone other than the authors.

Abbreviations



AfDB	African Development Bank
AGDI	African Gender and Development Index
AIS	African Institute of Studies
ANC	African National Congress
AU	African Union
AWDF	African Women Diplomatic Forum
BWASA	Business Women's Association of South Africa
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CEDAW	Convention of the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CREAW	Centre for Rights Education and Awareness
CUSO	Canadian University Service Overseas
DIRCO	Department of International Relations and Cooperation
DA	Democratic Alliance
EAC	East African Community
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICC	International Criminal Court
IGCLR	International Conference on the Great Lakes Region
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
J-P GEWE	Joint Programme for Gender and Women Empowerment
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Cooperation
KEWOPA	Kenya Women's Parliamentary Association
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MP	Member of Parliament
NCOP	National Council of Provinces
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NGM	National Gender Machinery
PROWEB	Professional Resources Organisation of Women and Executive Bureau
RNCYPT	Regional Network of the Children and Young People's Trust
RPSA	Rwandan Patriotic Army
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDGEA	Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
USA	United States of America
WCoZ	Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe
WDS	Women Diplomatic Service
WUA	Women's University in Africa
ZIMASSET	Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Social Economic Transformation
ZWRNC	Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network

Preface



‘No beard grows upon my cheeks
But in my heart I carry a sword ...
The battle sword for bread and honour
Against the poverty which pains my mother’s heart’

Vincent (2001:6z1 GWV)

Globally, much has been written about the status of women’s empowerment and gender equality in various institutional sectors. Such sectors include, but are not limited to, trade and commerce, government and politics, and science and technology. While some progress has been reported, the pace has been glacial.

Looking at nations across the world, statistics show that a number of African countries have made impressive strides in women’s parliamentary representation. Today, Africa stands as a global leader in this area. For example, in 2019, Rwanda took the lead in women’s participation in parliamentary representation at 62%. According to the United Nations (UN), many countries have sought to legislate gender equality and women’s empowerment. As of 26 March 2017, 143 countries are guaranteeing equality between men and women in their constitutions. Increasingly, countries and governments are realising that gender equality is not only a moral imperative, but an economic and political necessity. The purpose of the case studies presented in this book is to highlight and challenge the progress, or lack thereof, in addressing gender equity in the Public Service, but more specifically in diplomacy.

‘The UN Commission on the Status of Women acknowledges the importance of accelerating the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The commission recognises the important contribution by women and girls towards sustainable development and reiterates that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls and women’s full and equal participation and leadership in the economy are vital. This Commission notes that implementation of the PFA is critical to achieving sustainable development, promoting peaceful, just and inclusive societies, enhancing continuous, inclusive and economic growth and productivity, as well as ending poverty in all its forms everywhere and ensuring the well-being of all, (UN Economic and Social Council E/CN.6/2017/L.5 available at undocs.org/E/CN.6/2017/, 26 March 26, 2018.

Diplomacy is an area that has become important as states realise the fundamental need to strengthen, promote and protect their national interests and to fortify relations with

other states. Not much has been documented on the introduction of diplomacy as a discipline; the little available literature on the subject seems to highlight that diplomacy mainly served to avert wars and to foster negotiations between and among nations. For decades, diplomacy and international politics have been fields associated with, and reserved for, men.

Consequently, little research has been conducted on women’s participation and successes in international diplomacy and foreign policy. Most of the studies that have been conducted on women in diplomacy are country-specific and limited to the Ministry of Foreign/International Affairs within that country. As a general introduction, the book presents an overview of global trends in relation to women’s empowerment and leadership, reflecting on progress made, opportunities that exist and the challenges that women continue to face. The publication also highlights some of the instruments and interventions that have been introduced to address gender inequality.

The African countries targeted in this book are Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe. These countries were selected based on their uniqueness in appointing women in leadership positions to represent their countries as senior diplomats based in Canada. This made the collaboration and access to information convenient, and also presented an opportunity for an exceptionally personalised perspective.

The book explores the global clamour for women’s empowerment in leadership and governance in general. Chapter Two provides a summary of some of the targets that have been set globally and nationally within each country, highlighting the progress made towards the achievement of these goals by various nations and by the case study countries. Chapter Three explores the same issues, but focusses mainly on women in diplomacy, female appointments to diplomatic positions and challenges. Chapters four to seven present country-specific case studies.

The book concludes by identifying gaps in the literature, summarising the advances made and offering suggestions on the way forward.

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction and Methodology



1.1 Introduction

The global trend of excluding women in certain positions has ensured entrenched power structures that reinforce gender inequalities and overt discriminatory practices in a number of fields.

It is true that judging by declarations and patterns of recruitment over recent decades, careers and positions in politics and diplomacy have been traditionally reserved for men. The rationale provided has historically included: women cannot serve in places considered unsafe, or women need to serve as support to their spouses, or family demands and responsibilities make it impossible for women to assume key leadership positions.

Some cases in point include the “the story” of the Famous Five Canada or the Person’s Case. In Canada prior to 1929, women were not considered “persons” – “at least not in the fullest legal sense of the word”. Women were excluded from vying for positions in the Canadian Senate because the Canadian Government of the day had consistently and intentionally interpreted Section 24 of the British North America Act, Canada’s Constitution, at the time as “qualified persons”, meaning men only. This resulted in women being overlooked for the Canadian Senate.

In Rwanda for example, before 1994, the national directives (arête presidential) on the diplomatic career stipulated, among others, that women were ranked among things that were supposed to accompany the diplomat. However, with globalisation coming to the fore, a diverse

number of issues and areas of interest between nations now incorporate female participants and have served to dilute roles reserved for men. Embracing gender inclusion in diplomacy has brought with it much desired innovation and a fresh perspective on diplomacy.

Today, the diversity and complexity of issues and areas of global interest go beyond gender. International relations and diplomacy are no longer mainly about averting wars and conquering nations, but have shifted to cover issues of common global interest mainly related to human rights, health, climate change, environment, peace and security, education, sustainable development, and science and technology. Given this paradigm shift, women can no longer be excluded from taking part in driving the global agenda. The areas of common interest can be managed equally by both men and women, depending on their area of expertise and capacity. Furthermore, it is the different personalities, negotiating skills, cultures and experiences men and women can bring to the table that should determine who gets invited to participate.

The challenge in writing about women’s empowerment in Africa is the absence of detailed, current and relevant data. In the process of writing this book, the authors discovered that Africa had the weakest data collection and the greatest data gaps compared to other regions of the globe. This made it difficult to compare and capture the true picture of the status of women in diplomacy across all African countries.



AWDF members together with Carleton’s Institute for African Studies in Ottawa in May 2019

In their endeavour to highlight the progress made by women in some African countries in the areas of leadership and in politics, international relations and diplomacy, the publication used the methodology discussed in the next section.

1.2 Methodology

The book derives its origins from the motivation and interest shown by a group of African female diplomats who are members of the African Women Diplomatic Forum (AWDF) based in Ottawa, Canada. The AWDF focusses its activities on diplomatic issues and is a member of the African Group of Heads of Mission based in Ottawa, with coopted membership at Deputy Head of Mission level.

1.2.1 A brief historical background of the AWDF

The AWDF was formed in 2011 by a group of African female ambassadors and high commissioners based in Ottawa. The main goal was to bring together female diplomats in informal ways for moral, social and professional support during their tour of duty in Canada. The forum works with various stakeholders to promote the female agenda in diplomatic service. Specifically, the AWDF seeks to:

- work together to enhance partnerships between Africa and Canadian institutions;
- facilitate and strengthen interactions between its members and women leaders in all sectors of Canadian society;
- promote collaboration on issues of common concern
- assist the African Diaspora in bringing about increased visibility of Africa in Canada; and
- promote social activities within AWDF families.

Since its inception, the AWDF has been partnering with the Institute of African Studies (IAS), Carleton University, and other relevant parties in Canada to organise conferences and symposia geared towards enhancing debates on current affairs affecting women in Africa. The IAS was inaugurated in 2009 with the support of the African Heads of Mission in Ottawa, Canada. It has remained a central partner of the Group of African Heads of Mission and AWDF. The latter organised its first conference in Toronto from 27 to 29 May 2013 on “African Women Trade and Investment Opportunities”. The conference attracted business women from Africa, various speakers and African Canadian women in business.

The AWDF’s second conference on 12 March 2015 was held at Carleton University in Ottawa.

This AWDF initiative was organised in collaboration with Carleton University and the African Diplomatic Corps. The theme of the conference was: “The African Union’s Agenda 2063: Assessing the Development Vision for Africa”.

On 4 May 2016, the IAS and the Group of African Heads of Mission in Ottawa organised a conference entitled: “From Climate Change to Environmental Sustainability: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa and Canada”. Some members of the AWDF presented papers in a panel discussion focussing on “Supporting African Innovation: Renewable Energy, Agriculture and Women’s Empowerment”. The panel was moderated by Professor Mike Brklacich, Associate Dean, Graduate Programmes and Research, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, Carleton University. During the conference, Her Excellency Nouzha Chekrouni, Ambassador of Morocco, presented a paper on “Investing in Women’s Empowerment and Renewable (Clean) Energy for a Green Africa”. Dr Jane Kerubo, Deputy Head of Mission, Kenya High Commission, presented a paper on “Investing in Renewable Energy to Empower Women: Challenges and Opportunities for Africa and Canada” (available at <https://carleton/africanstudies>).

Together with the Group of African Heads of Mission, the Human Rights Research Council and Education Centre, the University of Ottawa, the Africa Study Group, the Centre for Trade Policy and Law and Canadian University Service Overseas (CUSO) International and the African Women Diplomatic Forum partnered with the IAS on 18 May 2017 and organised a conference entitled: “Beyond SDG 5: African Women, Innovation, and the Future of the Continent”. On behalf of the AWDF, under the theme: “Women and Apparatus of Power: Politics, Governance and Rights”, Her Excellency Mrs Florence Zano Chideya, former Ambassador of Zimbabwe, presented a paper on “African Women in Diplomacy: Progress, Opportunities and Challenges”. Ms Shakilla Kazimbaya Umutoni presented Rwanda’s success story on gender and women empowerment. These papers are the genesis of this book. During the question-and-answer session, a number of issues were raised that provided the AWDF with the impetus to explore the subject further. These questions included:

- How does the situation in Africa compare with other countries?
- What does the existing literature say about the topic under consideration?
- Bearing in mind the sovereignty of African countries, how are different countries embracing the global campaigns for women’s empowerment generally and leadership and governance in particular?
- What factors influence the trends, perspectives, pace and attitudes towards progress?
- What lessons can be learned from Canada, one of the global players, and from her efforts towards women empowerment?

Given the questions raised during this conference and the need to explore whether there was any progress in



Dr Purity Ngina, Dr Amina Abubakar leading the panel discussion

the advancement of women in diplomacy, specifically in Africa, the authors decided to explore this area, starting with the literature. As a result of the initial conference findings and the global data collection, it became evident that the conference papers presented by the AWDF could be developed into a larger inquiry, hence this book.

On 25 March 2019, the AWDF, in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Aga Khan Foundation Canada, organised a one-day seminar whose theme was “African and Canadian Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Challenges and Opportunities”. It attracted over 12 women scientists from Africa and Canada and was organised to celebrate the accomplishments of African women scientists in STEM. The seminar was organised in two parts. The morning session was organised in partnership with the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and featured a roundtable discussion that brought together African and Canadian women scientists.

The roundtable provided a platform for African and Canadian women scientists to share and exchange knowledge and ideas on how to enhance the participation of women in STEM. The roundtable was followed by a high-level panel discussion in the afternoon session organised in partnership with the Aga Khan Development Network at the Delegation of the Ismaili Imam 199 Sussex Drive, Ottawa, ON K1N 1K6. The panel was preceded by a keynote address on: “Women in Science: Busting Myths and Misconceptions” delivered by Ms Diane Jacovella, Deputy Minister of International Development in the Government of Canada. In a goodwill video message, the Governor General of Canada Right Honourable Julie Payette, a former astronaut and a supporter of women in STEM, gave a message at the start of the afternoon programme. She said: “Science is a great unifying

platform where we search, explore and find solutions to common problems”.

Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Zimbabwe are the AWDF members which decided to continue with the inquiry individually and collectively. Their initial reflections led to the conclusion that although a lot has been written about women’s empowerment in Africa, this body of knowledge was yet to be brought to the fore, thus the compilation of this unique offering. One cannot altogether rule out the potential to feed into transforming and upgrading empowerment and the development of diplomacy as a profession for female African diplomats.

To explore some of these critical questions, the authors engaged the services of Wangui Kimari, then a PhD candidate at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, York University, Ontario, Canada, to help with the literature review. The stage was set by highlighting the progress made in the empowerment of women globally and specifically in Africa, focussing on leadership and highlighting some of the challenges faced by female diplomats.

This book takes some aspects of the case study approach to research, which involves identifying and locating participants who have experienced or are experiencing the phenomenon that is being explored. The authors of this book are senior women diplomats and experts in various fields (individual biographies attached).

The authors have lived and worked in their respective countries and are therefore qualified to write about the subject from both a knowledge and experiential perspective. The book is about members of a network writing about the progress made in their countries. The book is based on a review of documents and other literature contained in their nations’ records.

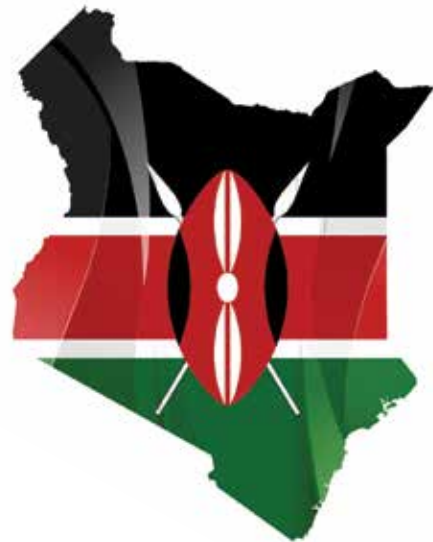
The authors reflect and observe patterns of women's empowerment on the African continent generally and give perspectives from specific countries. The perspectives are from two East African Community (EAC) member countries and two Southern African Development Community (SADC) member countries. The four diverse countries with a total population of ±130 million belong to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) region and the African Union (AU).

The book elaborates on the progress in the advancements in female empowerment in the political and economic spheres, and also registers some of the mechanisms used to measure, monitor and propel the changes established by key regional organisations such as the African Development Bank (AfDB), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and the AU, as well as national governments. Case studies of four African countries are used to elaborate on the experiences of women in leadership on the continent. Following this, the book summarises the challenges that women encounter on the continent, and how these shaped their opportunities in local governance and diplomacy. The authors conclude by highlighting the gaps in the literature, as well as in the multi-scalar and multi-stakeholder initiatives conducted at both a pan-African and local level, with a view to illustrating how international partners such as Canada can support the participation of African women in local governance and diplomacy.

1.2.2 About the focus countries

Historically, the four countries emerged from an insecure political environment brought about by the wave of the pre-colonial apparatus. Included in this was substantive internal conflict followed by the delicate art of state- and nation-building. No sectors in nation-building were spared from the need to prioritise gender development and diplomacy, albeit on a small scale.

Though diverse, there are cultural similarities in the four countries. Within that diversity, all four case studies use the same indicators to present a descriptive report on the situation in their sphere of influence, the status of women in political and leadership positions, participation in public services, and women's participation in diplomacy, and progress, challenges and opportunities. With the exception of Rwanda, the countries reflect interesting and similar patterns, influences and trajectory; they are all struggling with post-colonial neo-conservatism.



(a) Kenya

Kenya is located on the East Coast of Africa bordering the Indian Ocean to the east, Sudan and Ethiopia to the north, Somalia to the north east, Uganda to the west, and Tanzania to the south. It covers an area of 582 646 km² and ranks number 47 in the world in terms of size.

The population of Kenya has been growing steadily since the last national census in 2009 when it was estimated to be 38.6 million with women comprising 19.4 million and men 19.2 million (Republic of Kenya 2009, p.1). According to the 2017 economic survey, the population was estimated to be 45.4 million in 2016. In 2010, Kenya passed a progressive Constitution that emphasises the need for gender equality and inclusion in all spheres of life.

During the 11th Parliament (2013 – 2017), women represented 19.7% of the National Assembly and 26.9% of the Senate. The number of women in leadership positions has continued to grow, albeit slowly. For example, women formed 25.5% of the Cabinet secretaries and 36.6% of the principal secretaries in the period 2013 – 2017 (Republic of Kenya 2017, p.9).

Jane Kerubo, the Deputy Head of Mission for Kenya in Canada, presents the case study for Kenya.



(b) Rwanda

Rwanda is a sovereign state in East Africa with a widely varied geography. Rwanda has one of the highest population densities in Africa with a young, mostly rural population. The population is currently estimated to be 12.5 million.

The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi left the country shattered. Women took up new roles as heads of households and engaged in helping to rebuild the country. Rwanda recognised that recovery and development would only succeed with women playing a central role. Today, 52% of Rwanda's population are women. Gender equality and women's empowerment is a cornerstone of the Government of Rwanda's development strategy and a proven driver of development progress.

The greatest achievement since 1994 has been the transformation of the women of Rwanda from being desperate victims to leading actors in the reconstruction of the country.

Rwanda's achievements in gender equality and women's empowerment have been made possible by a strong political will at the highest leadership level.

Female participation in leadership in the nation's life has fast-tracked the implementation of gender equality programmes and women's empowerment. In addition to the 30% minimum quota for female representation in decision-making organs as enshrined in the nation's Constitution, women hold 64% of the seats in Parliament, 40% in the Cabinet, 50% in the judiciary, 50% in provincial governor positions, 43.6% in district advisory councils and 32.2% of ambassadors/high commissioners.

The Chargé d'Affaires of the Rwanda High Commission in Canada, Ms Shakilla K Umutoni, presents the case of Rwanda.



(c) South Africa

South Africa is a Parliamentary Republic with a population of about 56 million, of whom, according to the Statistics SA's Census of 2011, 51.3% are women. Africans are the majority population group at just over 41 million (79.2%), followed by whites (8.9%), coloureds/mixed race (8.9%) and Asians (2.5%).

The country shook off the colonial yoke of the apartheid system in 1994. Apartheid, a system which divided the country along racial lines and stripped black South Africans, the indigenous people of their human rights. Since the dawn of democracy in 1994 in South Africa, a number of policies have been introduced to address the racial inequalities brought about by the discriminatory laws imposed during the apartheid era. South Africa's 1996 Constitution, the supreme law of the country, created a foundation for policies to address gender inequality and promote women's rights. There has been notable progress of female leadership in the public sector and in positions of influence and politics that were previously dominated by men, such as in state-owned institutions, local government, legislatures and Parliament. These will be elaborated on in Chapter Six of this publication.

The case for South Africa is written by the High Commissioner for the Republic of South Africa in Canada, HE Ms Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo.



(d) Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country bordered by five countries, Zambia to the north, Mozambique to the east, South Africa to the south and Botswana and Namibia to the west and south west. It is often loosely referred to as a "teapot country" whose population boasts 16.15 million people (World Bank, 2016), 52% being women, with 16 languages, three of which are official: English, Shona and Ndebele. Zimbabwe has a circumference of 397 757 km². Zimbabwe, colonised by the United Kingdom since the partition of Africa (1883), assumed sovereign status on 18 April 1980 when it became a republic with a prime minister and a ceremonial president. The former assumed an executive position with the abolition of the post of ceremonial president.

In the middle of the 14th century, the historical and famous Munhumutapa Empire, representing present-day Zimbabwe, stretched from Angola to Mozambique. During this historical period, Nehanda Nyakasikana heightened the influence of female leadership. Eventually hanged for leading a revolt, known as the First Liberation War against colonialism, Nyakasikana is a part of national folklore.

Her heroism was evoked during the Second Liberation War, with the fulfillment of her declaration at the hanging site: "my bones will rise again from east". The second Chimurenga (revolutionary struggle) was conducted from Mozambique on the eastern side of Zimbabwe.

The country is guided by a Constitution, revised in 2013, in which the Gender Act is enshrined. While the country has been independent since 1980, it has found itself the recipient of non-United Nations sanctions from 2001 to today. The dual economy (apartheid) has been largely dismantled with government focussing on the economic turnaround after 19 years of isolation.

Female participation in government is on an upward trajectory, although it needs to be accelerated and promoted. Women are increasingly participating in diplomacy, but again the upward trend could be positively, deliberately and steadily strategised.

The case for Zimbabwe is written by the former Ambassador of the Republic of Zimbabwe and former Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Canada, Florence Zano Chideya, a one-time author.

References

1. African Women's Development Fund, 2017. *Futures Africa: Trend for Women by 2030*. Accra, AWDF
2. Republic of Kenya., 2009. Kenya Population and Housing Census 2009. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Available at <https://www.knbs.or.ke/publications> downloaded on April 18, 2018
3. Republic of Kenya, 2017a. Economic Survey 2017. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Nairobi. Government Printer
4. World Bank, 2015. *World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16-23): Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.

CHAPTER TWO: Overview of Women’s Empowerment and Politics

No Women, No Revolution!



2.1 Global review

Globally, the recorded number of countries that have made significant progress in advancing women’s participation in politics is extremely low. In many countries, women are still totally excluded from formal politics and are unable to exercise any political leverage. By “in politics”, we include women in Parliament, government institutions, diplomacy and other senior leadership positions.

On 21 and 22 September 2018, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, Honourable Chrystia Freeland, and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, Ms Federica Mogherini, co-hosted a Women Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Montreal, Canada. While the meeting discussed a number of areas covered in this publication, it was interesting to note that women’s empowerment, political participation and leadership was one of the main topics of discussion, especially the importance of women’s equitable inclusion at all levels of decision-making, including in the economy. Under this topic, the meeting highlighted, recognised and collectively addressed the barriers to women’s political, economic and social participation and leadership. It should be noted that at the time of the meeting there were only 30 female foreign ministers in the world and the meeting was attended by 17 of those ministers.

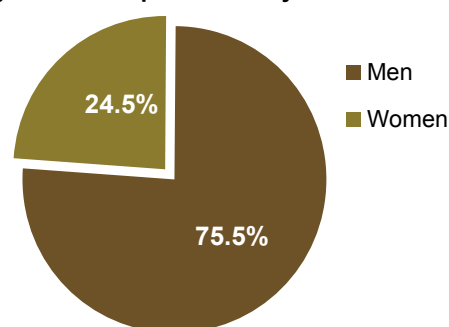
While there is a small, but notable increase in the number of countries that have elected a female leader, this number is still a far cry from what should be acceptable. Given the United Nations (UN) 1946 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that: “everyone has the right to take part in the government of *his* country, directly or through freely chosen representatives”, we should be seeing more of an increase of women in government.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the year 2017 witnessed positive changes in the cultural and social norms that framed women’s participation in elections all around the world. Elections held in 2017 resulted in a slight change in the world average of women in national parliaments. Women accounted for 23.97% of

all parliamentarians compared to 23.3 % in 2016 and 17.8 % in 2007. In 2019 there was a small gain of 5% on the 2017 percentage resulting 24,5%

Fig. 2.1 Percentage of women in Parliament

Percentage of women in Parliament, in all regions and all parliamentary structures



Gains were made in the elections held in 34 countries across the Americas, Europe, sub-Saharan Africa, Arab states, Pacific and Asia. The gains made over 24 years since the Beijing Conference (1995) are summarised in the following table.

Region	1995	2019	Gain +
1 World average	11.3	24.5	13.2
2 Americas	12.7	30.8	18.1
3 Europe	13.2	29.4	16.2
4 Sub-Saharan Africa	9.8	24.0	14.2
5 Arab states	4.3	16.8	12.5
6 Pacific	6.3	19.4	13.1
7 Asia	13.2	19.7	6.5

Table 2.1(a): World and regional averages of women in parliaments, 1995 and 2019

Source: Adapted from the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Women in National Parliament - Regional Averages

The data presented in the table shows that progress has been made over the period under review. The progress can be attributed to the global campaigns for women’s empowerment and gender equality, which resulted in many countries passing laws that are supportive of women’s

participation in leadership. Although fewer elections were held in 2018, the IPU (2019) observed that the proportion of women taking seats in national parliaments following those elections reached an impressive 24.5%.

However, in some instances, where women have been elected as head of state or government, they rarely

complete their term of office, or are not elected for another term. Currently, the percentage of women holding the office of Head of State or Head of Government is only 6% of the total number of international leaders. The following table (2.1b) (Source: Britannica, BBC, World Forum, Pew Research Center Analysis) illustrates heads of state or government in January 2019.

Head of State or Government	Country	Years in office
Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina	Bangladesh	14
*President Michelle Bachelet	Chile	7
President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarovic	Croatia	4
*Chancellor Angela Merkel	Germany	13
*President Kersti Kaljulaid	Estonia	2
*President Dalia Grybauskaitė	Lithuania	9
President Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca	Malta	4
*President Hilda Heine	Marshall Islands	3
*President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim	Mauritius	3
*President Bidhya Devi Bhandari	Nepal	3
Prime Minister (Māori: Te Piriimia o Aotearoa) Jacinda Arden	New Zealand	2
Prime Minister Erna Solberg	Norway	5
Prime Minister Beata Maria Szydło	Poland	3
Prime Minister Ana Brnabić	Serbia	2
***President of Swiss Confederation Doris Leuthard	Switzerland	4
*Prime Minister Theresa May	United Kingdom	3

Table 2.1(b) Female heads of government or state as at January 2018

***The first female leaders in these countries; * Figures as at January 2018.

***President of the Swiss confederation, Doris Leuthard, is a member of the Swiss Federal Council, which serves as Head of State and Government

The numbers increased slightly from 16 in 2018 to 22 in 2019 as shown in the figure below.

Figure 2.2. Female heads of state or government, 31 March 2019

Women leaders

As of Mar 31, 2019



Aung San Suu Kyi is Myanmar's de facto leader but her official role is that of State Counsellor (similar to Prime Minister)

Sources: Guide to Women Leaders. Photos: AFP



When it comes to global progress on female empowerment, it is even more curious to learn that substantial strides towards changing the status quo have been observed in countries within geographies in which political freedoms are perceived to be non-existent.

Confirming this observation, Manuela Picq, in an opinion piece on “Women in Parliaments: Contested Geographies”, which examines female participation rates in Parliament, states that at a global level, not all countries that claim women’s freedoms are necessarily those that practise it. Reflecting on the statistics provided by the IPU in <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>, Picq points out that out of 193 countries, the United States of America (USA) ranks 100 at a global level, behind countries usually seen as having poor records of female participation, such as Iraq, Pakistan and South Sudan, with merely 19.4% of women in the USA Congress.

According to the same chart by the IPU, and on the basis of information provided by national parliaments on 1 January 2019, countries such as Rwanda, South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique were far ahead compared to countries like the USA, Canada and the United Kingdom (UK). These are countries in geographies or continents perceived to be less modern than Western and European countries.

Picq also observes that indicators in the IPU chart show that countries perceived to be politically powerful are not leading global trends when it comes to female presence in leadership and politics. According to this writer, indicators show that it is often quite the contrary, meaning that the USA and Europe cannot invoke women’s rights when attempting to justify political, economic or military interventions.

Countries in the Commonwealth with existing strategies such as the Commonwealth Plan of Action (PoA) for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015 are also contributing to the gains for women across the world (Commonwealth Secretariat 2015; Burchard 2014).

Global trends show progress in female leadership participation. The Nordic countries have the highest percentage of female ministers at 48.9%, followed by the Americas at 22.9%, Africa at 20.4%, and Europe (18.2%), the Pacific (12.4%), Asia (8.7%) and the Arab region (8.3%). Every country in Africa and the Americas has at least one woman in a ministerial position (Women’s Involvement in Democracy (<http://democracyinfrica.org/women-politics-africa-today/>)).

The IPU report (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>) states that four countries had no women in Parliament in 2018: Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Vanuatu and Yemen. In 2014, eight countries had no women at all in government, a decrease from 14

in 2012: Lebanon, Saudi Arabia (Arab region), Pakistan and Brunei Darussalam (Asia), San Marino and Bosnia and Herzegovina (Europe) and the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu (Pacific). The number of women leading a ministry of defence has doubled from seven to 14 since 2012, the highest ever. The number of women in charge of foreign affairs and international cooperation has risen to 45, the highest number since 2008. Sweden is in the top five nations with the highest number of women both as ministers and in Parliament. The global average of women in Parliament has recorded an annual increase of 1.5%, reaching 24.5% on 1 October 2019.

The Americas maintain their lead as the region with the highest average of female members of Parliament (MPs) at 25.2%, while the Arab world has witnessed the biggest regional increase from 13.2% to 16%. Steady progress continues in Africa and Europe (up 2.1% and 1.4% respectively to 22.5% and 24.6%), but progress eludes Asia and the Pacific (now 18.4% and 16.2%). (<http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/3/progress-for-women-in-politics-but-glass-ceiling-remains-firm>)

Variations exist across regions, with the Nordic countries leading at 41.7%, the Americas at 28.1%, Europe (including Nordic countries) at 26.5%, Europe (excluding Nordic countries) at 25.3%, sub-Saharan Africa at 23.6%, Asia at 19.4%, the Arab states at 17.4%, and the Pacific at 17.4% as of June 2017 (single, lower and upper houses combined) (IPU 2017).

As of June 2017, only two countries had 50% or more women in Parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda with 64% and Bolivia with 53.1%. A number of countries have reached 30% or more. As of June 2017, 46 single or lower houses were composed of 30% or more women, including 19 countries in Europe, 13 in sub-Saharan Africa and 11 in Latin America. Progress has been made through the application of some form of quotas – either legislative candidate quotas or reserved seats – opening places for women to participate in national parliaments (UN Women 2017).

Gender balance in political participation and decision-making is the internationally agreed target set during the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (PFA) (UN 1995) (IPU 2017).

Women’s participation in leadership and decision-making has been found to be beneficial to society, because, “Women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women’s caucuses – even in the most politically combative environments – and by championing issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws and electoral reform”. (IPU 2008)



2019: Women heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Canada (WHDMO) hosted at a luncheon by the Right Honourable Julie Payette, Governor General of Canada, 27 March 2019.
 Photo courtesy of LS Anne-Marie Brisson, Rideau Hall, OSGG-BSGG

The participation of women in decision-making contributes to the overall development of society and leads to better and more effective governance. Ballington (2008, p.6) observes that a stronger presence of women in decision-making roles will allow new concerns to be highlighted on political agendas and new priorities to be put into practice through the adoption and implementation of policies and laws, which in the long run will contribute to democracy and good governance.

According to the IPU (2017), as of January 2017, only 18.3% of government ministers were women, holding mostly the portfolios for environment, natural resources and energy, followed by social sectors, such as social affairs, education and the family.

In spite of the progress reported in research, women still face challenges in their participation in politics.

Research tends to suggest that it is difficult for women to combine their family responsibilities with politics. A survey conducted by Ballington (2008) found that women parliamentarians were more than twice as likely as men to be divorced, widowed or separated with 16% in contrast to 6% of their male counterparts. Women are more than twice as likely to be single. These findings suggest that parliamentary careers tend to hold greater appeal for single women or married women without children than women whose family responsibilities may make political pursuits less attractive (Ballington 2008, p.9).

Women in the United Nations (UN)

The UN has been at the forefront in championing gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. There are a number of women occupying senior positions in the various organs of the UN as summarised in the table below:

Name	Position
1 Amina J Mohammed	Deputy Secretary-General of the UN
2 Inga Rhoda King	President of the UN Economic and Social Council
2 Jan Beagle	Under Secretary-General for management
3 Audrey Azoulay	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation Director-General
4 Michelle Bachetet	High Commissioner for Human Rights Council
5 Kelly T Clements	Deputy High Commissioner of the UN Refugee Agency
6 Dina El-Kassaby	Spokesperson for UN World Food Programme
7 Minh-Thu Pham	Executive Director of Policy at the UN Foundation
9 Mila Rosenthal	Chief of Communications of the UN Development Programme
10 Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka	UN Under Secretary and Executive Director of UN Women

Table 2.1(c): Women leaders in the UN as at January 2019

Source: Compiled from Foreign Policy Interrupted available at www.fpinterrupted.com/interruptor-series

Women heads of diplomatic missions accredited to Canada

An analysis of the gender representation of ambassadors/high commissioners accredited to Canada in January 2020 revealed that only 33 women (17.4%) out of the 184 countries had diplomatic relations with Canada. Out of the 33 women, nine represented countries from the Europe (Armenia, Denmark, Germany, Norway, France, Bulgaria, Moldova, Switzerland and United Kingdom), four represented the Caribbean states (Cuba, Guyana, Jamaica and, Saint Kitts & Nevis). African countries had seven women representatives (Ethiopia, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe). Two women represented the Asian region (Malaysia and Philippines) and Central and Latin American states had two female ambassadors (Honduras and Paraguay). The Middle East had one female ambassador representing Kuwait. Australia is another country represented by a woman. It is important to note that these statistics showed that three out of the G7 countries have female ambassadors (France, Germany and the UK) representing them in Canada (Global Affairs Canada, Office of Protocol, 2018). The rest, (eight) of the women were Chargé d'Affaires.

2. 2 Africa review

Africa has made progress in female participation in leadership and politics, but the numbers remain small. Improvement has been enabled by the vibrant voices and struggles of women on both a national and regional front.

Women are the most economically active in the world, “as farmers, workers and entrepreneurs” (Fraser-Moleketi in *Africa Gender Inequality Index*) and they contribute to a female labour participation that, at 65.4%, is the highest in the world (AWDF, 2017; ADB, 2015). It is these same women who have supported female presidents and vice-presidents in Liberia, Malawi and elsewhere, and have walked arm in arm with personalities such as Wangari Maathai – the first African woman to receive the Nobel Peace Prize – in fervent bids for gender equality.

Only 24% of all national parliamentarians in Africa were women as at November 2018, a slow increase from 11.3% in 1995 and 22.8% in 2016 (IPU 2018). By January 2017, 10 women were serving as heads of state and nine were serving as heads of government. Rwanda had the highest number of female parliamentarians worldwide, at 64 in the lower house. Globally, there were 38 countries in which women accounted for less than 10% of parliamentarians in single or lower houses as at June 2016, including four chambers with no women at all.

The African Union (AU), comprising 54 member states, has a gender policy and an action plan that is grounded in the protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, on the rights of Women in Africa (July 2003), in

the Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa (SDGEA, 2004) and in the Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development Resolution adopted by the heads of state and government in 2006. The member states are committed to the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in particular MDG3 on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment.

In a foreword to the gender policy document, the then Chairperson of the AU Commission, HE Jean Ping, notes that: “The AU Gender Policy Commitments will be used to provide the basis that will eliminate barriers to gender equality on the continent” (p.iii).

The AU's approach to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality is informed by the UN framework and the specific needs of the African continent (UN Charter and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), first Women's Conference, Mexico City (1975); adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), second Women's Conference, Copenhagen (1980); third Women's Conference, Nairobi (1985); and fourth Women's Conference, Beijing (1995) (AU Gender Policy, p.1).

It is estimated that about 70% of the AU member states have gender policies, but only a few countries have implemented these policies. The member states acknowledge gender mainstreaming as global, regional and national strategy in the implementation of the Beijing PFA and MDG3 on gender equality.

The main purpose of the AU's gender policy is to: “establish a clear vision and make commitments to guide the process of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment to influence policies, procedures and practices which will accelerate the achievement of gender equality, gender justice, non-discrimination and fundamental human rights in Africa” (Gender Policy, p.9). One of the values and principles guiding the implementation of the AU gender policy is: “the promotion of good governance and the rule of law, which guarantees human rights and rights of women through democratic and transparent institutions”. Another value is “the adherence of the principle of gender equality between men and women, boys and girls in enjoying their rights, sharing of opportunities, benefits and contributions” (p.9).

The overall goal of the policy is to “adopt a rights-based approach to development through evidence-based decision-making and the use of sex disaggregated data and performance indicators for the achievement of gender equality and women's empowerment in Africa” (p.10).

All but two African countries (Somalia and Sudan) have ratified CEDAW, and more than half have ratified the AU's Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa. Other

milestones include the AU's declaration of 2010 – 2020 as the African Women's Decade. In Kenya, the increase in female representation is attributed to the two-thirds gender rule in the Constitution, promulgated in 2010, and which provides that "not more than two thirds of the members of appointive and elective bodies shall be of the same gender (Article 27(8) and Article 81b)".

Population trends and estimates show that by 2030 the total population of women should rise to 65% in East and West Africa (*UN World Population Prospects*, 2015).

In spite of the progress made in women's empowerment in Africa, a gap still exists in the female labour force participation rate in sub-Saharan Africa. Available data shows that the female labour force participation rate (FLFPR) in 2015 was 65.4% compared to that of men at 76.6% (UNDP, 2015.) Women are often more likely to be in vulnerable positions such as being self-employed, or a contributing family worker without formal pay.

Women are overrepresented in sectors that are characterised by low status and pay (International Monetary Fund, 2013) and low pay is followed by low access to employee benefits. This overrepresentation is closely related to gender roles or stereotypes about women. It is not surprising therefore that women's participation in leadership and governance has been

identified as the most significant challenge to gender equality in Africa (AWDF 2017, p.59). However, more women are now vying for public office than before.

While Africa has seen a steady increase in the share of women in Parliament, it is only a small percentage of countries that have reached or surpassed the international target of 30% set by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1990 and reaffirmed in the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995. Given the current rate of change, it is estimated that representation of women in legislatures will not reach parity with men in developing countries until at least 2047 (Ernest and Young, 2011).

Africa's population has almost doubled over the past 15 years and the number of women in Cabinet positions has grown fivefold in 35 years. Again, numbers vary considerably by country and region. Southern and East Africa are ahead of the global average, though there is room for improvement. Globally, Africa has more women in Parliament and Cabinet. Credit for this growth may be attributed to targets for female representation set by regional parliaments and political parties. Representation, however, still needs to double if Africa is to achieve gender parity in government (Women Matter Africa, 2016, IPU, March 2017). Rwanda tops the world classification with 63.3% of women occupying parliamentary seats in 2019. The following table summarises the available data.

Global rank	Country	Seats	Number of women	Percentage of women
1	Rwanda	80	49	61.3%
7	Namibia	104	48	46.2%
10	South Africa	393	168	42.4%
11	Senegal	165	69	41.8%
18	Mozambique	250	99	39.6%
19	Ethiopia	547	212	38.8%
28	United Republic of Tanzania	393	145	37.2%
29	Burundi	121	44	36.4%
30	Tunisia	217	68	31.3%
33	Uganda	459	160	34.3%
40	Zimbabwe	270	87	31.5%
43	Cameroon	180	56	31.1%
48	Angola	220	66	30.5%
58	Sudan	481	130	30.5%
57	South Sudan	383	109	28.5%
64	Djibouti	65	17	26.2%
65	Algeria	462	119	25.8%
73	Somalia	275	67	24.4%
79	Lesotho	120	28	22.1%
79	Eritrea	150	33	22.0%
81	Guinea	114	26	21.9%
96	Kenya	349	76	21.8%

99	Morocco	395	81	20.5%
99	Mauritania	153	31	20.2%
101	Equatorial Guinea	100	20	20.0%
107	Madagascar	151	29	19.2%
115	Zambia	167	30	18.0%
116	Gabon	134	24	17.9%
122	Niger	171	29	17.0
124	Malawi	192	32	16.7%
126	Togo	91	15	16.5%
128	Libya	188	30	16.0%
135	Chad	168	25	14.9%
135	Egypt	596	89	14.9%
135	São Tomé and Príncipe	55	8	14.5%
141	Guinea Bissau	102	14	13.7%
142	Burkina Faso	127	17	13.4%
145	Ghana	275	36	13.1%
151	Sierra Leone	146	18	12.3%
151	Liberia	73	9	12.3%
155	Mauritius	69	8	11.6%
157	Congo	151	17	11.3%
160	Côte d'Ivoire	255	28	11.0%
162	Gambia	58	6	10.3%
162	Democratic Republic of Congo	485	50	10.3%
167	Botswana	63	6	9.5%
171	Mali	147	13	8.8%
172	Central African Republic	140	12	8.6%
174	Benin	83	6	7.2%
174	eSwatini	69	5	7.2%
180	Nigeria	359	20	5.6%
Total		10 693	2 593	25.93%

Table 2.2(a) African women representation in parliaments as at February 2019

Source: Adapted from the IPU (2019b): Women in National Parliaments. Statistical Archive.

Nine African countries held elections in 2017. In some of these countries, gains were made by women such as in Congo (3.9%), Kenya (3.2%) and Gambia (2.8%). In five of these countries, women made losses: Senegal (-0.8%), Liberia (-1.1%), Equatorial Guinea (-1.2%), Lesotho (-2.9%), Algeria (-5.8%) and Angola (-7.3%). The losses witnessed in some of the African countries are attributed to the reluctance of most political parties to nominate women to contest parliamentary elections as well as violence against women candidates and lack of implementation of laws geared towards supporting gender equality.

A survey conducted in 30 African countries in 2015 by *Women Matter Africa* (2016), found that from 2000 to 2015, the proportion of female parliamentarians almost doubled to 25%, and women's representation in Cabinet increased fivefold from 4% in 1980 to 22% in 2015, a quantitative leap from a regional perspective. These

findings rank Africa second only to the European Union in terms of share of female parliamentarians and is equal to that of Latin America. The statistics vary from region to region within the continent, with East Africa having the largest number of women in Parliament followed by southern Africa with an average of 25%, while West Africa has the lowest representation at 16%.

The *Women Matter Africa* study also found that 15 of the 30 African countries examined were above the global average. Women in the parliaments of Nigeria and Swaziland hold just 6% of seats. Zimbabwe reports 48% female representation in the Senate and 38% in the lower house and has a female president of the Senate as well as a female deputy speaker for the lower house. Zimbabwe registered a female vice-president for over a decade while both Liberia and Malawi were the first countries on the continent to register female heads of state.

The following table summarises the number of seats that were filled in nine African countries during the 2017 parliamentary elections. Some of the countries have legislation specifying quotas for female candidates. In Kenya, in addition to the legislated quota, a voluntary quota is allocated to political parties to nominate women or other marginalised groups into Parliament.

	Country	Total seats	Total women	% women	Quota
1	Senegal	165	69	41.8%	Yes
2	Angola	220	59	26.8%	Yes
3	Algeria	462	119	25.8%	Yes
4	Lesotho	122	27	22.1%	Yes
5	Kenya	349	76	21.8%	Yes*
6	Equatorial Guinea	100	20	20%	None
7	Congo	151	17	11.3%	None
8	The Gambia	58	6	10.3%	None
7	Liberia	71	7	9.9%	None
	Total	1,698	400	23.5%	

Table 2.2(b): Women in lower or single houses after parliamentary elections in 2017

Source: Adapted from the IPU (2018a). Women in Parliament in 2017.

The Year in Review. IPU

In all of the indices examined here to measure the status of women in Africa, Rwanda and South Africa consistently emerge in the top five positions. For example, of the 12 countries included in the recent AfDB report (2015), on women in the boardrooms of Africa, South Africa is second to Kenya with a percentage of 17.4% females on its corporate boards. The Commonwealth (2015) ranks Rwanda and Seychelles ahead of South Africa when it comes to the representation of women in national assemblies of commonwealth countries.

In Africa, only South Africa, Cape Verde and Rwanda have over 30% female Cabinet ministers (Pitamber 2016; IPU 2015). In 2017, South Africa had 41% female Cabinet ministers and 44% female parliamentarians.

In 1994, after the National elections for the first time in the history of SA, the president announced a gender balanced cabinet.

South Africa has had a female Minister of Foreign Affairs since 1999. Uganda has 36% female Cabinet ministers in key ministries such as education, trade and industry cooperatives, health, land, housing and urban development, and energy and minerals. It also had 37% female ministers of state, 39% female permanent secretaries and 34% female members of Parliament in 2015. The speaker and government chief whip of the Ugandan Parliament are women. In Kenya, women make up 23% of the Cabinet ministers and 37% of the principal secretaries.

In addition to these national political leadership positions, progress had been made in the appointment of women

to senior management positions both in the public and private sectors. In the *Women Matter Africa* study undertaken in 30 African countries, women in the public sector comprised 5% of the chief executive officers, 29% of senior managers and 44% of line managers. A number of women have also been appointed as permanent representatives of their countries to international and regional organisations such as the UN, AU, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC) and the Arab League.

2.3 Global interventions and observed progress in some African countries

For a long time, leadership has been considered a male domain. This is in spite of numerous successful leadership positions that women have held in different spheres and the multiple interventions that have been put in place to change perceptions and the status quo.

Global recognition has been via interventions such as the 1978 CEDAW, the 1995 Beijing PFA and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030 that build on the MDG framework (2000 – 2015). While all eight MDGs are directly relevant to the lives of women, only one focusses on women's equality and empowerment: *MDG3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women*.

The one target and three indicators of MDG3 are:

Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015.

Indicators:

- Ratios of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education
- Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector
- Proportion of seats held by women in national Parliament.

Since the MDGs were launched in 2000, significant efforts have been made on the African continent to meet the goals, especially in view of the low baseline figures in Africa compared to other regions. Highlighting this, the UNDP MDG progress report states that:

“Significant achievements in increasing women’s representation in national parliaments, reducing infant and HIV-related deaths, and enrolling more children in primary schools owe a lot to the effort and commitment of African people and their governments to meet the goals.” (UNECA *et al* 2015).

However, while Africa, and particularly East Africa, led the way in increasing the number of women in national parliaments by 15%, and despite almost reaching universal enrolment ratios of girls to boys in primary and secondary school, much work still has to be done before the required ratios of women in non-agricultural wage

employment, national assemblies and tertiary education can be met. The gaps are attributed to the persistence of structural inequalities, for example, poverty, employment and education, and enduring patriarchal cultural institutions (UNECA *et al*, 2015).

It is also important to note that Africa made improvements beyond MDG3, but still lagged behind other economies, in particular in “poverty, food security, and job creation” (MDG Monitor 2015). The recent improvement in the achievement of the goals has not extended to the poorest of the countries on the continent, and factors such as female poverty have inevitably impacted the progress towards fulfilling the MDG3 targets. Measures such as quotas, gender-sensitive budgets as well as other “gender-informed policy interventions” have allowed slow, but incremental gains. It also bears mentioning that the lack of consistent data in the region makes it difficult to measure progress (UNECA *et al* 2015, 15).

The following table shows the gains made in the case study countries: Kenya, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and South Africa in terms of meeting the targets of MDG3. It is important to note that the data, which details improvements in each country over that of previous years, is from examining the MDG status reports of each country for 2013 (2012 for Zimbabwe), as these were the only reports available.

Country	Ratio: girls to boys in primary in 2013		Ratio: girls to boys in secondary in 2013		Ratio: females to males in tertiary in 2013		Share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector (%)		Proportion of seats held by women in National Assembly (%)	
	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Kenya	1	0.98	1	0.89	1	0.81	35.9	50	19.7	50
Rwanda	1	1.03	1	0.93	1	No Data	18.1	50	64	50
S. Africa	1	0.96	1	1.07	1	1.38	45	50	44	50
Zimbabwe *2012	1	1	1	1.06	1	0.7	34	50	24% (upper house) & 14% (lower house)	50

Table 2.3: MDG 3 progress in Kenya, Rwanda, Zimbabwe and South Africa

Sourced from the country MDG status reports

The female to male ratio in Africa is roughly 50:50, and should remain constant over the next few decades. Factors such as declining infant mortality and a rising youth population have informed projections that show that by 2030 the continent will have a median age of 21 years (The Mastercard Foundation 2014, 4). Undoubtedly, against a backdrop of increased advocacy for women’s public and political participation (Okech 2016c), evidenced by regional commitments such as the Dakar PFA (1994) and the AU’s SDGEA, there should be much to look forward to among an increasingly youthful, female

population. These targets are complemented by a wide-reaching “gender-transformation agenda” taken up in the AU’s policy work channelled through both cross-cutting objectives as well as a number of thematic programmes such as those that focus on gender and women’s rights, and peace and security.

Furthermore, landmark interventions such as the 2003 Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (also known as the Maputo Protocol) and the AU Gender Policy (2009)

provide further evidence of the multi-level advocacy conducted by women across the continent and, above all, how this work translates into more gender-sensitive regional governance mechanisms. Demonstrating this, the AU, in its Gender Policy document, states that:

“The mandate of the policy derives from three main factors, foremost of which is the AU’s strong commitment to gender equality established in the various AU documents, namely the AU Constitutive Act (Article 4L), the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa, the SDGEA, and the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD) Framework. Collectively, these documents form a framework for commitments and responsibilities for the promotion of gender equality in Africa.” (AU 2009, 9).

The AU steers these gender targets through its Directorate for Women and Gender Development, which was formulated in 2000 (Okech 2016b, 9). Since its inception, this directorate has established key interventions for African women, such as The African Women’s Decade 2010 – 2020 and the Fund for African Women. It also designated 2015 as the Year of African Women’s Empowerment and Development towards Africa’s Agenda 2063 (AU WGD, 2017).

The AU designated 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women. These efforts are coupled with representation at a parliamentary level, with a target of 50:50 by the year 2063 (AU Commission 2015). The AU is also working closely with the AfDB, which launched its Gender Policy in 2001. Since then, it has taken numerous steps to consolidate and expand the gains enabled by this intervention. Two examples of this are the Gender Plan of Action of 2004 and the Gender Strategy of 2014: “Investing in Gender Equality for Africa’s Transformation”. The AfDB is also guided in its efforts by the Special Envoy on Gender, Geraldine J Fraser Moleketi, who was formerly Minister for Public Service and Administration in South Africa (1999 – 2008).

At a subregional level, organisations such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (IGCLR) have instituted interventions to protect the rights of women in situations of conflict (Okech 2016b, 9). Similarly, as a consequence of the efforts of a number of women’s organisations, the UN Security Council (SC) has passed a few resolutions geared towards inserting a critical gender perspective in security and peace-building processes. For example, the UNSC Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) emphasises the role that women can play in peace and security – a role that needs to be strengthened (Okech 2016b, 7). It is important to note that the activism of African women contributed greatly to the formulation of this resolution (Tripp 2013).

Regional organisations such as UNECA and the AfDB have established indices to monitor the progress of member states in “translating” relevant global and continental gender commitments, as contained in targets such as the 1995 Beijing PFA and the MDGs. By focussing solely on the African continent, the *UNECA African Gender and Development Index (AGDI)* aims to reflect African realities. Its data is based on statistics gathered from select African countries and it strives to identify underlying “power issues” in the inequalities noted by the report (UNECA 2011).

The AfDB’s *Gender Equality Index (2015)* offers a more comprehensive analysis of gender equality on the continent as it compares data on 52 African countries. Above all, “it was designed not just to measure gender inequality, but to promote development”, is “action-oriented” as it seeks to propel African decision-makers to “focus on and address some of the most serious barriers that prevent African women from engaging on a level playing field with men, to help African citizens demand more from their governments, and to help the AfDB itself to better focus its gender-related policy dialogue and interventions” (AfDB 2015). The composite metrics used for the analysis are the *Gender Status Index*, which is a quantitative measurement and the *African Women’s Progress Scoreboard* – a qualitative measurement (AfDB 2015).

Local and international NGOs and grassroots organisations are working together to improve the conditions of women across the continent. In one example, Action Aid has supported the crafting of a Kenyan Women’s National Charter (2012). On a Pan-African front, the African Women’s Development Fund (AWDF), which is based in Ghana and is the only organisation of its kind on the continent, provides grants to over 100 organisations that work to advance the rights of women in Africa. These efforts are anchored in the many smaller scale, but equally significant work of millions of women, in grassroots groups and individually, across the continent.

Since 2012, the Mastercard Foundation has pledged to give 70% of its 15 000 education scholarships programmes that are geared towards “transformative leadership,” to young girls (The Mastercard Foundation 2014). These interventions are propelled by data that shows women’s active participation in economic, political and social life improves the gross domestic product (GDP) of a country (AfDB 2014).

It bears mentioning that in 2015, only 22% of senior managers in mid-market businesses around the world were women. Figures collected by the Commonwealth Secretariat show that in Botswana, 37% of private-sector executive leaders were women, and in South Africa,

27% of senior management roles were held by women (Commonwealth Secretariat 2016, 7).

The Commonwealth Plan of Action recommends that member countries should strive to achieve at least 30% of women in key decision-making positions in all sectors: public, private and political (Commonwealth 2015). To date, these targets have not been met, not just in the Commonwealth, but globally. On average, only 22% of parliamentarians and 17% of government ministers worldwide are women (IPU 2017; Tripp 2013).

About eight Commonwealth African countries have 30% female representation in Cabinet positions, a significant departure from the 17% global average. To highlight the significance of this, it is worth noting that in 2015, Australia's Cabinet only had 5% female members. Canada, a global leader in gender equality, maintains a 50% male/female ratio in its Cabinet. In September 2015, Africa had more countries with female speakers in national assemblies than any other region in the world, with one-fifth of African parliaments having female speakers. These speakers are in legislative assemblies in Botswana, Rwanda, Uganda, Tanzania, Mozambique, Lesotho, Mauritius and Swaziland (Commonwealth 2015, 7).

In the last five years, a significant number of female vice-presidents have been elected on the continent: Joyce Banda in Malawi, Joyce Mujuru in Zimbabwe, Inonge Wina in Zambia, Monique Agnès Ohsan-Bellepeau in Mauritius, Samia Suluhu in Tanzania and Fatoumata Jallow-Tambajang in Gambia. These women were preceded by pioneer deputy presidents in earlier years in South Africa, Uganda, Gambia, Burundi, São Tomé and Príncipe and the Central African Republic. It is also important to note that the former head of the AU Commission, from 2012 to 2017, was a woman – South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, and Gertrude Mongella from Tanzania was the first president of the Pan-African Parliament of the AU in 2012.

Furthermore, Tripp (2013) calls attention to the non-stereotypical roles that women are adopting. In contrast to earlier decades when women would be given "softer" ministerial roles such as in the ministries of education, gender or sports, women now occupy a host of unconventional political roles. For example, in South Africa, Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, is the Minister of Defence, and Rachel Omamo has been the Cabinet Secretary in the Ministry of Defence in Kenya since 2013. In addition, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala served two terms as Nigeria's Finance Minister from 2003 to 2006 and from 2011 to 2015. Gender inclusion is also seen in local government positions, in voting habits and in the judiciary across the continent. With particular reference to the judiciary, though on an international front, Fatou Bensouda from Gambia is the chief prosecutor of the

International Criminal Court, which includes four African judges, two of whom are women (Tripp 2013; ICC 2017).

Reflecting on these positive developments, the AfDB states that:

"Even without quotas, women are taking on more leadership roles. In Liberia, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was the first woman to become President of an African nation, followed by Joyce Banda in Malawi and Catherine Samba-Panza in the Central African Republic. Today, women are represented in the Cabinet of every single African country, and the overall proportion of women Cabinet ministers has increased from 4% to 20%, with South Africa (45%), Cape Verde (36%) and Lesotho (32%) the front runners. In this respect, Africa is ahead of Europe. While improved representation of women does not always translate into equal influence, the trend appears to be positive." (AfDB 2015, 24).

Also highlighting these positive developments on the continent, Burchard (2014) states that, when compared to the 1980s when it "was virtually unheard of for a woman to run for public office, now women occupy on average 22.5 % of legislative seats across the continent".

This places Africa above Asia and the Middle East and only slightly behind the Americas and Europe (Burchard 2014; See also Tripp 2013). Together with changing local and international political norms, the authors attribute this progress to a number of factors, including:

- the extensive involvement of women in revolutionary movements that then found power in the post-colonial moment (i.e. South Africa and Zimbabwe)
- the peace-building role of women in recent conflict zones that drew on their ability to mobilise and subsequently translate into political change and enabled their access to power (i.e. Uganda and Liberia)
- with particular reference to Rwanda, the importance of including women in the post-conflict political arena, especially since a large section of the male population had been killed during the genocide (Burchard 2014).

In accounting for these trends, Okech (2016a, b, c) shows that African women are not passive victims who need to be saved as is so often portrayed. Instead, African women have contributed immensely to the advancements of gender rights both at home and abroad. As an example, Tripp notes how the work in peace-building contributed to the passing of UNSCR 1325 that aims to, "include women in peace negotiations and give them roles in peace-keeping missions around the world" (Tripp 2013).

What is evident from the above analysis is that both contextual dynamics and global currents allow for a situation where women are better represented in political, economic and social areas of power. One

key manifestation of this is that gender discrimination is outlawed in the majority of constitutions across the continent, and gender-based quotas for legislative bodies and political parties are now the norm in many African countries (Burchard 2014; Tripp 2013).

To ensure that women have the same opportunities as men to become leaders globally, the international community must address the unique challenges facing women and girls. Women's political empowerment is vital to fulfil the promise to implement the Beijing PFA of 1995 and the more recent commitment made by all 54 countries in Africa to achieve the SDGs. Gender parity in decision-making is vital for the sake of economic development, good governance, and peace and prosperity not only in Africa, but across the world.

The above analysis shows that contextual dynamics and current global trends allow for a situation where women are better represented in political, economic and social spaces of power.

References

1. African Development Bank. 2015. *African Gender Equality Index 2015*. Abidjan: African Development Bank
2. African Development Bank. 2015b. *Where are the Women: Inclusive Boardrooms in Africa's top listed Companies?* Abidjan: African Development Bank
3. African Union Commission 2015. *African Gender Scorecard*. Addis Ababa. African Union Commission
4. African Women's Development Fund. 2017. *Futures Africa: Trend for Women by 2030*. Accra,
5. AWDF
6. The United Nations, 1946. This right was reiterated in the article 25 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* adopted by General Assembly Resolution 2200 (XXI) of 16 December 1966
7. African Commission on Human and People's Rights. 2003. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. Available at: http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/women-protocol/achpr_instr_proto_women_eng.pdf
8. African Union. 2004. *Solemn Declaration in Gender Equality in Africa*. Available at: http://www.justice.gov.za/docs/other-docs/2004_AUdeclaration.pdf
9. African Union. 2009. *African Union Gender Policy*. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au_gender_policy_2009.pdf
10. AU Women Gender and Development. 2017. Official Website, available here: <https://au.int/en/wgd>
11. Burchard, Stephanie. 2014. "Women's Political Participation in Africa: An Upside of Conflict." *Africa Watch*. Institute of Defence Analyses: Alexandria, Virginia
12. Commonwealth Secretariat. 2005. *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat
13. Commonwealth Secretariat. 2016. *Gender and Political Development: Women and Political Leadership in The Commonwealth*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat
14. Commonwealth Secretariat. 2005. *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat
15. Commonwealth Secretariat. 2016. *Gender and Political Development: Women and Political Leadership in The Commonwealth*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
16. Geiger, A. and Kent, L. 2017. "Number of women leaders around the world has grown, but they're still a small group" available at www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/03/08/women-leaders-around-the-world/ downloaded on 24 April 2018
17. International Criminal Court. 2017. Official Website, available at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/>
18. Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) 2008. Women in National Parliaments. Available at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
19. Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018). Women in Parliament in 2017. *The Year in Review*.
20. Inter-Parliamentary Union (2018): Women in National Parliaments. Statistical Archive. Available at [ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classifo10618.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classifo10618.htm) accessed on 17 August 2018
21. McKinsey Company. 2016. *Women Matter Africa*. Sandton: South Africa.
22. Okech, Awino. 2016a. *Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa*. Accra: African Women's Development Fund
23. Okech, Awino. 2016b. *Gender and Security in Africa*. Accra: African Women's Development Fund
24. Okech, Awino. 2016c. *Unlocking the Doors. Feminist Insights for Inclusion in Governance, Peace and Security*. Accra: African Women's Development Fund
25. Pitamber, Pria. 2016. "South Africa's Women in Politics." Available in: *Brand South Africa*.
26. Tripp, A.M. 2013. "Women and Politics in Africa Today." *Democracy in Africa*.
27. UN General Assembly. *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, 1979*. Available at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>
28. UN Women. 2017. *Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*. New York: Commission on the Status of Women.
29. Women's Involvement in Democracy: <http://democracyinafrica.org/women-politics-africa-today/>



CHAPTER THREE: Women in Diplomacy and the Double Bind Dilemma

“Whatever women do, they must do twice as well as men to be thought as good...
Luckily, this is not difficult.”

Charlotte Whitton



An overview

At its essence, diplomacy is the conduct of relationships, using peaceful means, by and among international players, at least one of whom is usually a government. The typical international actors are states, and the bulk of diplomacy involves relationships directly between states, or between states, international organisations and other international players.

Women’s participation in diplomacy dates back to post-World War II. Before this, international relations and politics were considered a man’s domain. Niccolo Machiavelli, a pioneer in the field of diplomacy, is said to emphasise the importance of masculine characteristics in conducting diplomatic affairs. Sir Harold Nicholson once said: “Women are prone to qualities of zeal, sympathy and intuition which, unless kept under the firmest control, are dangerous qualities in international affairs” (cited in Talyn Rahman-Figueroa, 2012, p.2).

Male diplomats relied on women’s unpaid labour in maintaining relations with their political counterparts. Before women were admitted as diplomats, diplomatic wives were perceived as the

“unpaid benefit for the system as they played a vital role in bridging relations between male members from different diplomatic missions. The role they played was not formally recognised or paid for. Male diplomats depended on their wives’ cooperation by being their ‘eyes and ears’ at functions. Gathering intelligence is an essential task for diplomats. As such, diplomatic wives were entrusted with the duty of creating an atmosphere in the residence where diplomats from different states could get to know each other ‘man to man’ and talk business off the record.” (Talyn Rahman-Figueroa, 2012, p.2).

These obstacles and all other excuses came from leaders in the Western and European regions, regions where the

perception has been that they (the regions) are in the lead when it comes to gender equity. As an example, according to Douglas Brinkley and Luke Nichter in “The Nixon Tapes”, Richard Nixon wanted to appoint a woman as a high court judge only because he wanted to boost his election campaign. He is quoted as saying: “I don’t think a woman should be in any government job whatever. I mean, I really don’t. The reason why I do is mainly because they are erratic and emotional. Men are erratic and emotional, too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/27/us/book-says-nixon-considered-a-woman-for-supreme-court.html>.

Such irrational comments by leaders of influence give credence to the notion that women cannot achieve parity with men in leadership positions in the foreseeable future because of gender limitations. This is confirmation that the established structures, stereotypes, perceptions and unconscious bias ultimately place women in a double bind dilemma – when they become evaluated against a “masculine” standard of leadership, leaving women with “limited and unfavourable options, no matter how they behave and perform as leaders”. The field of diplomacy has been difficult for women to enter because, for a long time, diplomacy has been associated with wars, power and masculinity, all of which have been perceived as the sole preserve for men. Consequently, women often find themselves in an untenable position of having to perform their duties knowing that they are assessed against these “masculine standards”.

The Double Bind Dilemma has been explained as a psychological impasse created when contradictory demands are made of an individual so that no matter which directive is followed, the response will be construed as incorrect. It is a situation in which a person must choose between equally unsatisfactory alternatives; a punishing and inescapable dilemma.

https://www.catalyst.org/system/files/The_Double_Bind_Dilemma_for_Women_in_Leadership_Damned_if_You_Do_Doomed_if_You_Dont.

3.1. Women in diplomacy, global review

Though positive changes are taking root in the sectors touched on thus far, it appears that in the arena of diplomacy, women have not been able to advance as rapidly as in other sectors. Curiously, few women throughout history have been engaged in diplomacy on a formal, international scale (Keohane *et al* 2010, 9).

Notwithstanding the slower pace of progress in this sector, Stewart (2012) reports on a survey by *Embassy Magazine* that tallied the status and number of women in diplomacy across the globe, and concluded that both the conditions for, and the quantity of, women in this field had improved since the early 2000s. The evidence given for this is cross-cutting, from the number of women in the diplomatic service globally to the increase in policies that make it easier and more attractive for women to remain in the field. In one instance, their findings show that 15% of all permanent representatives to the UN in New York are women compared to the early 2000s when the figure for female participation was only 5%.

What is more, the number of women heads of mission in London has also risen to 13% from 9% over a similar period, and in Washington the number has increased to 14% from 6% in the late 1990s. Undoubtedly, it is the Nordic countries that lead the way and, at the time of the survey, Norway had an impressive 30% of female ambassadors in Europe – a significant improvement from 8.5% in 1995. In Europe, Finland, Sweden and the UK follow closely behind Norway.

Elsewhere, 27% of ambassadors from the USA are women, and in the Caribbean, Grenada remains a pioneer as more than half of its ambassadors are female. In the Americas, a quarter of all Panama's ambassadors are female. While states in the Middle East and North Africa still do not have much female representation in diplomatic

positions, nonetheless, their numbers are also on the rise. In the Asia-Pacific region, Philippines and Australia are the torch bearers, with 40% (Philippines) and 29% (Australia) of the heads of missions they deploy are women. On the African continent, South Africa and Rwanda are leading the way with women with just below 25% female heads of missions, above the international average of 14% (Stewart 2012).

Affirmative action adopted by many foreign ministries, as well as changes to social attitudes, which bolster the confidence of women of the “next generation” in diplomacy worldwide, are the reasons given for the incremental increase in the number of women in the field. At the same time, the need for better family-friendly policies, for example, to cater for the employment of male spouses, was emphasised by the *Embassy Magazine* survey respondents. It is important to note that organisations such as the Women Diplomatic Service (WDS), the professional association for senior women diplomats based in London, is also playing its part to support women in the field.

Although progress has been observed in the appointment of women into political leadership, especially in a number of African countries, challenges remain. Research shows that women continue to occupy staff roles rather than line management positions as well as being appointed to social welfare portfolios that do not result in much political influence. According to *Women Matter Africa* (2016), numbers do not equal influence.

Given that in September 2018, the total number of female foreign ministers globally was less than 30 is a clear demonstration that there is resistance to change. It should, therefore, be obvious that this slow progress is also observed in diplomacy. Table 3.1 (a) below is the list of female foreign ministers as at September 2018.

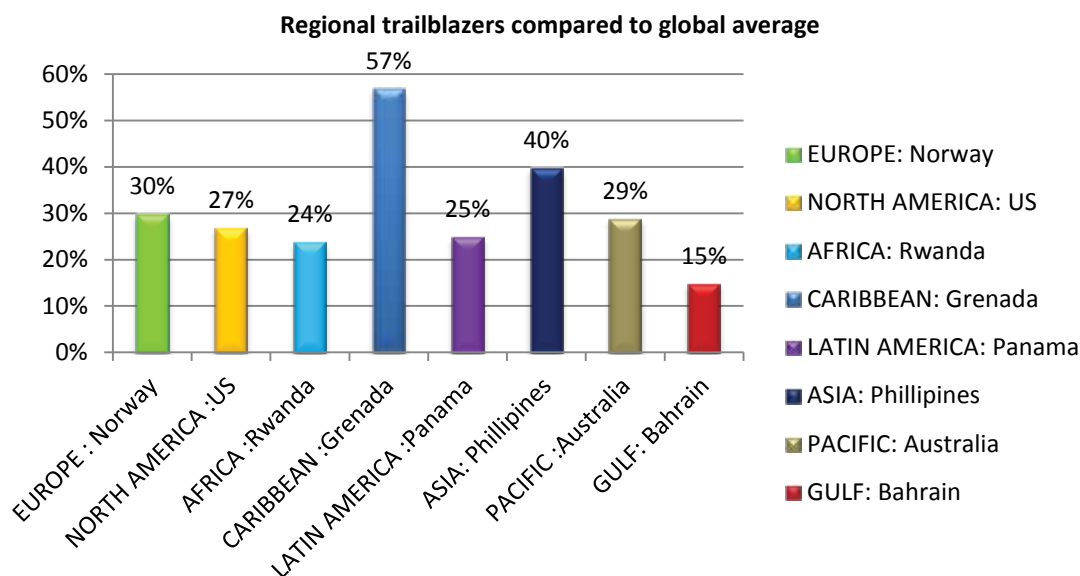
	NAME	FULL TITLE	COUNTRY	REGION
1	Her Excellency Ms Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey, MP	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration	Ghana	Africa
2	Her Excellency Ms Monica Juma	Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs and International Trade of the Republic of Kenya	Kenya	Africa
3	Her Excellency Ms Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia	Namibia	Africa
4	Her Excellency Ms Louise Mushikiwabo	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda	Rwanda	Africa
5	Her Excellency Ms Lindiwe Nonceba Sisulu	Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa	South Africa	Africa
6	Excelentísima Señora Maria Ángela Holguin Cuéllar	Ministre de Relaciones Exteriores de la República de Colombia	Colombia	Americas
7	Her Excellency Ms Francine Baron	Minister for Foreign Affairs and CARICOM of the Commonwealth of Dominica	Dominica	Americas
8	Excelentísima Señora Saqndra Erica Jovel Polanco	Ministre de Relaciones Exteriores de la Republica de Guatemala	Guatemala	Americas
9	Her Excellency Ms Kamina Johnson Smith	Minister for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica	Jamaica	Americas
10	Excelentísima Señora Isabel de Saint Malo de Alvarado	Vicepresidenta y Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores de la Republica de Panamá	Panama	Americas
11	Honourable Sarah Flood-Beaubrun	Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister with responsibility for External Affairs of Saint Lucia	Saint Lucia	Americas
12	Excelentísima Señora Epsy Campbell Barr	Primera Vicepresidenta de la Republica Ministra de Relaciones Exteriores Culto	Costa Rica	Americas
13	Her Excellency Ms Sushma Swaraj	Minister of External Affairs of the Republic of India	India	Asia
14	Her Excellency Ms Kang Kyung-wha	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea	Republic of Korea	Asia
15	Sone Excellence Madam Maria Ubach Font	Minister des Affaires etrangeres de la Principaute d'Andorre	Andorra	Europe
16	Her Excellency Ms Karin Kneissl	Federal Minister for Europe Integration and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria	Austria	Europe
17	Her Excellency Mrs Ekaterina Zaharieva	Deputy Prime Minister of Judicial Reform and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria	Bulgaria	Europe
18	Her Excellency Mrs Marija Pejčinović Burić	Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia	Croatia	Europe
19	Her Excellency Aurelia Frick	Minister for Foreign Affairs, Justice and Culture of the Principality of Liechtenstein	Liechtenstein	Europe
20	Her Excellency Ms Ine Eriksen Søreide	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway	Norway	Europe
21	Her Excellency Ms Margot Wallstrom	Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden	Sweden	Europe
22	Her Excellency Ms Julie Bishop	Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Commonwealth of Australia	Australia	Oceania
23	Her Excellency Mrs Faustina K Rehuher-Marugg	Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Palau	Palau	Oceania
24	Her Excellency Mrs Chrystia Freeland	Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada	Canada	Americas
25	Her Excellency Ms Federica Mogherini	High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission		Europe

Table 3.1 (a) List of female foreign ministers as at September 2018

The following graph, adapted from the *Embassy Magazine* shows the proportion of women heads of mission and regional trailblazers compared to global average.

Figure 3.1: Proportion of female heads of mission in selected countries

http://www.embassymagazine.com/barometer/bar_issues/emb38_bar.html



Available data from Armenia shows that out of 80 missions, only four missions are headed by female ambassadors. This is only 5% of women serving as ambassadors. In Belgium, women occupy only 10% of the senior diplomatic positions.

(http://www.genderportal.eu/sites/default/files/resource_pool/GenderStat_f_Hfdst_1-8_tcm337-160843.pdf)

In the European Union (EU), the diplomatic corps currently only has 11 out of 115 female ambassadors, which has led members to refer to the EU as the “Western European old boys club”. In 2002, only 11 female ambassadors served their country as permanent representatives at the UN in New York, with 15 female diplomats posted in Washington. These numbers are slightly higher than they were a few years ago, but when compared to the 192 member states currently in the UN, it means that only 6% of diplomats are women. The UK has yet to appoint a female diplomat to the UN as its representative. It took the UK 191 years to finally appoint its first female head of mission, and in 2010, only 21.8% of senior management positions from 260 diplomatic missions were filled by women (Talyn Rahman-Figueroa March 8, 2012).

Scanning the diplomatic gender map in 2018 in Canada, the female heads of missions accounted for 27%. This figure seems to be lagging slightly behind that of both Southern African Development Community (SADC) and East African Community (EAC) figures. SADC, as part of regional harmonisation average gender balance expectation, is pegged at 50%/50%, while the AU gender barometer targets 30% female diplomatic personnel.

3.2 Women in diplomacy, Africa review

In *Gender, Culture and Protocol in the Diplomatic Service*, South Africa’s Department of International Relations and Cooperation reminds us that women in diplomacy and political leadership are not a new phenomenon. The publication cites the following examples from Africa’s pre-colonial era:

- Angola’s history speaks of Queen Ann Nzinga who, in the 17th century, formed alliances with other kingdoms to fend off the Portuguese. She declared the lands she ruled over “free country” and promised all slaves who reached her lands freedom. She was not one to ignore responsibility. She oversaw mighty armies that strategically kept her lands free throughout her four-decade rule.
- The Egyptian Queen, Hatshepsut, is renowned for expanding foreign trade and improving diplomatic relations. She also initiated the development of construction programmes and a naval fleet.
- Ghana’s Ashanti Empire gave us Yaa Asantewa, the brave Queen Mother of Ejisu. She inspired the fight against colonial invaders by declaring: “Is it true that the bravery of the Ashanti is no more? I cannot believe it. It cannot be! I must say this, if you the men of Ashanti will not go forward, then we will. We the women will, I shall call upon my fellow women. We will fight the white men. We will fight till the last of us falls in the battlefields”.
- Other African leaders include the Queen of Sheba, Ethiopia’s BC Makeda, in the 10th century and Nehanda, the Zimbabwean warrior spirit medium,



The Group of African Heads of Missions accredited to Canada in May 2019

who joined her compatriots in fending off the English invasion of Zimbabwe prior to the 1890s. She declared, as she faced death by hanging, that, “my bones will rise again”, a prophecy evidenced by the mass exodus of the population who voluntarily left the country for the east and returned on the attainment of independence in 1979 following decades of Chimurenga (war of liberation).

- Africa’s Diaspora also birthed leaders like Harriet Tubman and Rosa Parks.

Despite examples of powerful female leaders in history, a women’s role in diplomacy has nevertheless traditionally been thought of as the doting wife or the adoring daughter. Signs of change appeared in the 1930s when 13 countries, including Nicaragua and Turkey, appointed female diplomats. A few decades later in 1996, Madeleine Albright declared: “Today, women are engaged in every facet of global affairs, from policymaking to deal-making, from arms control to trade, from the courtroom of the War Crimes Tribunal to the far-flung operations of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees”.

The range of functions that diplomats engage in does not necessarily require diplomats to be men. Women can negotiate; they are good communicators, strategic thinkers and are good in public relations. Accordingly, there can never be an excuse to continue excluding women from this sphere.

The data in Table 3.1(b) shows that some African countries such as South Africa, Uganda, Zimbabwe and Rwanda are making notable progress in appointing women to diplomatic positions. There are a number of women who also hold senior management positions in the ministries of foreign affairs as deputy heads of missions, consular generals and directors of various directorates in the ministries.

Country	Number of ambassadors /high commissioners		
	Women	Men	Percentage of women
Ethiopia	10	40	21
Rwanda	9	34	26
Uganda	14	20	41
Sudan	12	206	6
South Africa	38	88	30
Zimbabwe	10	35	22.2
Total	93	423	21.7

Table 3.2(a): Percentage of women ambassadors/high commissioners in selected African countries, May 2018

Source: Compiled from the various country ministries of foreign affairs data.

Data on African countries represented in Canada suggests a dismally low number of women in the Foreign Service. Although it is important to note that the gender equality challenge is not unique to Africa, it is not possible to give exact numbers as this area is still being researched.

In most countries, female participation in diplomacy appears to be as a result of a combination of opportunity and personal drive rather than through a coordinated effort by governments to increase female participation in international diplomacy. Apart from a few women who have climbed the career diplomatic ladder, the majority of women rely on the political will of the appointing authorities, especially for political appointments.

3.3 The Double Bind Dilemma

Even before women entered the field of diplomacy, the playing field was uneven and riddled with barriers to entry. Often, as soon as a woman becomes a diplomat, her leadership style and performance are measured through gender stereotyping. This leaves female diplomats vulnerable to unfair criticism and leads to them always trying to do more to prove themselves. It is not surprising



Members of the African Women Diplomatic Forum, March 2019

that these women are often left with the feeling of being trapped in a double bind – a sense that “whatever you do as a woman, you can do no right”.

“As diplomacy has been exclusively male for a long time, there are particular forms of ingrained masculinity norms, scripts and practices. These have led to informal barriers that exclude and prevent women’s participation in diplomacy. The gendered nature of diplomacy sometimes prevents the addition of women from making it more gender equal. Sometimes, there is overt or signalling to women that they are not suitable for diplomacy. These include unfounded fear that women cannot combine a demanding diplomatic career with marriage or parenthood (Ref: Aggestam, K. and Towns, A. [2019] *The Gender turn in Diplomacy: a new research agenda in International Feminist Journal of Politics* Vol 2 Issue No1 pp 9-28)

(a) Barriers to entry

Globally, women’s advancement to leadership and political position is reminiscent of an obstacle course with a number of challenges at almost every step of the way. The small number of women in diplomatic positions reflects the same challenges faced by women in the political, civil, private or judicial sectors. The main challenges for women in diplomacy are making “tough choices between family life and their careers”, because of discriminatory laws and persistent institutionalised patriarchy that manifest in a diversity of prejudices. Regardless of the interventions that have been instituted, women are still struggling to break the glass ceiling in the diplomatic arena.

“In one area where it seems likely that women could excel, there have been curiously few women in history engaged in it on a formal, international scale: diplomacy.” (Keohane *et al* 2010, 9).

Male-dominated representation in diplomacy is no longer viable within an interconnected world where women’s rights are globally recognised.

Rahman (2012), using the UK as a case study, examined gender hierarchy as a key problem to the advancement of women in diplomacy, and explored a variety of practical solutions to breaking centuries of patriarchal tradition. She asked several key questions that are relevant to this publication:

- If diplomacy is supposed to reflect all of society, why are women still marginalised in the diplomatic hierarchy?
- Why does gender hierarchy exist in diplomacy?
- Why are women necessary in diplomacy?
- What is obstructing women from becoming ambassadors?
- What are women currently doing to overcome gender hierarchy?
- How can management promote better representation of women in diplomacy?

A number of structural barriers still exist in gender equality and gender-based discrimination persists in labour markets worldwide. The challenges impose greater constraints on women than on men in balancing work and family responsibilities and these structural barriers need to be eliminated for women to be able to participate fully in society and equally in politics and in particular, in international diplomacy. (UN Economic and Social Council E/CN.6/2017/L.5 available at undocs.org/E/CN.6/2017/L.5) General Assembly resolution 48/134, annex.

Female diplomats face a myriad of barriers to entry and advancement in their careers, some of which are discussed.

(b) Weak implementation of laws

The main challenge in the empowerment of women appears to be weak implementation of existing laws to protecting women’s rights and/or the sustained political

will to achieve substantive equality through gender sensitive policy-making. For example, the East African region has the highest proportion of countries with constitutional provisions that recognise equal rights to work and equal pay for work of equal value, but the region has the lowest proportion of statutory protection for unequal pay. Sometimes, effective implementation of guarantees is challenged by the existence of multiple laws that contradict each other, thus curtailing the rights of women (UN Women, 2011).

It has been observed that as Africa's record of women in Parliament improves, it has been accompanied by rising cases of women rights' abuse as reflected in ineffective electoral systems, politically fragile environments, rising religious fundamentalism, cultural conservatism, recurring democratic recessions, a lack of constitutionalism and political patronage (Okech Awino 2016a). Examples of political violence against women are described elsewhere in this book.

(c) Roles and role reversals: reconciling work and family

Working abroad poses challenges with regard to maintaining marital relationships and child rearing. Whereas most women are willing to accompany their husbands abroad if they are posted as diplomats, the same sacrifice is sometimes difficult for men who have to leave their careers to accompany their wives who have been appointed as diplomats. Most African cultures consider it normal for a woman to accompany her husband to missions abroad, but it is not the same if a husband accompanies his wife, especially if they have independent careers.

The issue of multitasking becomes a reality for most female diplomats who have to combine their role of motherhood with the responsibilities of their office. A diplomat is expected to protect the interests and image of her/his country in the host country as well as build networks that are geared towards exploring opportunities that a host country offers. As a result, the work schedule of a diplomat can be very demanding and this includes attending commonplace events like breakfast meetings, lunches, elaborate dinner parties, receptions and functions.

Besides being the face of one's country, family commitments, especially in a new country, require a mother's undivided attention. Young mothers with children must balance their work life with their family commitments. This can test parents even under normal circumstances.

The requirements of being a diplomat can be more challenging for single women, or in cases where a woman does not have adequate support from family or friends.

Svedberg (2018) cited, in Aggestam and Towns (2019); alludes to institutional gender norms about appropriate "male" and "female" behaviour that discourages women's participation in diplomacy. She notes that diplomacy is not well organised to enable the combination of work and family life, especially because women shoulder more care responsibilities than men.

(d) Stereotypes: "think-leader-think-male" mindset

Societal: Some cultural practices promote women as inferior. In some cultures, "from day one, women and girls face a political, cultural and social environment that inhibits their development into well-equipped female leaders". Dr Banda observed that aspiring and existing female leaders faced their own unique challenges, such as the lack of appropriate training and financing, violence and discriminatory media coverage and fake news (Dr Joyce Banda Wilson Centre 2017).

Patriarchal: Female ambassadors often report that their male counterparts from other parts of the world do not afford them the same respect they show other male colleagues, and do not take them serious. One female ambassador interviewed said:

"To be sent as an ambassador, a woman has to convince not only the Minister and the President, but also the members of the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, that she is competent; the majority of them sometimes express concerns regarding gender and age." Rahman (2012, p.2)

Some countries consider posting a female ambassador as downgrading a country's relationship with the posting country. Sometimes, male colleagues do not take female ambassadors seriously and depict them as less authoritative and assertive. Some countries reject female diplomats outright. Those women who are in postings sometimes feel ignored during meetings as the majority of male ambassadors will often discuss sports and women. Because the patriarchal mentality remains subconsciously intact in the minds of senior male officials, women feel the pressure to prove that they are capable of matching or outperforming their counterparts.

Some female diplomats experience outright discrimination because of their gender. The authors have encountered situations where, for example, female heads of mission who are accompanied by their husbands to diplomatic functions have reported that when their husbands accompany them it is embarrassing when the accompanying spouse is addressed or recognised as the head of mission instead of the wife. This is because of entrenched patriarchal attitudes where the man is expected to be the diplomat and not the woman. The female diplomat is then left in a position where she has to explain and clarify the position.

(e) Life experiences of female diplomats

For some women, becoming an ambassador is a double burden. Bloch (2004) shares her experience when she served as US Ambassador to Nepal (1989 to 1993) and said that she had to:

“succeed, to break the persistent stereotypes that women and Asians are not equipped to handle foreign affairs. I also did not want to become another excuse for denying women and Asians future ambassadorial appointments.” (p.98)

She had to establish credibility with the country of accreditation, the embassy staff, the ministry headquarters and the diplomatic community to be taken seriously. According to Bloch, establishing credibility is sometimes determined by how well a diplomat is able to handle the totality of the bilateral relationships as well as being a good manager of one’s embassy.

Working overtime and balancing family and work

Madeleine Albright once said:

“... it used to be that the only way a woman could truly make her foreign policy views felt was by marrying a diplomat and then pouring tea on an offending ambassador’s lap.” (Bloch, 2004, p 93).

The Women’s Foreign Policy Group Study (WFPG) undertook a study in 1998 of 589 women, which included in-depth interviews with 43 women, to learn more about the personal, professional and environmental factors that had shaped women’s careers in the diplomatic service (Bloch, 2004, p.95). The study found, among other things, that women in diplomacy found it hard to balance family life with frequent travels overseas, long office hours and the need to attend conferences and other events. For these women to succeed in their diplomatic career, they had to:

“constantly ... exceed performance expectations, make their male colleagues feel comfortable, and schedule marriage, family time, and even childbirth, around their careers.”
(Bloch, 2004, p.96)

Although the findings cited by Bloch (2004) are based on a survey of US diplomats, African women diplomats can relate to them in a number of ways.

It is important to note that owing to the gender stereotypes common in most African cultures, women bear responsibility for domestic chores even when serving abroad. A diplomat, especially at the rank of ambassador/high commissioner is on call 24 hours for seven days a week. This can cause work overload, especially for women who may have young families. One female African

diplomat described the work of an ambassador as “sitting pretty like a duck while pedalling”.

Childcare responsibilities

Childcare responsibilities are the remit of women in most African cultures. However, career women in Africa often benefit from support from extended family members or affordable domestic support workers when they have to leave their young children at home to go back to work after childbirth. African countries have different policies and laws in relation to allowances or childcare benefits. In most cases, government officials make their own arrangements for childcare. Many young female African diplomats with young children experience challenges accessing childcare services.

Canada, through its Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has specific regulations that diplomats must adhere to if they need the services of domestic workers, including childcare services. Global Affairs Canada describes these regulations in detail on its website. The regulations allow a diplomat at the rank of ambassador or high commissioner to hire a maximum of two domestic workers per household. The domestic workers hired by diplomats are given accreditation during the posting period of the diplomatic agent. The accredited domestic workers have the same labour rights, human rights and social protections as all Canadians and temporary foreign workers in Canada.

Additional requirements are attached to the employment of domestic workers that may be difficult for some African countries to meet. For example, the diplomat requiring the services of the domestic worker must:

- have sufficient income to pay the domestic worker in accordance with the prevailing wage set in the province of residence and the method of payroll payment set by the Office of Protocol, and further agree to ensure complete, accurate and timely payment
- ensure that the potential employee is at least 21 years old, has successfully completed the equivalent of Canadian high school education, has received at least six months’ training, and has worked as a domestic worker or caregiver or in a related occupation for at least two years during the past four years
- ensure that the potential employee can speak, read and understand English or French to be able to function on his/her own in an unsupervised setting.

The diplomat must also ensure that the wages, including overtime, hours of work, job duties, suitable accommodation arrangements and workplace safety, holiday and leave entitlements, health insurance coverage, termination, resignation and repatriation terms are agreed on well in advance.

The domestic worker cannot be a blood relative of the employer or the employer’s spouse. A blood relationship

means a first-degree relationship with the employer and/or the employer's spouse (this includes grandparents, parents, brothers or sisters, nephews or nieces, sons or daughters, or grandchildren).

The foregoing regulations, while aimed at protecting domestic workers and preventing human trafficking, pose a challenge to many female African diplomats with young families. Some women diplomats who have tried to bring workers from their own countries into Canada have encountered a number of challenges, ranging from delays in visa issuances. Workers who have been cleared to arrive in Canada have also sometimes proved difficult to manage. One women ambassador shared an experience in which her domestic worker, upon arrival in Canada, became extremely rude and difficult to manage. When the diplomat decided to terminate her employment and repatriate her to Africa, the domestic work disappeared. After spending time looking for the domestic worker, she was later informed that she had applied for asylum. When seeking asylum, it has happened that some of these domestic workers have made false allegations against the diplomat who was her employer. These allegations included unfounded claims of abuse, unpaid salaries and being overworked. Such incidents do not reflect well on the diplomat or the diplomat's country and sometimes can lead to blacklisting of certain countries.

The requirements of bringing domestic workers from Africa can be prohibitive. Some diplomats resort to hiring locals to help with childcare and domestic work, which can be expensive. For example, effective from 1 October 2017, the minimum hourly wage for work performed in Ontario, increased to C\$11.60/hour. This is equivalent to 928 Kenya Shillings. This salary is more than the basic salary of an ambassador/high commissioner in Kenya at Job Group T.

The alternative is to use childcare centres. These are also expensive and are only open during specific hours of the day. However, most diplomatic functions are held after office hours. To cope with this challenge, some women diplomats bring their young children to meetings like receptions.

Fabrizi (2017), writing about female British diplomats across Europe, observes that social constructs conspire against diplomats. Emma Hopkins, the British Ambassador to Bulgaria, shares her experience as a female leader in a blog and says that:

“As a female leader, I constantly set my own parameters. I have two small children, so I will host business lunches rather than dinners. I won't start meetings at 8.30 or 9 not to disadvantage those dropping kids off at school.” (Cited in Fabrizi, 2017).

Family or career

Nearly every job change or promotion means an international move for diplomats. This poses a challenge, especially for married women. In most African cultures, men's careers take priority; therefore, the challenge of getting one's husband to accompany a female diplomat is real. In certain countries such as Canada, the labour laws restrict a diplomat's spouse from finding a job that befits their academic and professional qualifications.

Career diplomat versus political appointment

There are two types of diplomats, especially at the rank of ambassador or high commissioner. One group belongs to the career diplomats, who have advanced through the ranks in the Foreign Service and enjoys job security. The other group of diplomats is appointed directly by a president or head of state. This category of ambassadors serves at the pleasure of the president or head of state and their terms and conditions are more fluid.

Often, female ambassadors face challenges of acceptance, especially if they are not career diplomats. One African women ambassador shared an experience where one of her subordinates found it difficult to take instructions from her and sought to undermine her authority and refused to recognise her appointment.

Despite the challenges that female diplomats face, there are a number of advantages that result from serving as a diplomat. These advantages, taken from our personal experiences, include but are not limited to solidarity and personal growth.

Female heads of mission often develop long-standing valuable bonds and relationships that cut across borders and cultures. Typical continued interactions are regional associations that are formed by diplomats like the African Women Diplomats Forum (AWDF) and the African Heads of Mission Group.

Serious national business opportunities between countries can emerge from diplomatic interaction and intra-regional trade has often resulted from personal contact between female diplomats.

References

1. Banda, Joyce. 2017. *Advancing Women Leaders in Africa*. Discussion with Her Excellency Dr Joyce Banda Former President of Malawi available at <https://www/wilsoncentre.org/event/advancing-women-leaders-africa-discussion>
2. Bloch, Chang Julia (2004): *Women and Diplomacy in The Ambassadors Review* pp.93-100

3. Fabrizi Rebecca (2017): *Women Leading British Diplomacy across Europe*, Available at <https://blogs.fco.gov.uk/fcoeditorial/2017/03/08/women-leading-british-diplomacy-across-europe/> access on 9 August 2018
4. Global Affairs Canada (undated): http://www.international.gc.ca/protocol-protocole/policies-politiques/domestic-workers_domestiques-prives.aspx?lang=eng accessed on 14 August 2018
5. Okech, Awino. 2016. *Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa*. Accra: African Women's Development Fund
6. Keohane, N., Plassnik, U., Boden, A., Esfandiari, H., Hermann, T., Jamal, A. & Danspeckgruber, W. (2010). *Women Leaders in International Relations and World Peace*. Liechtenstein: Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination
7. Talyn Rahman-Figueroa. 2012. *Celebrating the Rise of Women in Diplomacy*. Guest Contributor. Available at <https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/2012/03/08celebrating-the-rise-of-women-in-diplomacy>
8. UN Economic and Social Council E/CN.6/2017/L.5 available at undocs.org/E/CN.6/2017/L.5 General Assembly resolution 48/134, annexure
9. *Women in Diplomatic Service*. 2009. Official Website, available at: <http://www.wds-uk.org.uk/> http://www.embassymagazine.com/barometer/bar_issues/emb38_bar.html



CHAPTER FOUR:

Women's Empowerment in Kenya



Jane Kerubo

4. Introduction

This chapter presents the case of women's participation in diplomacy in Kenya. The chapter is organised into various sections. The first section gives a brief history of the developments in Kenya in relation to the empowerment of women. It mentions ways that Kenya has tried to implement the global conventions or treaties on gender equality and women's empowerment by legislating on a number of provisions of international conventions.

The second section deals with the status of women in Kenya's political and leadership positions with specific examples drawn from the National Assembly, Senate and county governments. The third section investigates women's participation in the Public Service in general before female participation in diplomacy is discussed. The sections are all aimed at showing the progress that has been made over the years, but more specifically since 2010, when a new Constitution was promulgated that made clear provisions for human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination. The chapter ends with a discussion of the opportunities for female diplomats in Kenya and the challenges that persist.

4.1 Background and context

Kenya has made progress over the years in relation to women's empowerment in all spheres of life. Kenya

has embraced the global gender equality goals and incorporated them in the design of national policies and strategies as captured in its National Development Blueprint Vision 2030.

Kenya has ratified various specific international treaties and conventions touching on inclusion and equality. The 2010 Constitution made provisions for gender equality in its Bill of Rights chapter. The Vision 2030 also aspires to equal rights and opportunities between men and women in pursuit of enjoyment of a high quality of life. Article 2(6) makes all ratified international conventions or treaties part of national law.

Kenya's progress in equality and human rights issues is captured or assessed through periodic reporting in the Kenya National Human Development Reports and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, Annual Economic Surveys and Statistical Abstracts.

The Gender and Equality Commission (GEC), in its analysis of the equality and inclusion index for Kenya, and using the indices of development, health, education, social justice and civic engagement, gender equality and labour force participation from 2016, estimated the national equality and inclusion index to be 58.9%. This means that over 42.1% of the population was excluded from benefiting from various services. The highest index at national level was the Social Justice Index (70%), which highlights that the promotion of social justice was enhanced by the Kenyan Government after the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution. The Gender Equality Index was 38%, implying that over 62% of women were excluded from various economic activities partly because of their gender (Republic of Kenya NGECC Report, 2016).

The Constitution makes a number of provisions for equality and non-discrimination. The Preamble to the Constitution lists equality as one of the essential values upon which to base governance. Article 10 (2a & b) of the Constitution details the national values and principles of governance, which include the rule of law, democracy and participation of the people, human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality and human rights, non-discrimination and protection of the marginalised.

The Bill of Rights also makes provision for equality and inclusivity and provides that: "the state and its organs should observe, respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights and fundamental freedoms of the marginalised".

Article 27 of the Constitution makes provisions for the principles of equality and freedom from discrimination. Specifically, Article 27(3), which states that women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. The provisions of the 2010 Constitution require specific legislation and measures such as affirmative action to realise equality and inclusion in Kenyan society. Article 260 declares that “the state shall take legislative and other measures, including but not limited to affirmative action programmes and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups as a result of past discrimination”.

As a result of these constitutional provisions, a number of laws and acts of Parliament have been passed in Kenya to ensure that the spirit and letter of the Constitution is put into effect. Some of the laws that emphasise gender equality and inclusion passed in Kenya that benefit women’s empowerment in leadership and governance are summarised below.

4.1.1 The Employment Act (2007) addresses discrimination in employment under Section 5 and requires that employers should promote equal opportunity in employment, and strive to eliminate discrimination in any employment policy or practice. This Act gives effect to Article 27 of the Constitution. It also allows for affirmative action to promote equality or eliminate discrimination in the workplace, especially for those groups that have been disadvantaged in the past.

4.1.2 The Political Parties Act (2011) is important as it enhances political empowerment for women. The Act requires that party membership reflects Kenya’s diversity. In the past, political parties have been male-dominated and sometimes formed along ethnic lines. This Act provides that a party may only be registered if its membership and governing body reflect regional and ethnic diversity and gender balance and has representation from minorities and marginalised groups. The Act also establishes the Political Parties’ Fund, which is allocated to registered political parties.

The fund is supposed to be used to promote representation in Parliament and county assemblies of women, PWDs, the youth, ethnic and other minorities (Political Parties Act 2011: Section 7(2)(b) and (c)). The code of conduct for political parties requires them to respect and promote gender equity, equality and human rights.

4.1.3 The Electoral Code of Conduct (2011) establishes a level playing field for candidates in competitive elections. It sets out provisions that promote an

atmosphere and culture of tolerance, courtesy and respect. All of these values/virtues, if followed, are supposed to benefit women who want to enter politics. (Republic of Kenya 2016 p.49).

4.1.4 The Elections Act (2011) as amended by the Elections Act (Amendment No. 2), 2012; the Elections Laws (Amendment) Act, 2016 and the Election Laws (Amendment) Act, 2017; Regulations 54-56 of the Election (General) Regulations, 2012 as amended by the Election (General) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 and the Elections (Party Primaries and Party Lists) Regulations, 2017; all prescribe minimum stipulations for submission of party lists. All political parties participating in a general election are required to nominate and submit a list of all persons who proposed to stand for election. The party lists should comprise an appropriate number of qualified candidates and alternates comprising male and female candidates in the priority in which they are listed. However, this criterion does not apply to the Senate party list where all nominees are supposed to be women as per the provisions of Article 98 (1)(b) of the 2010 Constitution (Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, 7 June 2017).

In addition to the several laws that have been passed and enacted by Parliament to give effect to the Constitution, there are also a number of national policies that have been developed. For example, the Kenya Vision 2030 is the country’s long-term development blueprint in its social pillar, the theme of which is, “Investing in the People of Kenya”. Its main aim is gender equality through the development of strategies to increase the participation of women in all economic, social and political decision-making processes, and improve access to education. Sessional Paper No.3 on National Policy and the Action Plan on Human Rights, 2014 also provide for equality and inclusion in the national development of all peoples of Kenya.

The National Policy on Gender and Development and its Plan of Action for 2008 – 2012 also guarantee Kenyan men and women equality before the law and enable equal access to economic and employment opportunities. Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2006 on Gender, Equality and Development provides a framework for gender mainstreaming in all government departments, including the establishment of a substantive gender ministry, the National Commission on Gender and Development, and gender officers in ministries and parastatals, institutions of higher learning and officers at district and sub-district level.

Article 56 of the Constitution demands that the State should put in place affirmative action programmes to

ensure minorities and marginalised groups' participation and representation in governance and other spheres of life. (Republic of Kenya 2016, xxiv). As a result of this requirement or provision in the Constitution, a number of affirmative action strategies have been put in place to empower women. These include:

- The Uwezo Fund, which is an initiative aimed at enabling women, youth and persons with disabilities and provides access to finance to promote business and enterprise at a constituency level. This is envisioned to enhance economic growth that will lead to the realisation of Vision 2030 and the SDGs. In the 2016/17 financial year, about Ksh5.4 billion was disbursed to 900 516 beneficiaries (Republic of Kenya 2017, p.72).
- The Women Enterprise Fund provides accessible and affordable credit to support women to start and expand businesses and employment creation. It provides business support services such as capacity-building, marketing, promotion of linkages and infrastructure. In 2015/16, about Ksh2.3 billion was disbursed to 178 375 beneficiaries (Republic of Kenya 2017, p.72). It is important to note that the loans given through Uwezo Fund and Women Enterprise Fund are given at zero per cent interest rate.
- The Parliamentary Women Representatives Affirmative Action Fund helps female representatives from the 47 counties in Kenya to support projects geared towards empowering women. Another intervention is the 30% preferential procurement for women, youth and people with disabilities, where women are advanced loans to start small-scale businesses.

The foregoing interventions and legal frameworks suggest Kenyan women are being provided with an increasing number of opportunities under the new constitutional dispensation. However, these do not always translate into an increase in their political representation as this number still remains below the constitutional threshold.

In spite of the progressive provisions geared towards women's empowerment, much still remains to be done to operationalise these efforts. The Constitution does not expressly provide for mechanisms to fulfil gender quotas in the National Assembly and Senate, which it does for county assemblies.

The National Gender Commission conducted a study in 2016 following five years of implementation of the Constitution, which was promulgated in August 2010. The study objectives were twofold. First, to examine indicators of equality and inclusion and second to develop a national status report at national and county levels. The study also

assessed the extent to which the Government of Kenya had inculcated the principles of equality and inclusion in relation to employment, political representation, social protection and education at national and county levels both in the public and private sectors.

The study found that anachronistic traditions that subordinated children and the youth, that perceived women as being inferior to men, equated disabilities with curses, associated the elderly with retrogressive experiences and denied opportunities to minorities and marginalised groups, still prevailed (Republic of Kenya, National Gender and Equality Commission, 2016, p.xviii).

4.2 Women's participation in politics and governance

As noted earlier, Article 56 of the Constitution mandates the State to introduce affirmative action programmes to ensure minorities and marginalised groups participate and are represented in governance and other spheres of life.

Kenya has held 12 general elections since the attainment of independence in 1963. In all these elections, female representation has remained lower than that of men. Table 4.1 summarises the progress made over the years. The data in Table 4.1 shows that women have been underrepresented in Parliament and that few women have been elected directly to Parliament. The number has increased since 2007 with much progress being made after the 2010 Constitution.

In the 2013 elections, a total of 16 women were elected constituency members of the National Assembly, while another 47 women were elected as county women representatives and five others were nominated, totalling 68 female members in the National Assembly.

A total of 18 women and 49 men were represented in the Senate after the 2013 national elections. Women represented 26.9%. Most of the women in the Senate in 2013 were nominated as none were elected directly either through the 16 seats reserved for women in the Senate, or the two women nominated by their parties to represent the youth and/or people with disabilities.

The 2017 elections saw the election of three female governors and three female senators for the very first time. These gains were coupled with the election of 23 female members of the national Parliament (MPs) and 96 female members of the 47 county assemblies. Compared with the previous elections in 2013, when there were no female senators or governors and only 16 elected MPs and 47 female county representatives, this was a significant step forward for the country (Republic of Kenya, 2017a). Moreover, it is important to note that more women

Period	Number of constituencies	Number of elected members		Nominated members		Total elected and nominated		% women
		Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	
1963-1969	158	158	0	2	0	160	0	0
1969-1974	158	157	1	10	1	167	2	1.2
1974-1979	158	154	4	14	2	168	6	10.4
1979-1983	158	154	4	11	1	165	5	8.5
1983-1988	158	156	2	9	1	165	3	3
1988-1992	188	186	2	10	0	196	2	1
1992-1997	188	182	6	12	1	194	7	3.5
1997-2002	210	206	4	9	5	215	9	4
2002-2007	210	200	10	4	8	204	18	8
2007-2013	210	194	16	6	6	200	22	9.9
2013-2017**	290	274	63	7	5	281	68	19.5
2017-2022**	290	267	70	6	6	273	76	21.8

Table 4:1. Women representation in the National Assembly in Kenya 1963 – 2017

** The number of elected women in 2013 and 2017 included the 47 women elected on seats reserved for women

Source: Adopted from the *Status of Equality and Inclusion in Kenya Report* (Republic of Kenya, National Gender and Equality Commission 2016, p.173) and the *Kenya Gazette* 18 August 2017

than ever before ran for election, and particularly inspiring was the candidacy and subsequent election of women in communities that are “perceived to be hostile to women” in Isiolo, Samburu and Nandi counties (Gathumbi 2017). In addition, six women were nominated to the National Assembly to represent women, youth and marginalised groups and 18 women were nominated to the Senate. In spite of the progress made in the 2017 election, the representation of women in the National Assembly still falls short of the constitutional requirement of at least one third.

The quotas for women have played a role in enhancing the participation of women in Kenyan politics. It has been shown from other countries’ experiences that gender quotas work as an incubator towards enhancing female participation and representation in political processes. There were five women (three in the National Assembly and two in the Senate) who, having benefited from nomination into Parliament or the Senate in 2013, went on to contest in their constituency or county and won their seats.

In his State Opening of the First Session of the 12th Parliament on 12 September 2017, the President Elect of the Republic of Kenya, HE Uhuru Kenyatta, acknowledged that gaps still existed in women’s representation in politics and leadership. He said:

”I also celebrate the women of Kenya who continue to demonstrate leadership throughout the country ... I am a proud Kenyan for the gains we have made in promoting inclusion of women into elected office. I am proud because I have great confidence

in Kenya’s women and deep faith in their capacities. However, as important as these gains are, we recognise we still have much more work to do to increase their participation in national leadership.”

The 2010 Constitution also devolved governance to grassroots level and saw the establishment of 47 counties headed by governors and their deputies. The county governments provide more opportunities for women to take part in the political leadership of the country. The number of female county representatives’ seats increased the number of women in Parliament. However, women still face challenges when elected directly into the county assemblies. During the 2013 national elections, only 82 women were elected as members of county assemblies out of the 1 450 seats available nationally, a mere 5.7%. No women were elected as governors or senators in 2013. However, nine women (91.1%) were indirectly nominated by men contesting the position of governors in nine counties. Following the constitutional provisions on affirmative action to bridge the gender gap and ensure one third representation, 592 women were nominated to the counties’ assemblies (Republic of Kenya 2016, NGEC Report page 181). A number of women (151 out of the 448) have also benefited from appointment to county executive committees, about 33.7% of all the appointments in the 47 counties.

In 2017, three women were elected as governors of three counties (Kitui, Kirinyaga and Bomet) for the first time. Five of the 47 counties had women as deputy governors. However, fewer women are elected directly to the county assemblies (less than 100). Most of the women access the county assembly through the gender top-up lists or

nomination as representatives of marginalised groups. In 2017, 556 women were nominated to the county assemblies under the gender top-up programme to meet the one third gender rule provided for in the Constitution (Republic of Kenya 2017b, *Kenya Gazette* number 7847, 18 August).

In spite of the gains made in gender equality in political leadership in Kenya, the country still lags behind its peers in the East African region – Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Burundi. Kenya is the only country not to have been able to reach the 30% political representation of women required by its Constitution, Commonwealth requirements and other commitments to which it is a signatory (NGEC 2016, 176; Gathumbi 2017). In 2017, the two thirds gender rule continued to be a thorn in the flesh of the 12th Parliament; none of the houses (the National Assembly, Senate or county assemblies) have the 30% representation of women required by Kenya's Constitution. It is for these reasons that Kenya only ranks 14th behind its East African neighbours in the *African Gender Equality Index* (African Development Bank, 2015).

It appears that society is still reluctant to elect female political leaders. The constitutional requirement is for the minimum gender to have 117 legislators against 232 for the majority gender.

That a number of Kenyan women have been vocal members of the opposition and other smaller parties in recent years is also evidence of the strides made by women in politics in Kenya. For example, Charity Ngilu (elected governor of Kitui county in 2017) contested the presidential election in 1992 and Martha Karua contested the presidential election in 2013 with the National Rainbow Coalition-Kenya Party. In a climate where the majority of women still have to contend with discrimination, threats and even violence when they run for political positions (see NGEC 2016; Berry *et al* 2017), the increasing number of women in the political sphere, whether in the ruling or opposition party, is inspiring, and likely indicative of slow, but sure change.

This fight for gender equality in political representation and related advancements have been taken up by a number of local organisations. The NGEC, established by an Act of Parliament in 2011, is the foremost government arm tasked with ensuring state compliance with all national and international policies to which Kenya is a signatory. It focusses on: “issue[s] of equality and freedom from discrimination” (NGEC 2016). To these ends, the NGEC is customarily chaired by women. It has been instrumental in advocating for the rights of women in Kenya, and has spearheaded a number of projects that target, for example, sexual and gender-based violence. The *Keeping the Promise: End GBV Campaign Handbook* (2015) is one manifestation of this work.

The importance of the women's rights' advocacy directed towards improving the governance opportunities for women conducted by government bodies, such as NGEC, and civil-society organisations, should not be underestimated. Beyond the collaborative work currently undertaken to demand the implementation of the two-thirds gender rule undertaken by the NGEC together with organisations such as the Centre for Rights Education and Awareness (CREAW) and the Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA), Kenya has a history of women organising around representation and change in Kenya. Nzomo (n.d.) details some of these critical activities and, in particular, highlights the work of the Kenya Women's Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) – a cross-party caucus constituted by all female MPs in Kenya. This association was founded in 2001 not only to increase the number of women in Parliament, but to draw attention to issues affecting women nationally.

Nzomo (n.d.) compares the climate in Parliament before the creation of KEWOPA and states that: “for four decades prior to the formation of KEWOPA, no legislation in support of women's rights was enacted in the male-dominated Kenyan Parliament. In some cases, laws supporting women's rights were repealed”. In contrast, since its inception in 2011, KEWOPA has collaborated with other NGOs across the country to enable important



Women Members of Parliament at the KEWOPA 12th Parliament Induction Seminar in Naivasha, Kenya, 14 January 2018

gains for women in law despite the low number of female parliamentarians. Two examples of these laws are the Sexual Offences Act of 2006 and the 2011 Anti-Female Genital Mutilation Act. In addition, it bears mentioning that members of KEWOPA were also influential in the 2010 Constitution-making process (Nzomo, n.d.).

The goal of all these organisations is to raise cohorts of transformative women leaders who take up power through a variety of strategies, rather than relying on political appointments. The Africa Centre for Transformative and Inclusive Leadership (ACTIL), a partnership between Kenyatta University and UN Women, targets the creation of such a crop of female leaders (ACTIL 2017; Mastercard Foundation 2014). This work complements strides taken by the Joint Programme for Gender and Women's Empowerment (JP-GEWE) – a government of Kenya and UN initiative launched in 2009, as well as initiatives supported by other organisations. The local iteration of the global Women and Girls Lead Campaign of USAID supported a media initiative called the *Women in Red* Campaign. The core objective of this film-series intervention is to increase female political participation at all levels and to raise awareness. It was produced in conjunction with the Kenyan Broadcasting Corporation and has reached millions of viewers (USAID 2015).

In addition to ascending to political leadership through elections or nominations to the National Assembly, County Assembly and Senate, women also benefit from political appointments to Cabinet secretary, principal secretary or ambassadorial appointments. However, these appointments have not closed the gap between men and women. The NGEA (2016, 177) shows that between March 2013 and March 2015, the executive favoured men over women when it came to political appointments. Women received, on average, only 33% of the political appointments during this two-year period. It is important, nonetheless, to note that one of these nominations was the appointment of Amina Mohammed as the Cabinet Secretary for Foreign Affairs – an esteemed position.

Women's participation in political leadership in Kenya has been limited by a number of factors, including inadequate or lack of a solid financial base, political violence targeting female candidates, demeaning and derogative language used by male candidates and their supporters, negative stereotypes and anachronistic socio-cultural beliefs (Republic of Kenya 2016, p.118). Some of these factors have led to delayed legislation on the one-third minimum gender provision of the Constitution. The Attorney General sought an opinion of the Supreme Court on how to implement the two-thirds gender representation in the National Assembly and Senate. In a majority ruling, the court found that the legislative measures for giving effect to the two-thirds gender principle under Article 81(b) of

the Constitution, and in relation to the National Assembly and Senate, should be enacted by 27 August 2015. Article 100's provision requires the National Assembly to enact legislation to promote the representation of women in Parliament (Republic of Kenya 2016 p.xxiv). A draft Bill of the Constitution of Kenya, Amendment Bill (No. 4) of 2015, was geared towards this effort, but it was defeated twice by the male-dominated National Assembly.

Women who venture into politics still face a number of challenges. Some of the women who contested the 2017 national elections shared their experiences in the media. The few women who make it to national or county assemblies have to endure various forms of violence, political thuggery and intimidation, including sexual harassment, meted out to them by male opponents and their supporters with the aim of elbowing them out of the race (*Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

One woman who unsuccessfully vied for a seat in the Senate shared how she was accosted by a mob of more than 30 men armed with batons and machetes on her way home during the campaigns. She said:

"I was trailed by two men riding on a motorbike for more than 30 minutes. Then suddenly a crowd emerged. They blocked the road with tyres and stones. They smashed the rear window of my car after my husband pleaded with them to spare us. Young men intimidated her to drop her political bid." (*Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

Some women are sexually harassed by supporters of their rivals. One female aspirant said:

"The sexual harassment takes two forms: verbal and physical. The verbal harassment takes a subtle but a very embarrassing and intimidating form where your appearance and beauty take the centre stage and not the issues at hand." (*Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

The male opponents and their supporters sometimes hurl insults loaded with sexual innuendoes. One woman said:

"You wake up one morning and people decide to call you a prostitute, forgetting that you are a mother and a sister to someone. Sometimes, the male candidates will use your fellow women to criticise you." (*Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

Another noted that:

"The physical form of sexual harassment takes the form of encroachment on personal space from an admiring and ogling public, forced and attempted

hugs from men, unwarranted touching and in some cases efforts to undress you, especially when campaigning in hostile territory.” (*Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

Another shared how, in one incident, youths, well-known to her, slapped, manhandled and touched her inappropriately during a meeting of political aspirants. Some women only narrowly escape death after they are attacked during campaigns, which sometimes run late into the night. Some are left with permanent physical and emotional injuries. In one region where women are still discriminated against, a female MP had her house set ablaze during the party primaries and her bodyguard killed. While addressing the media about her experience, she said that the death of her guard on D-day of the primaries and torching her house were two scenes she would live with on her political journey.

Another political aspirant in the 2007 national elections, Flora Terah Igoki, narrates how she was tortured in the course of the campaigns and left for dead and her only child murdered to force her out of the political race. She captures her experiences in one of her books, entitled: *Life Beyond Pain, A Journey through my Heart – The Seasons of Joy, Pain, Fear, Depression, Hope, and Healing* (2014):

“On the fateful day of September 7th, 2007, I was attacked by some well-dressed men as I walked home. One of them hit me on the nose and I fell. He then put his knee on my neck as his accomplices pulled out my hair. Amidst kicks and insults they mixed my hair with human excreta and forced it into my mouth. I tried to spit it out but my mouth was held shut. I painfully swallowed it when I realised it was either that or I choked to death. They made etching marks with thorns from the nearby fence, beat me senseless as they repeatedly warned me against running for the North Imenti Constituency parliamentary seat. God saved me through some young girls who screamed just as my attackers were dragging me away to my father’s grave where they had planned to rape me.” (Igoki 2014, p.6).

Flora Igoki’s experience is painful and represents a graphic example of how female political aspirants are intimidated and scared out of competing with men in the political arena. As if that was not enough, as she was healing from the physical and emotional injuries, her 19-year-old only son was murdered in mysterious circumstances on 11 March 2008 (page 7). She admits that this experience made her decide not to contest for a political position in Kenya. The experience made her make a tough choice:

“I knew that my priority was to stay alive and sane ... I knew I had to make a choice and it had to be

a super choice, it was either I continue engaging in politics or quit and continue with my community work.” (Igoki, 2014, p.95).

She even had to move out of the country as she feared for her life:

“However, as much as I wanted to pursue politics, deep in me I also knew that I was getting fed up with always being on the run for no reason. I was tired of getting scared about men who will do anything just to prove their narrow views no matter what the cost. I asked myself over and over again why I was subjecting myself to such torture. Instead of running for office myself, I reasoned that I could just fundraise for other women candidates to run for office.” (Igoki 2014, pp.93-94).

The unfortunate aspect of intimidation is that the perpetrators of such violence against women are never brought to justice. Flora Igoki encourages African women who undergo such experiences to share their travails in writing even though resources are a challenge. Sharing experiences would help those advocating for change to bring to an end many oppressive and harmful practices.

Female MPs who seek re-election also encounter challenges. One woman shared her experience:

“The campaign is so dirty and the male rivals try and humiliate you out of the race. This includes attempts to drag in dirt and cause you emotional pain ... You need to be prepared and tough because you can expect anything at any given time. People will target you and your family. They will even go to the extent of trying to maliciously discredit your candidature. Someone can call you anything regardless of the environment you are in, just to kill your morale so that you can quit the race.” (former female MP, *Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

Even nominated women are not spared embarrassment.

“I face a lot of challenges. The biggest being insults on my sexuality and societal challenges, considering we live in a patriarchal society.” (former nominated MP, *Daily Nation*, 31 May 2017).

These experiences highlight the challenges women face in their efforts to contribute to political leadership and governance. These experiences are not unique to Kenya, but they severely hinder the progress that women are making towards empowerment. They also suggest that good laws alone, without a change in attitudes and perceptions, cannot translate to meaningful progress.

4.3 Women participation in the Public Service in Kenya

Despite the numerous laws in Kenya that support equality and inclusion in employment, most are not enforced. In Kenya, a slightly larger proportion of females than males never attend school. The female share of the total wage bill was about 37% in 2013 and 2014, which is indicative of their underrepresentation in formal employment (Republic of Kenya 2016, p.xxi).

State institutions have more female representation on boards than the private sector, with an average of 26% of women as members of high-level secretariats. This could be because, as the AfDB states, both Kenya and South Africa have government mandates, through their constitutions and other regulations, to promote greater representation of women on the boards of state-owned corporations, while adherence to gender equality in the private sectors of both these countries has been integrated in the “principles of good corporate governance” (AfDB 2015b, pp.9 & 38). The Central Bank of Kenya straddles these two spheres, and it bears mentioning that Sheila M’Mbijwe is the Deputy Governor of this institution. It is also relevant to note the existence of the Women’s Enterprise Fund, a semi-autonomous government agency within the Ministry of Public Service, Youth and Gender Affairs. Since 2007, this fund has provided credit to women to start or expand their own businesses. This initiative is part of Kenya’s commitment to both the MDGs and SDGs and it emerged as a winner of the Sustainable Development Goals Award for its work towards promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment (Women Enterprise Fund, 2017).

A summary of the representation of women in the Public Service at senior decision-making level, based on the *National Economic Survey 2017* for the period 2015 and 2016, is presented in Table 4.2 and shows that progress is being made.

The data in the Table 4.2 shows that fewer women held senior positions during the period under review, but overall attempts are being made to reach the one-third gender rule as provided for in the Constitution, especially in the lower echelons of the Public Service such as magistrates, practising lawyers, high court judges and county commissioners.

Despite the fraught, but improving, negotiations evident in politics, women appear to be a force to be reckoned with in the private sector in Kenya. A recent report by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) showed that Kenya had more women in boardrooms than any other country on the African continent, with an average 19.8% of women on private-sector boards. This representation surpasses the global average of 15%. Even the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), the umbrella body for the private sector in Kenya, has four women out of nine members on its board of directors (KEPSA 2017).

Kenyan women have been extremely influential in generating advancements that bring together innovation, entrepreneurship, human rights and gender advocacy in the field of technology. Two important examples are the Ushahidi platform, a crisis crowd-sourcing site, and Akirachix, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to fostering new generations of women in technology

Position	2015				2016			
	Female	Male	Total	%Female	Female	Male	Total	% Female
Cabinet secretaries	5	15	20	25.5	5	15	20	25.5
Principal secretaries	15	26	41	36.6	15	26	41	36.6
County commissioners	18	29	47	38.3	18	29	47	38.3
Sub-county commissioners	35	260	295	11.9	40	255	295	13.6
Deputy secretaries	62	142	204	30.4	66	149	215	30.7
Supreme Court judges	2	5	7	28.6	2	5	7	28.6
Court of Appeal	8	18	26	30.8	7	18	25	28.0
High Court	37	60	97	38.1	37	59	96	38.5
Magistrates	216	235	451	47.9	216	222	438	49.3
Kadhis	0	35	35	0.0	0	45	45	0.0
Chiefs	114	2 476	2 590	4.4	126	2,464	2,590	4.9
Assistant chiefs	482	5 404	5 886	8.2	489	5 397	5 886	8.3
Total	994	8 705	9 699	10.2	1 021	8 684	9 705	11.7

Table 4.2: Participation in key decision-making positions by sex, 2015 – 2016

Source: Adapted from Republic of Kenya (2017) *Economic Survey 2017*. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Nairobi, Page 73

to enhance social change in Africa (Ushahidi 2017; Akirachix 2017). Integral to the formation of both of these organisations were the energies and skills of pioneering women: Ory Okolloh, the co-founder of Ushahidi, and Judith Owigar, a co-founder of Akirachix.

Further analysis of female participation in the Public Service reveals that women are disadvantaged in accessing employment and are outnumbered by men in the more lucrative sectors/industries such as manufacturing, professional, scientific and technical areas. Evidence suggests a pay gap between males and females although Kenya ratified the Equal Remuneration Convention in 2001. Women are likely to earn about 67% to 70 % of the salary of men. About 70% of the ministries and departments meet the two-thirds gender rule in overall distribution of employment by gender. However, within the upper job categories (R to T) and lower categories (A to D) of the Public Service, the constitutional threshold is rarely met (Republic of Kenya 2016, p.xxii).

4.4 Women’s participation in the Diplomatic Service in Kenya

Men have dominated the Diplomatic Service for a long time. The first female ambassador in Kenya was appointed in 1984, followed two years later by the first woman to

be appointed to a senior diplomatic mission (Republic of Kenya 2017). Progress has been made since 1984 and a number of missions have been headed by women. Since 2013, the Cabinet Secretary/Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Trade has been a woman and the Principal Secretary for 2016 to March 2018 was also female.

In March 2018, the former Principal Secretary of Foreigners, Ambassador Monica Juma, was appointed as Cabinet Secretary. According to the *Economic Survey of 2017*, 17 women and 47 men were serving as ambassadors/high commissioners in Kenya’s 54 missions abroad (Republic of Kenya 2017, page 73). Some of the embassies headed by women include India, Paris, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Botswana and Ethiopia. Similarly, there are four women occupying deputy head of mission positions at the rank of ambassador in India, Canada, United Kingdom, New York and Algiers. Another 19 women held the rank of ambassador at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs even though they were not heading posts in October 2017.

At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Headquarters in Nairobi in October 2017, 10 women headed various directorates, including Africa and the African Union (AU), Americas, Great Lakes, Legal Affairs and International Treaties,



Some of the women Cabinet secretaries in the Kenya Government. From left to right: Amina Mohamed, Sicily Kariuki and Raychelle Omamo. Photo | Nation Media Group Saturday 27 January 2018

Middle East, East African Community, Cultural Diplomacy, Welfare and Chief of Protocol. The Chief of Cabinet in the Minister's Office was also a woman.

The statistics suggest that deliberate efforts are being made by the Ministry and Government to enhance female participation in diplomacy. Other international positions may also be held by Kenyan women in the United Nations (UN) and AU; however, the data was not available for comparison.

Beyond the formal diplomatic arena, Kenyan women such as the late Wangari Mathaai (Nobel Peace Prize winner and environmental justice activist), Tecla Lorupe (athlete and spokeswoman for peace, women's rights and education and 2016 UN Person of the Year) and Suzanna Owiyo (musician) have acted as informal diplomats for the country. Another Kenyan woman, Alice Wairimu Nderitu, won the 2017 Global Pluralism Award for her tireless efforts at brokering peace in various parts of Africa. Alice Wairimu Nderitu, a former commissioner with the National Commission on Cohesion and Integration of Kenya, has mediated and brokered peace in multiple ethnic conflicts throughout Africa. She has worked to promote pluralism at all levels of conflict prevention by empowering diverse voices and including historically excluded people in the mediation process. Her work is an example of how women can play a role in global peace-building (Global Centre for Pluralism, 2017).

4.5 Conclusion

The foregoing discussion suggests that Kenya is on the right path towards women's empowerment. Although progress is slow, the potential is substantial. The 2010 Constitution provides for the expansion of women's rights and a number of laws have been enacted, making very positive provisions towards gender equality. The periodic reporting of progress in this area as captured in the Kenya National Human Development Reports and the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics annual economic surveys and statistical abstracts provides a good framework for monitoring and evaluating progress.

Efforts to empower women have been advanced mainly through projects such as the Uwezo Fund, the Women Enterprise Fund, the Parliamentary Women Representatives Affirmative Action Fund and the 30% preferential procurement reserved for women, youth and people with disabilities under the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities Programme. Although these efforts do not translate into immediate gain in female participation in political leadership and governance, they go a long way towards empowering women economically.

References

1. Action Aid International Kenya. 2017. Official Website, available at: <http://www.actionaid.org/kenya>



Alice Warimu Nderitu (centre), HE Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo and Jane Kerubo in Ottawa, Canada, 2017



2. African Development Bank. 2015. *Where are the Women: Inclusive Boardrooms in Africa's top listed Companies?* Abidjan: African Development Bank
3. Berry, Marie, Yolande Bouka and Marilyn Muthoni Kamuru. 2017. "Kenyan Women Just Fought One of the Most Violent Campaigns in History." *Foreign Policy*. Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/07/kenyas-female-politicians-just-fought-the-one-of-the-most-violent-campaign-in-history-election/>
4. Gathumbi, Nyambura. 2017. "Kenyan Women Moving into Leadership after the 2017 Elections." *HIVOS* blog. Available at: <https://east-africa.hivos.org/blog/kenyan-women-moving-leadership-after-2017-elections>
5. Global Centre for Pluralism. 2017. Global Centre for Pluralism Awards Alice Wairimu Nderitu of Kenya with the 2017 Global Pluralism Award. available at <https://award.pluralism.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Alice-Wairimu-Nderitu-EN.pdf>
6. Igoki, Flora Terah. 2014. *Life Beyond Pain. A Journey through my Heart – The seasons of Joy, Pain, Fear, Depression, Hope and Healing*. Toronto
7. Kenya Private Sector Alliance. 2017. Official Website, available at: <https://kepsa.or.ke/>
8. Mastercard Foundation. 2014. *Women's Transformative Leadership in Africa*. Available at: <http://www.mastercardfdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/Womens-Transformative-Leadership-2014.pdf>
9. Nzomo, Maria. (nd). *Women in Political Leadership in Kenya: Access, Agenda Setting & Accountability*. Nairobi: Institute of Diplomacy & International Studies, University of Nairobi
10. Nation Media. 2017. *Daily Nation* Newspapers 31 May 2017
11. Republic of Kenya. 2010. *Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya
12. Republic of Kenya. 2016. *Status of Equality and Inclusion in Kenya*. Nairobi: National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC). Nairobi. Government Printer
13. Republic of Kenya. 2017a. *Economic Survey 2017*. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Nairobi. Government Printer
14. Republic of Kenya. 2017b. *The Kenya Gazette* Notice. Available online at [Kenyalaw.org/kenya_gazette/gazette/Notices/8378_8379](http://kenyalaw.org/kenya_gazette/gazette/Notices/8378_8379), dated 25 August 2017
15. Republic of Kenya. 2017c. *Women and Men in Kenya. Facts and Figures 2017*. Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Nairobi. Government Printer
16. Republic of Kenya. 2009. *Kenya Population and Housing Census 2009*. Kenya National Bureau of statistics. Available at <https://www.knbs.or.ke/publications> downloaded on April 18, 2018
17. Shiundu, A. 2017. Factsheet: *Kenya's New Parliament by Numbers* (Africa Check) Available at <https://africacheck.org/factsheet-kenya-new-parlimanet-numbers> downloaded on December 11, 2017
18. Women Enterprise Fund. 2017. Official Website: <http://www.wef.co.ke/>

CHAPTER FIVE:

Women's Empowerment in Rwanda



Chargé d'affaires Shakilla Umutoni

Rwanda has made the headlines on the African continent and around the world for its unprecedented record of implementing and achieving the most impressive gains for women. This was highlighted at the 2016 African Union (AU) Summit where President Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda, together with Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, former Chairperson of the AU Commission won the “Gender Champion Card”.

President Kagame is also a member of “HeForShe”, a solidarity campaign for the advancement of women initiated by UN Women, and Impact Champion (HeForShe 2017). For these reasons, Rwanda, together with South Africa, Tunisia and Algeria, won the 2016 Gender Scorecard Award at the closing ceremony of the Ordinary Assembly of the AU in Kigali in late July 2016 (Tashobya, 2016).

Evidencing these gains, Rwanda, at 64%, has the highest percentage of women in Parliament in the world (Inter-Parliamentary Union [IPU 2017]).

Women constitute 41% of judges in the Supreme Court, 32% of judges in the High Court, 35% of ministerial positions, 23.8% of ambassadors, 93.8% of mayors and

43.5% of civil servants (Turianskyi and Chisiza, 2017, 13). It is also remarkable that the Rwandan heads of missions in the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Canada – important geopolitical positions – are women. The current Foreign Minister of Rwanda, Honourable Louise Mushikiwabo, is the longest-serving person in the post since 1994. Also, the Speaker of Parliament, spearheading the parliamentary diplomacy in conjunction with the two vice-presidents of the senate, is a woman. As for diplomatic positions, the Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN) in New York and the Ambassador of the AU are also women.

5.1 Legal frameworks and other supporting structures

Rwanda's legal framework includes:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Rwanda of 2003, revised in 2015, which encapsulates the principles of gender equality and women's rights and provides for a minimum 30% quota for women in all decision-making positions.
- Law No 59/2008 on the Prevention and Punishment of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) punishes marital rape and addresses GBV in all its forms.
- Law No 54/2011 of 14/12/2011 relating to the rights and the protection of the child, guarantees the rights and protection of all children against abuse.
- Law No 43/2013 of 16/06/2013 governing land in Rwanda: this law guarantees women's equal rights with men on land access, ownership and utilisation.
- Law No 27/2016 of 08/07/2016 governs matrimonial regimes, donations and successions, ensuring that women enjoy certain rights within marriage and in families and enjoy donations granted or received within a family and successions.
- Law No 13/2009 of 27/05/2009 regulates labour in Rwanda and provides for equal opportunities and equal pay for women and men, and prohibits sexual harassment in the workplace.
- Organic Law No 10/20/2013/OL of 11/07/2013 governs political parties and politicians. It also prohibits any form of discrimination based on gender, sex, race and religion in political parties.
- Organic Budget Law No 12/2013. This law institutes gender-responsive budgeting and enforces accountability measures for gender-sensitive resource allocation

across sectors, programmes and projects through gender budget statements – a mandatory annex of the Budget Framework Paper submitted to both chambers of Parliament.

- Organic Law No 01/2012/OL of 02/05/2012 deals with crimes related to the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography.
- Law No 32/2016 of 28/08/2016 governs relations between persons and family.
- Law No 003/2016 of 30/03/2016 establishes and governs maternity leave benefits for women and men.

Gender equality is also embedded in the national strategic frameworks, which include:

- **Vision 2020** is the country's development framework and it states that to achieve gender equality and equity, Rwanda will eradicate all forms of discrimination against poverty and practise affirmative action policy in favour of women. Gender will be integrated as a cross-cutting issue in all development policies and strategies.
- **Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy 2013 – 2018** commits Rwanda to placing the family at the centre of its development, and stresses that the care and protection of children and promotion of gender equality are prerequisites to achieving equitable and sustainable development for girls and boys, women and men.
- **Seven-Year Government Programme 2010 – 2017** details priorities to be achieved in various sectors, including introducing the ISANGE programme in each health centre. This programme aims to provide psychosocial, medical, police and legal services to adult and child survivors of GBV and child abuse occurring in the family or in the community. It's an outstanding model of response to Violence Against Women (VAW)/GBV and provides an inclusive and holistic response to GBV to minimise the risk of re-victimisation, spoilt evidence and delayed justice. It also sets forth measures to enhance capacities of GBV committees so that violence is eradicated at all levels.

These gains made towards empowering Rwanda's women are a direct result of the measures taken within and beyond the 2003 Constitution – a process that is substantively supported by the executive. Before the genocide, women never held more than 18% of seats in Parliament. However, since the Constitution of 2003, which guarantees women 30% of seats in Parliament, as well as the requirement that all political parties reserve 30% of seats for women, the presence of women in national assemblies has increased exponentially. As a case in point, after the 2003 elections, 48.4% of parliamentary seats went to women and currently, as noted previously,

the figure stands at 64%. There is also a 30% female participation in Gacaca courts (Gender Monitoring Office Rwanda, 2016; Turianskyi and Chisiza, 2017, p.8).

At local level, women's councils work to ensure equal access to services such as education, health and personal security. These efforts have enabled more girls than boys to enrol in primary school, as well as progressive laws when it comes to land rights (Rwanda Women's Network, 2011). These regulated education rates also represent the highest primary school enrolment rates in Africa (Turianskyi and Chisiza, 2017. p.15).

To expand and consolidate these gains, formal gender "machinery" has been established and consists of the following government institutions:

- The Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), Gender Monitoring Office and the National Women's Council. MIGEPROF plays "a leading role in the implementation of the gender agenda" and is "mandated to ensure strategic coordination of policy implementation in the area of gender, family, women's empowerment and children's issues," (MIGEPROF 2016; Gender Monitoring Office, 2017)
- Other organisations play a critical role in ensuring the expansion and sustainability of gender mainstreaming in Rwanda, an example of which is the Rwanda Women Parliamentary Forum (FFRP), which aims to enhance "gender equality and women emancipation" in Rwanda (FFRP 2016). Civil-society organisations play an equally important role to add value to other women empowerment and gender equality programmes in the country.

More is still to be done. For example, gender equality is targeted in forward-looking multiple national strategy frameworks: the National Gender Policy (2010), Vision 2020, the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (2013 – 2018) and the Seven-Year Government Programme (2010 – 2017). Looking towards the future, the Tech Girls Mentorship and other ICT initiatives have provided a platform for women to access important technological advancements (Gender Monitoring Office 2016, 7). The instituted gender-responsive budgeting that has been put in place has contributed to many of these important gains (Abott and Malinda 2016, 23).

About 70% of the population after the genocide against Tutsi was female. Currently, women make up about 52% of the adult population (Gender Monitoring Office, 2016). The World Economic Forum (WEF) *Global Gender Gap Index*, 2016 reports that Rwanda has closed more than 80% of the gender gap, coming fifth in global rankings – the only African country in the top 10.

The philanthropic work of the First Lady of Rwanda, Her Excellency Jeanette Kagame, through both the Imbuto Foundation (an initiative that supports and empowers thousands of vulnerable Rwandan communities through health, education, youth and economic empowerment activities) and the Organisation of African First Ladies against HIV/AIDS (OAFLA) have greatly contributed to the strides made by women in the country. When asked if progress has been made for women since the genocide, His Excellency Paul Kagame stated that:

”It is true that attitudes have gradually changed, and we are all the better for it. This shift has come about mainly because Rwandan women have contributed positively to the healing of society and to nation-building. Women alongside their male colleagues have demonstrated leadership and strength through active participation in key national programmes, including Unity and Reconciliation; fostering of orphans of the genocide; the Gacaca courts (Rwanda’s traditional court system that has been modernised and used to simultaneously administer justice and promote reconciliation); as well as the repatriation and reintegration of former government soldiers. Also, there is an increasing number of women holding elected positions in Parliament and local government. Their positive

contributions to different aspects of society have won them the confidence of Rwandan men and society at large, who now view women as true partners in nation-building.”

Away from formal politics in Rwanda, there are women whose efforts and determination have allowed them to become leaders and mentors in their communities. One example is Esther Mbabazi – the first woman commercial pilot in Rwanda at the age of 24. In addition, organisations such as Akilah Institute, dedicated to “building future generations of women leaders and professionals in East Africa” (Akilah 2017), are contributing to the expansion of economic and leadership opportunities for women in Rwanda and East Africa.

5.2 Women’s participation in political and leadership positions

With women holding 64% of seats in the lower house of Parliament, Rwanda is the first country in which women have moved beyond 50% of parliamentary representation and over 30% in other political leadership representation. This achievement has come about through prioritising women, and introducing structures and processes designed to advance them at leadership levels.



Shakilla Umutoni awarded for her supporting role in Public Diplomacy on 12 March 2019

The 1994 genocide against the Tutsi left the country shattered. Most of the human capital had disappeared, either killed during the genocide or fled to neighbouring countries. It was obvious that Rwanda was so devastated that it could not be rebuilt with men's labour alone. That reality led President Kagame, who has led the country since 2000, after his Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) stopped the genocide in July 1994, to make a call for equality. Therefore, the country's new Constitution, enacted in 2003, decreed that 30% of parliamentary seats must be reserved for women. This measure also applies to all decision-making government bodies and political parties' leadership. The Government also pledged that girls' education would be promoted. President Kagame vowed to implement this policy out of a conviction that it would benefit the country in the long run.

The country embraced Kagame's policies and even went beyond his mandatory minimum percentage to the extent that Rwandan politics are currently cited as a model for gender inclusiveness. The quote below clarifies President Kagame's vision on gender equality:

"Women can deliver more when they are enjoying their full rights. But with men and women working together using their talents to the maximum, the effect is not just additive, it multiplies. All of society benefits. The sum is indeed much greater than the parts."

President Kagame was speaking in Nouakchott, Mauritania, as co-host of the "Women in Power" High-Level Meeting alongside European Union Commissioner, Neven Mimica, on 30 June 2018.

Rwanda, like many other countries in the developing world, has achieved its goal of eliminating gender disparity at all levels of education. Women have surpassed men in the literacy ratio for the population aged between 15 to 24 years as a result of sustained campaigns to ensure girls attend school and complete basic education.

	Baseline 2000	2015 Target	Actual 2014
Ratio of girls to boys in primary school	1,00	1,00	1.03
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary school	0,51	1,00	1.12
Share of women in waged employment in the non-agricultural sector	7,6%	50%	8.2%
% age of seats held by women in national Parliament	26%	50%	64% (2013)

Table 5.1: MDG 3 targets and indicators in Rwanda

Source: Republic of Rwanda, 2014

Rwanda can harness further improvements in its objective of eliminating gender inequality by addressing the following challenges:

- The gender gap in public sector higher education, especially in science and engineering.
- The low share of women in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector. Several programmes have now been designed to address the issue such as the National Employment Programme (NEP) with specific courses, including vocational and technical training targeting girls and women.
- The insufficient skills for gender analysis make it difficult to identify key gender priorities and to propose appropriate interventions. Poverty still remains a significant constraint as women still constitute the majority of the poor.
- Persistent negative cultural and patriarchal attitudes that hamper women's full involvement in initiatives at community levels.
- Limited skills and capacity for employability that derive from gendered roles and responsibilities reducing women's employment and income opportunities.

For the gains made in the empowerment of women in Rwanda to be sustained, government, communities and all stakeholders should undertake the following strategies. The Government should strengthen the mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in interventions that improve livelihoods and reduce poverty for women and their families. Mechanisms for ensuring women's equal access to fair employment practices, credit, assets and economic benefits should be developed.

The mechanisms for ensuring equal access to quality, practical formal and non-formal education for women and girls should be strengthened as well as those for providing women and girls access to quality and affordable healthcare, including sexual and reproductive health services. Other strategies for protecting the gains made include:

- promoting elimination of violence against women while strengthening mechanisms for responding to the needs of survivors and vulnerable women
- promoting equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their complete involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflict as essential for the maintenance and promotion of sustainable peace and security
- strengthening women's capacity and instituting measures to ensure women's equal access to, and full participation in, decision-making and leadership
- ensuring the protection, promotion and realisation of women's and girls' economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights

- strengthening mechanisms for ensuring women's role in the management and safeguarding of natural resources and the environment.

Although some challenges still remain towards realising gender parity in all sectors in Rwanda, the stage is set for the women to exercise their rights and realise their potential and aspirations and become full partners and beneficiaries in the country's development.

References

1. Abott, Pamela and Dixon Malunga. 2015. *The Promise and the Reality: Women's Rights in Rwanda*. Working Paper No. 5. Oxford Human Rights Hub. Available at: <http://ohrh.law.ox.ac.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/OxHRH-Working-Paper-Series-No-5-Abott-and-Malunda.pdf>
2. Gender Monitoring Office (Rwanda). 2016. *From Victims to Leading Actors: Rwanda's Gender Dividend*. Kigali: Gender Monitoring Office Republic of Rwanda
3. HeForShe. 2017. He For She Official Website, available at: <http://www.heforshe.org/en>
4. Republic of Rwanda. 2015. *Rwanda's Report on MDG Implementation and Domestication of the SDGs*. Kigali: Government of Rwanda
5. Ministry of Gender and Family Protection (MIGEPROF). 2010. *National Gender Policy*. Kigali: MIGEPROF.
6. Rwanda Women's Parliamentary Forum. 2017. Official Website, available at: <http://ffrp.rw/index.php?id=2>
7. Rwanda Women's Network. 2011. *Experiences of Women in Asserting their Land Rights: The Case of Bugesera District*. Available at: http://www.rwandawomennetwork.org/downloads/Experiences_of_Women_in_Asserting_their_Land_Rights_The_Case_of_Bugesera_District_Rwanda.pdf
8. Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2017. "Women in National Parliaments." Available at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
9. Tashobya, Athan. 2016. "Official: AU Gender Scorecard Award boosts fight for equality." *The New Times*. Available at: <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/read/201971/>
10. Turianskyi, Yarik and Makebe Chiziza. 2017. *Lessons from Rwanda: Female Political Representation and Women's Rights*. South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA). Available here: <http://www.saiia.org.za/occasional-papers/1168-2017-03-16-gap-op-yarik-and-matebe/file>
11. World Economic Forum. 2016. *The Global Gender Gap Report*. Geneva: World Economic Forum.

CHAPTER SIX: Women's Empowerment in South Africa

You Strike a Woman, You Strike a Rock!



High Commissioner
Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo

The struggle for women's liberation and women's rights in South Africa dates back to the apartheid era. Women took to the streets in protest for recognition and the most significant of these protests was the August 1956 march by about 20 000 women of all races against the apartheid pass laws. Led by Rahima Moosa, Sophie Williams-de Bruyn, Helen Joseph and Lillian Ngoyi, carrying thousands of petitions with more than 100 000 signatures, the women sang the freedom song "Wathint' abafazi, wathintint' imbokodo", roughly translated "[When] you strike a woman, you strike a rock."

The slogan "Wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo" has since become a war cry, representing women's strength, determination and courage. The 1956 march led to significant changes in the pursuit of the emancipation of women in South Africa,

The late struggle icon, Ms Winnie Madikizela-Mandela, who died in April 2018, fought not only white domination,

but also sexism, just as she fought for the poor and dispossessed. She advocated women's rights and denounced patriarchy. While serving as the President of the African National Congress (ANC) Women's League, she encouraged women to fight the rigidly defined gender roles and responsibilities and not to protect male dominance. She is quoted in one interview as saying: "The overwhelming majority of women accept the patriarchy and protect it". She also told the interviewer that: "Men dominate women through the agency of women themselves".

After she was banished from her home in Soweto, Johannesburg, in May 1977 to Brandfort in the Orange Free State, her home became a place where international sympathisers would receive news about her imprisoned husband, Mr Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela, and the state of affairs in South Africa. While in Brandfort, she hosted and received diplomats, foreign media, non-governmental organisations and international sympathisers of the oppressed and the plight of black people. She was the conduit to the outside world, an accidental diplomat, albeit a crucial one, in calling for justice for oppressed South Africans.

In 1992, under the auspices of the Women's National Coalition (a body formed from various organisations in South Africa to represent women and funded by Canada), women participated in the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). Driven by Dr Frene Ginwala, the former Ambassador to Italy, the Women's National Coalition aimed to ensure that women's voices, concerns and views were taken into consideration during the transition from the minority rule of the oppressive apartheid system to a democratic system. To represent women's views at the Gender Advisory Committee, the women elected Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

Following South Africa's first democratic election in 1994, South African women again looked beyond race and party lines and came together demanding at least 30% representation at the negotiating table. For consideration in the drafting of the South African Constitution, the women brought forward the Women's Charter, which was drawn up in 1954 and which emphasised gender equality



9 August 1956, Women's March to the Union Buildings, Pretoria.

Photo courtesy of GCIS

principles and gave a foundation to a gender-sensitive peace agreement and constitution.

However, the struggle for women changed after 1994 with the focus shifting towards economic inclusion and equality and the entrenching of women's rights. It is as a consequence of the comprehensive tools for women's empowerment established since 1994, that South African women have achieved notable milestones.

Prior to the passage of the Bill of Rights in 1996, South African women were invisible, ignored and treated as second-class citizens, albeit to different degrees, depending on one's race. The conventionally patriarchal society meant that women were under the control of their fathers, husbands or close male relatives. The progressive South African Constitution with its Bill of Rights provided an empowering legal framework with far-reaching measures to redress transformation and create a non-sexist, non-racial and democratic South Africa.

6. Empowerment and the legislative framework

In December 1995, a year after democracy, South Africa's Parliament adopted the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol. Some of the notable instruments or legislative frameworks include the Constitution of South Africa (1996), the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000), the Employment Equity Act (1998) and the Electoral Act (1998). A Commission on Gender Equality (CGE), an independent statutory body, was established in terms of Section 187 of Act 108 of the

Constitution of South Africa (1996) to promote and protect gender equality.

The 1996 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the cornerstone of South Africa's democracy, includes the Bill of Rights (Chapter 2). The fundamental rights for all citizens are enshrined in the Bill of Rights and it integrates economic, political, social and cultural rights. All policies geared towards women's empowerment, rights and gender equality are specifically informed by Section 9 of Chapter 2 in the Constitution as stated below:

Figure 6.1 Bill of Rights provisions for gender equality in South Africa

Equality

- 1 Everyone is equal before the law and has the right to equal protection and benefit of the law.
- 2 Equality includes the full and equal enjoyment of all rights and freedoms. To promote the achievement of equality, legislative and other measures designed to protect or advance persons or categories of persons, disadvantaged by unfair discrimination may be taken.
- 3 The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
- 4 No person may unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds in terms of subsection (3). National legislation must be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.
- 5 Discrimination on one or more of the grounds listed in subsection (3) is unfair unless it is established that the discrimination is fair.

At strategic policy level, the country's National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality (2000) establishes a clear vision and framework to guide the processes of developing laws, policies, procedures and practices to ensure equal rights and opportunities for women and men in all spheres, levels and structures of government, the workplace, the community and the family. In 2013, the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill was introduced in Parliament to give effect to Section 9 of the Constitution by providing for a legal framework to advance the empowerment of women as well as gender equality. Chapter 5 of the 2013 Women's Empowerment and Equality Bill aims to strengthen the enforcement of compliance by both government and the private sector in matters of gender mainstreaming and equality.

6.1 Other supporting structures and instruments

To ensure the realisation of women's rights enshrined in the Constitution, a number of organisations have come together to develop frameworks, conventionally referred to as the "National Gender Machinery" (NGM). The NGM is essentially an integrated consortium of "structures located at various levels of the state, civil society and within the statutory bodies". These include the Ministry of Women, youth and persons with disabilities in the Office of the Executive, the Office of the Status of Women, the CGE, non-governmental organisations and religious bodies.

It is the Ministry of Women, youth and persons with disabilities located in The Presidency, that bears primary responsibility for implementing and coordinating the National Gender Policy Framework through its mandate to "champion the advancement of women's socio-economic empowerment and the promotion of gender equality" (www.women.gov.za). The Gender Policy Framework outlines South Africa's vision for gender and the way in which the country intends to implement this vision.

The impressive gains by South African women in leadership positions in government, and particularly in Cabinet and Parliament, are the result of quotas as well as women's advocacy to end patriarchy in society and operate at both the federal and local level, and even in the National House of Traditional Leaders.

In May 2019, for the first time in the history of South Africa, President Cyril Ramaphosa appointed a balanced Cabinet, in which 50% of all ministers are women. Since the lauded Constitution of 1996, which drew from the Women's Charter of 1954, women have increasingly taken up positions of power. Before democracy in South Africa, the representation of women in Parliament was

only 2.7% – a dismal phenomenon when compared with the current rate of 50%, reaching the MDG target.

Since 2007, the ANC, the ruling party in South Africa, has established equal representation for men and women on party lists. This is coupled with the Electoral Act, 73 that requires all registered political parties to ensure full and equal participation of women in party practices (see also Pande, *et al*, 2011).

Female participation in leadership positions extends to important and not just "token" realms of state bureaucracy. Evidencing this are the female Cabinet ministers who have held portfolios as diverse and important as defence, transport, labour and science and technology, and not just positions seen to "fit" women such as those in social welfare or gender affairs. Furthermore, women comprise 30% of the embassy heads of mission, 40% of senior management in the Public Service, and 34% of the judges in the country. At 54.9%, women are also the highest percentage of registered voters in the country (Department of Women, 2015). These gains are all in line with the African Union (AU) Commission commitments as well as the 2008 Southern African Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development.

6.2. South African women in politics, state-owned enterprises and the Public Service

(a) Politics and Parliament

Political empowerment is an area in which South Africa fares relatively well compared to other countries both regionally and globally. The World Economic Forum's (WEF) *Gender Gap Report* ranks South Africa 15th out of 144 countries. The report also places South Africa way ahead of its BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) counterparts with Russia at 75th, Brazil 79th, India 87th and China 99th. It also ranks South Africa seventh for women representation in Parliament, and 13th for women in ministerial positions.

This is a great achievement for South Africa's democracy and for women, compared to when Helen Suzman, the only women Member of Parliament during apartheid, cast a lonely figure as she relentlessly challenged the system. Although South Africa has had two female deputy presidents (Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka and Baleka Mbete) in recent years, the WEF's *Gender Gap Report* notes that a female has not served as head of state.

When the ANC held its election conference in December 2017 in Gauteng, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu (current Minister of Human Settlement, Water and Sanitation) and Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma (current Minister of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs) threw their hats in the

ring for the position of the president of the party. Neither woman won – they lost out to Cyril Ramaphosa. However, should either of the two women had won, this would have placed her in line for president of the country after South Africa’s national election held in May 2019.

While it is commendable that the two women vied for the position of presidency, it is highly disturbing that neither was even elected to be deputy president. This begs the question of whether or not the ANC Women’s League, which could have swung the vote in favour of women, is unconsciously biased towards women as a result of decades of entrenched patriarchy. This could be a setback in the fight to address leadership and gender discrimination in politics, public service and other social structures and sectors.

National Parliament

Progress is measured in terms of the proportion of seats held by women in the national Parliament. The People’s Assembly website, www.pa.org.za, on South African women in Parliament, states that prior to South Africa’s democracy, female representation in Parliament was at just 2.7% and rose to about 28% by the time the Constitution was adopted. By 2009, parliamentary seats occupied by women rose to an all-time high of 43% and with the latest appointments (2019), it is at 50%.

A close look at the number of women represented in the three majority political parties as per the latest disaggregated data (July 2019) from the Parliament of the Republic of South Africa on female representation in Parliament and political parties is fascinating. The ANC has 49% of its seats occupied by women while the Democratic Alliance has 34% of its seats allocated to its female members. It is interesting to observe that the fairly new Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) has 36% of its seats occupied by women.

South Africa had its first female Speaker of the National Assembly, Honourable Frene Ginwala, from 1994 to 2004. From April 2004, another female Speaker, Honourable Baleka Mbete, took the reins until 2008 when she was appointed by the then President of South Africa, Kgalema Motlanthe, as his deputy. In 2014, Mbete was re-elected to the position of Speaker, a position she held until after the 2019 elections, when another female speaker, Honorable Thandi Modise was appointed to the position.

Female ministers in South Africa hold key ministerial positions, which in some countries are mainly reserved for men. As an example, Minister Nosiviwe Mapisa-Nqakula, has since 2012 headed the Department of Military Defence and War Veterans while Minister Naledi Pandor, another woman, heads International Relations and Cooperation. Both ministers have also held powerful

ministerial position within departments that are mainly reserved for men. From 2009 to 2012, Minister Mapisa-Nqakula was Minister of Correctional Services while Minister Pandor has been the Minister of Science and Technology and Higher Education and Training.

The Minister of State and Security is another female, Minister Ayanda Dlodlo, preceded by another female Minister Dipuo Letsatsi-Duba

(b) State-owned institutions

The state-owned enterprises (SOEs) have also made impressive gains in female leadership positions. According to the 2017 research report, *The Census*, conducted by the Business Women’s Association of South Africa (BWASA) on women in leadership positions in South Africa, compared with the Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) listed companies, the SOEs lead with top women in management positions at 40.5%. This impressive improvement on representation of women in both the SOEs can be attributed to the commitment by the South African Government, through its legislative framework, which is designed to protect women’s rights, promote gender equality and facilitate women’s empowerment.

Figure 6.2: Comparison between JSE-listed firms and SOEs, 2017

Source: BWA South Africa Women in Leadership Census 2017

	JSE-listed companies	State-owned enterprises
Share of female CEOs	4.7%	5%
Share of female chairpersons	6.9%	10%
Share of female directors	19.1%	41.2%
Share of female executive managers	29.5%	28.5%

c) Public Service

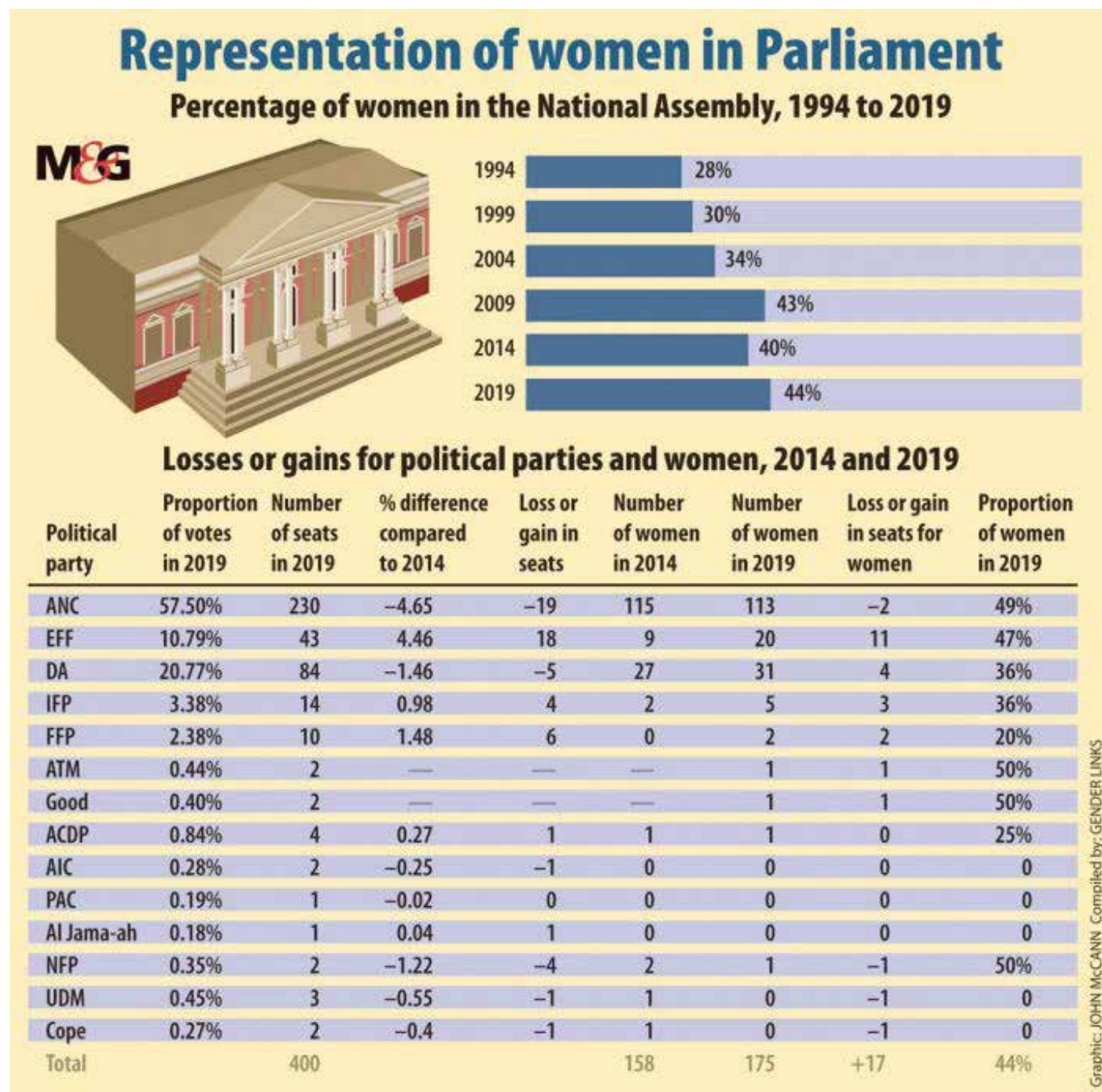
As indicated earlier, South Africa’s legislative framework, the supporting instruments, quotas, women’s voices and programmes geared towards protecting women’s rights have ensured progress in terms of women in leadership positions in government and other public sectors. Government has to reach basic international targets when in the workplace. However, according to the BWASA’s 2017 research report, “despite gender equity targets and making up the majority of workers in the Public Service, women account for only 41% of senior management positions”.

d) Higher education

Higher education is another area where women have been underrepresented and seemingly the status quo will remain for a long time regardless of race, qualifications, experience or age. However, a trickle of progress has been made recently in some institutions when it comes to

Figure 6.3 Representation of women in the South African Parliament, January 2019

Source: Parliament of the Republic of South Africa



the position of chancellor. While this is admirable, it should be remembered that a chancellor’s role is ceremonial. South Africa has 26 universities and only four female vice-chancellors. A vice-chancellor holds the actual leadership position at a university, where the incumbent is in charge of the overall strategic direction of a university. Women continue to be underrepresented at the vice-chancellor level.

The University of Cape Town appointed Professor Mamokgethi Phokeng, who took over as Vice-Chancellor at the end of June 2018. Professor Cheryl de La Rey is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Pretoria while Professor Xoliswa Mtsose occupies this position at the

University of Zululand. The Vice-Chancellor at the University of Mpumalanga is Professor Thoko Mayekiso.

6.3 South African women in diplomacy

For decades, foreign policy worldwide has excluded any meaningful participation by women, resulting in the underrepresentation of women. While there has been an outcry on the underrepresentation of women in foreign policy and specifically in diplomacy, the United Nations (UN) is the only international, “actor that actively promotes the importance of more women in diplomacy”. *Women in Diplomacy: How is the Problem of Absence of Women*

in Diplomacy Framed by the United Nations? (Moez Dharsani & Alexandra Ericsson: 2013:55).

South Africa does not have a legal framework, which specifically and exclusively addresses female representation in foreign policy. However, the same legislative framework that targets women's empowerment and the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women also seeks to promote equality and employment in South Africa and is relevant when applied to address the underrepresentation of women in foreign policy.

On its website, <http://www.dirco.gov.za/department/index.html>, the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) states its mission objectives as: "To formulate, coordinate, implement and manage South Africa's foreign policy and international relations programmes, promote South Africa's national interest and values and the African Renaissance (and create a better world for al)". The website also alludes to the following strategic priorities:

- through bilateral and multilateral interactions, protect and promote South African national interests and values
- conduct and coordinate South Africa's international relations and promote its foreign policy objectives
- monitor international developments and advise government on foreign policy and related domestic matters
- protect South Africa's sovereignty and territorial integrity

- contribute to the formulation of international law and enhance respect for the provisions thereof
- promote multilateralism to secure a rules-based international system
- maintain a modern, effective and excellence-driven department
- provide consular services to South African nationals abroad
- provide a world-class and uniquely South African State Protocol service.

It is worth noting that DIRCO has, since 1999, been headed by female ministers. The current minister, Honourable Naledi Pandor, took over from Minister Lindiwe Sisulu in May 2019 after serving for about 15 months in this position. Minister Sisulu took over from Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane who had served in this department since 2009 and was preceded by another woman, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma. All these women have been working on the transformation of the country's international image and reputation. After international isolation for her human rights violations during the apartheid regime, South Africa has had to work hard to reposition itself globally and in the region. At some point, all three political leaders – the minister and two deputy ministers – were women.

The pre-1994 history of South Africa's Foreign Service boasts a record of only three women at ambassadorial level. Since the advent of democracy, the number of women who have served as ministers, deputy ministers, heads of mission and representatives of international



Heads of Mission Conference 21 – 26 October 2018

Heads of Mission Conference, 2018
Source: DIRCO, 2018 South African Heads of Mission

organisations, has increased tremendously. About 64 women have served as heads of mission, including ambassadors, high commissioners and consuls-general.

In 2001, South Africa had 17.4% female heads of mission, but by February 2005, the number had increased notably to 24.2% women. As at 8 June 2010, 26 out of the 113 (22.1%) serving heads of mission were female. By the end of 2017, DIRCO had 38% women serving as heads of missions. Today it is however 30%. Overall, in 2015, 229 (40.25%) women were employed in missions abroad, including as ambassadors, high commissioners and consuls-general.

To South Africa's credit, it does not discriminate against women being posted to important and highly demanding missions; however, a barrier to female heads of missions exists when it comes to posting women to highly conservative societies whose women live under a veil where the political and administrative office is generally staffed only by men.

Today, South Africa has emerged as an international symbol of progress and leadership on the African continent and as a powerful political player in the global sphere where it has more than embassies.

Minister Nkoana-Mashabane was one of the first female ambassadors following the dawn of democracy. She served as the High Commissioner to Malaysia from 1995 to 1999, and was also accredited to the Philippines and Brunei. In 1999, she was appointed as High Commissioner to India and accredited to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Maldives and Nepal. As the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, a position she had held since 2009, she played a strategic leadership role in lobbying for South Africa's inclusion as a member of the Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa (BRICS) formation.

6.4 South African women representation in other leadership fields

The increase in the number of women in leadership positions in various fields, both in South Africa, across the continent and internationally has been significant. While these women have overcome some of the obstacles placed upon them because of their gender, their roles have benefited different societies nationally and internationally. Much work is still to be done to increase the number of women in leadership positions. The following table illustrates South African women who have made a substantial impact on the world stage in politics and leadership:

NAME	INTERNATIONAL ROLE
Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma	In 2012, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma took over as the Chairperson of the AU Commission, a position she held until the end of January 2017.
Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka	Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka is an Under-Secretary-General of the UN and the Executive Director of UN Women. From 2005 to 2008, she was appointed Deputy President of South Africa. In 2018, the Prime Minister of Canada, Justine Trudeau, appointed Mlambo-Ngcuka to the Gender Equality Advisory Council for Canada's G7 Presidency ("the Council"). The Council's mandate is to "promote a transformative G7 agenda and support and ministers in ensuring that gender equality and gender-based analysis are integrated across all themes, activities and outcomes of Canada's G7 Presidency".
Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi	Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi is a special envoy on gender to the African Development Bank
Judge Navi Pillay	Judge Navi Pillay is a former High Commissioner for Human Rights and a former International Criminal Court (ICC) judge.
Justice Mandisa Maya	In 2017, Justice Mandisa Maya was appointed as the President of the Supreme Court of Appeal, making her the first woman to occupy the position. Her appointment elevated her to the third-highest position in the Judicial Branch as the court is the second-highest judicial body in South Africa.
Gill Marcus	Gill Marcus took over as the ninth Governor General of the South African Reserve Bank in 2009, a position she held until 2014.
Frene Ginwala	Frene Ginwala was the first female Speaker of South Africa's National Assembly after the advent of democracy. She held this position from 1994 to 2004.

Dr Brigalia Bam	Dr Brigalia Bam has served as chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropole and the Walter Sisulu University. She also served as the Africa regional secretary and coordinator of the Women’s Workers Programme for the International Food and Allied Workers Association, based in Geneva. For about 12 years, starting in 1999, she was the Chairperson of South Africa’s Independent Electoral Commission.
Judge Yvonne Mokgoro	Judge Yvonne Mokgoro served as the Chairperson of the South African Law Reform Commission. She is also a former judge of the Constitutional Court of South Africa having served in this capacity since the Constitutional Court’s inception.

Table 6.4 South African women representation in international political leadership

In June 2019, Advocate Pansy Tlakula, former Chief Electoral Officer of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) was elected to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) for the period 2020 to 2023. She was elected by a commanding number of votes, amounting to 128 votes.

Overall, while there is still room for improvement, South Africa has formulated a number of efforts to increase female representation and leadership in all sectors. Emphasis is also placed not on the numbers, but on the quality and placement of women in leadership positions to give input and inform strategic decision-making. A significant improvement has been made in the enrolment of girls and women in education, which is a direct result of the substantial amount of money dedicated to education in the national budget, gender-sensitive budgeting, and the advocacy of both government and civil society.

South Africa is indubitably one of the African countries that has displayed impressive results both on the continent

and globally when it comes to women’s presence in political decision-making positions. This is buoyed by the legislative framework and the country’s Constitution, which has its Bill of Rights as its cornerstone.

References

1. Department of Women (South Africa). 2015. Official Website, available at: <http://www.women.gov.za/>
2. Office on the Status of Women (South Africa). 2002. *South Africa’s National Policy Framework for Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality*. Available at: https://www.gov.za/sites/www.gov.za/files/gender_0.pdf
3. Environmental Affairs South Africa. 2017. *National Gender Policy Framework*. Available at: https://www.environment.gov.za/projectsprogrammes/environment_sector_genderstrategy/policy_framework



CHAPTER SEVEN:

Women's Empowerment in Zimbabwe

“You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated. In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.”

Maya Angelou



Ambassador Florence Chideya

This chapter on women's empowerment and gender diplomacy in Zimbabwe scans the nurturing and far-reaching evolution of gender policy in various facets of Zimbabwean life. The chapter is discussed under the following subheadings: Legislative framework and reforms in support of women's empowerment; Skills development and capacity-building; Status of women in leadership position in the public and private sector; Zimbabwe and its foreign policy outlook; and Women in diplomacy and peacekeeping, challenges and opportunities.

Prior to the attainment of independence in 1980, the Government of Zimbabwe had long committed itself to the advancement of women's rights and gender equality. The progress, however, has not kept pace with the expectations due to the general disturbances caused by exogenous factors such as the economic embargo and HIV pandemic.

As a result of this, the country collaborated with the four international agencies, namely: the United Nations

Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organisation (ILO) and UNWOMEN, to focus on four priorities centred on four pillars, namely:

1. promoting women's security and combating gender-based violence
2. women's political participation and influence
3. women's economic empowerment and working conditions
4. national accountability on gender equality and women's empowerment. http://www.ilo.org/wcms5/groups/public/.../africa/uments/genericdocuments/wcms_548676.pdf

The same report quoted above, in which the Government collaborated with the mentioned UN agencies, further notes that banking records show women lagging behind men in terms of their participation in the sector, including access to bank accounts in formal financial institutions (37.12% versus 42.55% – *2012 Global Index*, World Bank). Ibid

The UN development agencies partnered with Zimbabwe under the Joint Programme on Gender Equality, Zimbabwe (JPGE) in an effort to seek out and elaborate the gender requirements so as to institute relevant reforms.

The JPGE undertook the responsibility for capacity-strengthening at macro and micro levels as well as the catalyst to morph gender issues into policy and legal context.

7.1 Legislative framework and reforms in support of women's empowerment

Gender equality is enshrined in the Zimbabwe Constitution, which provides for non-discrimination on the basis of gender and other issues. Promoting gender equality may or may not necessarily empower women. One is likely to relate the concept with the familiar traditional sectoral

disciplines such as education, health and funding formulas because of their visibility in those disciplines.

The Equality Index, which measures gender parity, ranks the country eighth out of the 52 African countries profiled by the African Development Bank and it is also one of the top 10 forerunners in women's rights among all the countries surveyed (ADB 2015). Chigora and Dewa 2009, reinforce the same fact in a survey that measures three dimensions across the continent: equality in economic opportunities, human development and equality in laws and institutions.

In pursuing reforms and legislation aimed at gender mainstreaming, Zimbabwe has made significant progress. The country adopted the National Gender Policy in 2004, which provides a framework for the implementation of legislative arrangements and measures to streamline gender development. The country's Constitution, adopted in 2013, recognises the rights of women, explicitly stating in Chapter 4, Part 2, Section 15, that there shall be equality and non-discrimination.

During the year of the revised Constitution, 2013, the country positioned itself for the recognition of women by establishing its own process to implement MDG3 and SDG5, alongside the domestic policy direction, Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socioeconomic Transformation (ZIMASSET), which includes gender considerations. On the legal front, the revised 2013 Constitution made giant leaps in protecting the rights of women in Zimbabwe. The Constitution not only includes a section on women's rights, but also foregrounds these commitments by outright pronouncing gender equality and gender balance as a founding value of the country. Secondly, the Bill of Rights (Chapter 4) recognises the right to treatment,

including right to equal treatment and opportunity in political, economic, cultural and social spheres. The same Bill of Rights provides for 50-50 representation in decision-making positions in commissions and other elective bodies.

These declarations became the support for mainstreaming gender equality across all spheres: economic, legal, political and social. For example, the Constitution reserves 60 seats in the National Assembly for women in addition to any of the seats held by women who are elected. The Constitution also created a Gender Commission whose mandate is the: "investigation of possible gender rights violations, receiving and considering gender-based complaints from the public.

The Zimbabwe Constitution states that the Zimbabwe Gender Commission Act has:

"To provide for the establishment of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission to perform specified functions, including the investigation of and making of recommendations on the removal of barriers to the attainment of full gender equality; and to provide for matters connected with or incidental to the foregoing."

Government has declared "The Second Republic" anchored on the key goals towards Vision 2030 whose pillars are to:

- Transform Zimbabwe into an upper middle-income economy with a capita gross income of between US\$3 500 and US\$5 000 in real terms by 2030.
- Raise employment rates upwards, not only in the formal sector, but also covering the SME sector.



- Progressively reduce poverty rate, to levels consistent with upper middle-income economies.
- Achieve an average life expectancy of over 65 years, and in the process, score in the upper echelons of the happiness and prosperity index.
- Guarantee national food security, affordable, competitive and accessible education and health services, and infrastructural development.
- Rationalise the Public Service wage bill in order to reduce the fiscal deficit to sustainable levels and to undertake reforms to unlock the potential of public enterprises to effectively contribute to the country's GDP. The enunciation of a positive foreign policy hinged on engagement and re-engagement with the global community.
- Promote investment and create a One Stop Shop Investment Centre through accelerated ease of doing business reforms and improved political and economic governance
(*Call to action Permanent Secretaries, Herald 4 October 2018*. Dr Misheck Sibanda, Chief Secretary to the Cabinet).

Reflecting on these pillars, the Transitional Stabilisation Programme became the instrument to bring about the desired effect across sectors, including women empowerment. It is scheduled to run from October 2018 to December 2020.

Post-independence Zimbabwe saw the Government creating the Ministry of Community Development and Women Affairs, responsible for protecting the rights and needs of women, as well as implementing legislation and policies for female inclusion. Several female ministers have been at the helm of this charge like Hon. Dr Naomi Nhwitiwa, Hon. Nyasha Chikwinya, and the longest-serving and current Minister Stembiso Nyoni. Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe mandated most commercial banks to set up women's desks to develop products and services that focus on the needs of female entrepreneurs.

The work of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission complements the work of the Ministry for Women's Affairs, Gender and Community Development. Critical to the gender work of all these institutions is the 2017 National Gender Policy (NGP), which was launched to: "address the shortcomings" of the initial 2004 policy as well as respond to "emerging issues" in the political, social and economic spheres. To these ends, its foremost goal is to: "eradicate gender discrimination in all spheres of life and development" (Ministry of Women Affairs, 2017). Furthermore, a need was identified to appoint a systematic focal point for gender mainstreaming into local and national governance policies translating into

sound economic practices and enhancement of women's contribution to gross domestic product.

Beyond the formal governance environment, a number of local and international women's groups are mobilising to ensure that the State adheres to local, regional and international commitments. These range from women's rights groups such as the Women's Coalition of Zimbabwe, to institutions like Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network, and the Women's University in Africa. At grassroots level, organisations such as the Regional Network of the Children and Young People's Trust (RNCYPT) are creating more opportunities for young girls to take part in various governance structures, while also investigating the barriers that impede their participation in governance (RNCYPT 2016).

Zimbabwe has also introduced PADARE, a traditional platform that pursues a conventional approach to equality and women's empowerment. The establishment of micro-PADAREs in villages across the country complements government efforts to reverse negative stereotyping, patriarchal prejudice and the fear of women in leadership positions.

7.2 Skills development and capacity-building

Zimbabwean women have a long history of political participation, from colonial times through the liberation struggle to modern-day Zimbabwe. When Africa was partitioned in 1883, during the Berlin Conference, women began to lose their hitherto important and essential positions in society. Zimbabwe's liberation narrative credits a woman, Nehanda Nyakasikana, for inspiring the Second Liberation War, which brought about the country's independence. The latter, was at the centre of leadership during the Munhumutapa Empire, which stretched from present-day Angola to Mozambique and became the visionary and mental stimulation for the Second Liberation War. The wave of colonialism is credited with dislodging women out of their traditional, gender-balanced role. This squeeze seemed similar to what happened in Europe when suddenly men took over the running of everything, including representation.

Upon the attainment of independence and realising that educated women and girls resulted in empowered societies, Zimbabwe embarked on compulsory free education for all. The education changed the nation's vision such that as women became more educated, the pool from which to draw women into national leadership grew. This was a commendable move, but as time went on, the economic challenges and the inadequacy of the national fiscus made it difficult to maintain such a mammoth task of funding education nationally. Unlike

in the past, where the traditional, cultural patriarchal perspectives on education lacked gender sensitivity and decisions on children's education were usually left to parents, the opposite now held true. Zimbabwean parents would do anything to educate their children, a position that holds true even today.

The Women's University in Africa (Harare), which was established in 2002 with an enrolment of 145 students, has seen enrolment rise over the years. In 2017, there were 6 001 graduates, of whom 4 500 were women. The university draws its student body from the African continent and is one of the first institutions to do so. In September 2017, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority (ZIMRA) Board Chairperson, Willia Bonyongwe, officiating at a university function celebrating the construction of the new Harare Campus, underscored the need to invest in women's education to build confidence, a point reinforced by the acting Vice-Chancellor, Dr Elizabeth Chikwiri, who supports the broader vision of establishing similar universities in the rest of Africa.

Several agencies have embarked on aggressive formulas for empowering women by supporting many different initiatives: staff development, capacity-building, microfinance, mentorship programmes, looking for leadership material, networking and partnership projects from both the private and public sectors, to name a few. Organisations such as the Professional Resources Organisation of Women and Executive Bureau (PROWEB) are at the centre of such activities but are periodically hampered by a lack of funding. Women are known to be amenable to mentorship opportunities from other women in successful positions and role modelling became an accepted strategy. The World Bank took up the challenge to empower women more aggressively in business and finance towards the end of 2017. In 2017, female top civil servants constituted 24% of the senior civil service.

A project known as WOMEN GET ON BOARD, by PROWEB, ran the Journey to the Top Seminar Series for its membership whose aim was to conscientise, mentor and stimulate women of all echelons to benefit from leadership studies and work towards active participation. Hon Dr Olivia Muchena, (2013) an academic and Minister of Women's Affairs, then guest speaker at the seminar, made a call for women to move away from constantly describing their situation but to constantly strategise how to get of the situation they find themselves in. She cautioned them that they should be conscious of boardroom games, in sports and in the military. She observed that appropriate legislation and policy, while it did go a long way to provide a general cover for gender balance, fell short in maintaining the momentum once

established. It requires constant follow-up and monitoring and evaluation (Seminar report 2013).

Mckinsey Global Index, MGI, 2015 established that between \$12 trillion and \$28 trillion could be added to the economy if women took their rightful place in society. No doubt, more women's contributions to gross domestic product can benefit everyone in the world. As Madeleine Albright, former US Secretary of State, once said: "... societies are more stable if women are politically and economically empowered."

7.3 Women in leadership

Anita Morjani, emphasising the total societal approach, had this to say,

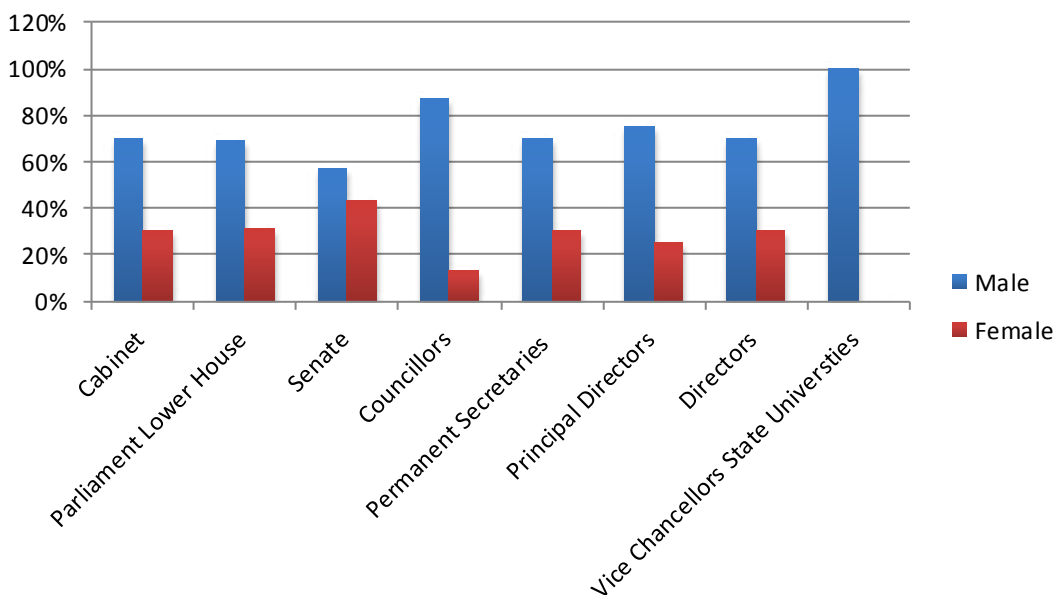
...“imagine yourself in a warehouse, totally pitch-black inside, when you turn on a flashlight to navigate your way in the dark, your vision is limited to only where your beam flashes. The light of the flashlight can only show all the parts and contents of the warehouse, and yet, when the lights are turned off, it doesn't mean nothing exists, it is still there, yet you see nothing. So, it is with the sexes, as humanity we must begin **to really** see all sexes for total societal total benefit”. (The Flashlight Effect, A Simple Solution to Focus your Mind. <http://anitamorjani.com>, November, 2014)

Since the country's independence, significant progress became visible in the area of women's participation in politics in Zimbabwe. A number of women have held leadership positions. Some examples include the female politician, Edna Madzongwe (1980 – 2017), who was the President of the Senate (World Bank 2017; IPU 2015).; Joice Mujuru, a veteran and female politician, served in the capacity of Vice-President of Zimbabwe for a decade from 2004 – 2014; both positions traditionally held by men. These women are regarded as pioneers of gender visibility in post-independent Zimbabwe, (SADC gender protocol country reports and IPU 2015. <http://genderlinks.org.za>). Beginning with the election of 2013 and again in 2018, one of the deputies of the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, (RBZ) has been a woman, Dr Jersimen Tarisai Chipika, and was subsequently replaced by another woman, Dr Charity Dhlwayo.

The positions of President of the Senate and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly have been held by women as a result of the quota system. Furthermore, the constitutional commissions are nearly compliant with gender parity.

Sixty seats have been and are reserved for women in Parliament, elected through a system of proportional

Figure 7.2. Status of both genders in public leadership positions in Zimbabwe, 2019.



representation. Zimbabwean women have much to celebrate, as they comprise more than a third of legislators in Parliament and total 124 female MPs out of 350, with the reservation. The proportional representation clause is scheduled to fall away in 2023. However, women in Zimbabwe continue to push for 50/50 representation for all political party positions to promote equity in decision-making; as determined by the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development that urges member states to adopt specific legislative measures so that women have equal opportunities to participate in all electoral processes. Female political empowerment is assumed to be the driver of economic and social development. Some of the statistics summarised here give an indication of the percentage of women in various leadership positions in Zimbabwe.

Figure 7.2 summarises the status of women in positions of leadership in various sectors of the society. In comparison, females are still faring much lower than their male counterparts

In May 2017, the Chair of the nine-member Zimbabwe Gender Commission, Commissioner Margaret Sangarwe-Mukahanana, urged women to increase their participation ahead of the 2018 general elections to achieve gender parity in the political arena. Women in Zimbabwe constitute 52% of the population, while the representation in high political positions lacks balance. Only three female provincial affairs ministers had been appointed in a country with 10 provinces. Statistics show that women constitute 34% of the current Parliament (125 out of 350), of which 48 are in the Senate in the National Assembly. (Zimstats).

Women in politics and other sectors were criticised by the current Chairperson of the Zimbabwe Gender

Commission, Commissioner Mukahanana-Sangarwe. She is on record urging women to correct the slow pace of gender reform, encouraging them to participate in both private and public office. The commission has subsequently committed to developing a database of qualified women from different fields to accelerate their inclusion on corporate boards (Mananavire 2017).

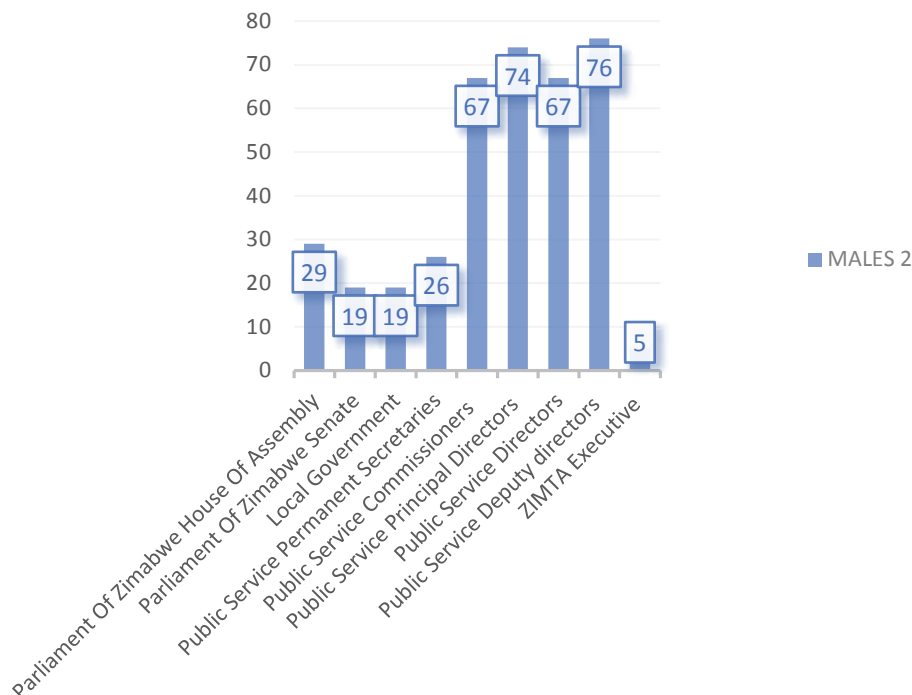
In the private sector, the absence of women in senior positions is quite conspicuous, save those female-owned companies, which reflect the opposite. While Zimbabwe is not included in the 2015 African Development Bank (AfDB) survey of women in the boardrooms of Africa, a study on the presence of female executives in companies listed on the Zimbabwean Stock Exchange (ZSE) was undertaken by Njaya and Chimbadzwa (<http://eaournals.org/journal...vol-3-issue11-november-2015>)

The study sought to explain the “chronic lack of women on [these] boards”. The research shows that while some sectors have commendable female representation, such as the information technology sector where women occupy 42.9% of board seats, “more than half (58.3 %) of the companies listed on the ZSE did not have a female board member” (Njaya and Chimbadzwa, 2015, 20). The OECD confirms that gender parity is far below the targets that have been set as women remain underrepresented in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, also known as the STEM disciplines, let alone management echelons where less than 25% is recorded.

A research study conducted in 2015 on private-sector management revealed that of the 64 chief executive officers (CEOs) of companies listed on the stock exchange, only three were women. Since then, a significant leap has brought the total to 45%. CEOs in privately owned

Figure 7.3 Non-corporate but key sectors (2013).

Source: Women Get on Board, 2017



manufacturing enterprises headed by women jumped from 3% to 27% (Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries, 2017 survey). The numbers are less encouraging in state-owned enterprises. Of the 103 CEOs, only 15 were women.

It has come to be widely acknowledged that: “gender sensitivity within the country’s development and implementation of national, regional and continent-wide commitments still needs support and improvement.” Despite regional and international commitments to 50/50 parity representation by 2015, Zimbabwe only holds about 25% representation in public service institutions. In the case of the Zimbabwe Defence Force, no women are represented in positions at the highest levels despite the Government’s commitment to the UN Resolution 1325 in relation to peace and security. In addition, women’s representation in the Parliament of Zimbabwe remains low at 35% following the last elections of July 2013. Female representation in the country’s 92 urban and rural councils still remains below 20% and the country’s new 26-member Cabinet has only three female ministers. *Government Gazette, 2013*, in comparison with 2018 when three female Cabinet ministers with 10 Minister of State in the provinces.

Apart from formal and public sectors, there are emerging areas for women; this demographic is finding its niche. Some of these areas were not only traditionally off-limits to women, but were male-dominated. Women are making compelling contributions to the arts, for example, the artists Yvonne Vera, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Stella Chiweshe, Thandie Newton and author, No Violet Bulawayo, are ambassadors for Zimbabwe in their

respective artistic and entertainment fields. In addition, Zimbabwe’s grandmother spirit medium, Nehanda, who was an inspiration for the independence struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, continues to inspire many generations of Zimbabwean women and men. When facing execution, she declared that: “my bones will rise again from the east”. This declaration was followed by the spontaneous uprising of movements of ordinary people to join “Chimurenga”, the Liberation War. Immediately following independence, the legal age of majority became 18 for boys and girls. Previously, there had never been a legal age of majority in Zimbabwe. The Legal Age of Majority was a policy, which entitled previously disenfranchised young people from exercising their right to vote, enter into formal marriage, representing themselves without the husbands or male person.

7.4 Women’s participation in diplomacy

On the foreign policy front, Zimbabwe has remained resolute in the execution of its foreign policy in the past two decades, during which period the political and economic environment was overshadowed by an economic embargo from the Western alliance countries. In his inaugural speech in November 2017, the President and Commander of the Defence Forces, Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa, addressed the global community with these words:

“We are ready to embrace each and all, on principles of mutual respect and common humanity ...” Referring to international relations, he had this to say: “We subscribe and affirm

the principle where all nations of the world are equal and sovereign partners working towards the maintenance of world peace as collectively cherished under the United Nations Charter.”

Retired Major General Sibusiso Moyo, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, had this to say of international relations during one of his early engagements with diplomats in Harare: “Zimbabwe will pursue multilateralism in its foreign policy, guarantee the safety of foreign investment and respect the sovereignty of other states ...”

In his maiden speech, Minister Moyo stated that: “Zimbabwe’s foreign policy objectives are fundamentally to help safeguard and enhance the comfort of all her people. This is done through interaction with other countries at various levels in order to influence the behaviour of other actors so that the international environment is conducive to the attainment of these goals guided by an overriding belief in and love for mankind, the sacredness and the inviolability of our national sovereignty and the need for freedom, justice and equality for all”.

The Government has made tremendous progress in enhancing gender equality in the diplomatic field. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has adopted a gender parity policy that ensures that for every promotion of a male officer, a female officer is appointed. Consequently, more than half of the ministry’s management staff are women. This policy has also been escalated to the appointment of heads of missions, although it continues to show gaps in the various ladders.

Leading the pack of the first female ambassadors to be appointed to represent the post-independent Zimbabwe in the late 1980s were Angeline Makwavarara (Sweden), who made history by being appointed the first female Ambassador to the Nordic region, followed by Evelyn Kawonza (Austria); Lucy Muvungi (Namibia); Lillian Chitauro (Canada); and Florence Chitauro (Australia), and Chipso Zindoga. As earlier alluded to, this number has significantly improved as close to 22% of ambassadorial appointments from Zimbabwe are women (Chideya, *et al*, 2017). These gains are comparable with those required by the SADC Gender Protocol Targets (SADC 2008.) Although more progress is needed before Zimbabwe achieves the 50% representation of women required by this protocol, it is a commendable upward trajectory. The highest office in the land boasts an increasing number of senior female officers who have become visible, boosting the confidence of the rest of the female officers. The representation of women in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Zimbabwe, which is summarised here shows that women occupy 66% of directorships in the above ministry (Source: Government Records)

Zimbabwe has internalised the realisation that the decline of Cabinet diplomacy during the last century has brought about a new and different approach to diplomacy. Recruitment into the diplomatic field in the past appeared to focus on the traditional model; focussing on the political administration and international affairs. It has since emerged that though that is the mainstay, the selection of top diplomats especially, has begun to reflect and has been reinvented and is now an actively multidisciplinary unit composed of various interest and lobby groups. This multilevel nature of diplomacy brings about a whole new set of strategies and a different *modus operandi*. What this effectively means is that as the country moves forward, particularly in the areas of empowerment and diplomacy, the renewed energy arising out of national positive gender policies will provide the impetus and become instrumental in challenging women to venture into putting themselves forward for positions in previously male-dominated boardrooms. Without empowerment, gender-sensitive diplomatic practice may remain elusive and even remote.

This is a new material reality which is all-inclusive and where practitioners have a huge task to relearn and implement to retool. First, there is the acceptance of using women, who are able networkers and who can deliver positive strategies for the national benefit. Women, as they bring different attributes and approaches to their positions in any capacity, find themselves deserving a fighting chance, especially in the diplomatic arena.

Diplomats serving Zimbabwe when interviewed by journalists (“The Zimbabwean”) to comment on the growing influence of females in diplomacy had this to say: “Take yourself seriously, but not overly seriously because you get into a situation that you start fighting battles that are not worth fighting for.”

“Women are good at diplomacy because they tend to be less confrontational by nature, and they tend to be amenable to what we can call win-win situations. By this I don’t mean by any means that women are soft or they are pushovers – you still have to have a bit of backbone to pull in this game. I mean we have a different approach than men to settle conflicts and in finding creative problem solving,” Head of Mission, who was at the helm of one Embassy in Harare. (15 April 2013.) <http://thezimbabwean.co.zw>

7.5 Women in peacekeeping as part of international diplomacy

In 2005, the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, said that “study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women ...”



Africa Day 2016: The former Dean and Ambassador for Zimbabwe, Florence Chideya; The former Governor General for Canada Rt. Hon Michael Jean and Ambassador of the Republic of Ethiopia, Birtukan Ayano Dadi

“It was during the latter’s tenure (1997 – 2006), that he took a bold step to shine a spotlight on women empowerment as a tool for development to include peace and security. It was also then that enhanced empowerment assumed centre stage through his encouragement for global implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution, UNSC 1325.”

Peacekeeping ensures women’s equal participation and influence with men and the promotion of gender equality in peace and security decision-making processes at national, local and international levels. This affirms the importance of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, peacekeeping, post-conflict peace-building and governance. In 2011, to her credit, 31% of the Zimbabweans in peacekeeping forces in Africa were women. The percentage increased to 42% in 2012, and then reduced slightly in 2014 to 41%, according to UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR).

However, in cautioning the UN (UNGA, 2017) and explaining the socio-economic political environment of the country, former President Robert Mugabe said that the biggest impediment to Zimbabwe achieving the 2030 gender equality agenda was the burden of sanctions, imposed by the Western alliance over the past

16 years. In the same speech, he added: “we are being punished for doing what all other nations do ... responding to and looking after the basic interests of our people”. He opined that as long as those restrictions remained, Zimbabwe’s capacity to implement the 2030 agenda would be challenging. The second republic has seen these measures renewed by the Western alliance as a clear strategy to stall national economic development of a young nation.

In 2000, UNSCR mandated states to institute a whole raft of measures to ensure the full participation of women in peace and security and various other facets of gender balance. Four pillars for implementation include the prevention of relapse into conflict, and all forms of structural and physical violence against women and girls, including sexual and gender-based violence. Follow-up discussions in March 2018 of the Eastern African states reveal that more progress must be made towards gender equality. The SADC has formulated a regional action plan. Countries in the region such as Malawi, South Africa, Madagascar and Namibia are working on adopting national action plans on the empowerment of women, specifically focussed on: participation, protection and recovery. Zimbabwe is expected to develop a national action plan 17 years after the adoption of the resolution. (UNSCR).

7.6 Challenges and opportunities

Zimbabwe's literacy rate currently exceeds that of all other African countries (UNESCO, 2015). Zimbabwe's post-independent education gender policies prioritised compulsory education for all children regardless of gender. It is well documented that social and economic circumstances changed significantly following decades during which the country endured Western trade embargoes, which in turn altered the strategic direction of education, resulting in the female child being sacrificed when family resources were depleted and inadequate to keep children in school. Other factors hampering the development of women in the workplace were continuous screening and the discouragement of women in the consideration of traditionally male-dominated careers. Women were often left in "softer" "safer" careers. Yet another reason for women's slow upward mobility in politics can be outright sexism by a patriarchal, political elite. The extent to which the Gender Commission's involvement in rebranding the improved gender balance in the corporate world would require not only the women themselves, but also policymakers and the public at large. Njaya and Chimbadzwa's observations and recommendations to women:

- "Women should adopt a proactive approach (to company board selection) by volunteering, self-promotion and building self-confidence to take initiatives.
- Women should build strong social and business networks that would support their promotion as company directors.
- Women should build their public image through public speaking, writing.
- The Government should introduce a mandatory quota representation for each sex in non-executive board positions for companies listed on the Zimbabwe Stock Exchange.
- Companies should change the definition of eligibility for the appointment of board of directors and broaden the candidate pool by considering women who have other senior qualifications elsewhere.
- Gender statistics on corporate boards of companies in both private and public sectors project suggest as "works in progress" to a large extent and that: gender parity in corporate governance remain "a pie in the sky".
- Leadership positions in both the private and public sectors remain predominantly male-dominated and do not represent gender diversity."

The country can continue to benefit from best and successful practices from countries at the forefront of the development and empowerment of women. Sharing and contextualising lessons will lay the foundation for a sound future legacy in global discourse.

Socialisation and prioritising the family over one's career continues to impact many women's career options, despite improvements in their conditions of service. Clearly, these drawbacks call for serious introspection. One of the challenges that can be faced by couples is when one is posted away from the Ministry and the partner cannot be fully engaged; it is not uncommon to experience resistance to acceptance of the position albeit in subtle ways. If not addressed, these issues may result in reorganisation of the family at times to the family unit's detriment.

Women empowerment as part of gender balance and development contributes a much-coveted critical resource in the pursuit and recruitment of excellence in the hunting ground for public service and diplomacy. As the country moves forward, particularly in the areas of empowerment and diplomacy, the renewed energy arising out of national positive gender policies will continue to be instrumental in challenging women to venture into positions in previously male-dominated boardrooms. Without empowerment, gender-sensitive diplomatic practice may remain elusive and remote.

Acknowledgement of women's talents is overdue. One of my sisters tells a story about a time when her then high school daughter was interviewing for a chance to go for a summer leadership conference. One of the panel members asked where my niece found time among all her various extracurricular activities, including, but not limited to, soccer, track and field and mentoring. My niece is reported to have responded: "If you want something done, give it to a busy person because she will figure it out and get it done".

The struggle for civil liberties and economic redistribution is still integral to the agenda of post-apartheid southern Africa. The goals summarised above must be pursued. Respect for human rights goes hand in hand with economic and gender parity and social justice.

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Conclusion



Introduction

The four case studies in this book show the impressive gains for women in each of the countries represented. For Zimbabwe and Kenya, these strides have been highlighted in the new constitutions of 2013 and 2010 respectively. Both Rwanda and South Africa emerged from struggling socio-political periods in 1994, and have since become leaders on the continent in advancing comprehensive rights for women. That there is a powerful constitutional framework that entrenches gender equality and empowerment in all of these countries is indisputable. Moreover, at regional level, organisations such as the AU and the AfDB have adopted gender policies that fortify local commitments

In spite of the slow progress in some of the areas emphasised by MDG3, the 2013 data from these countries reflects improvements over previous years. What is more, SDG5, which aims to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls – with targets for violence, discrimination, economic resources, reproductive rights, technology, leadership”, offers an increase in the aspirational objectives for gender equality that countries in Africa can and should adopt, and which will build on the achievements enabled by the MDG process.

Given the slow progress and observed resistance in some areas where female leadership should have advanced, the four case studies seem to suggest that, notwithstanding the extensive local and regional gender framework, laws are often not translated into reality. Commenting on this, the African Women’s Development Fund states that: “laws are powerful in protecting the rights of women but rarely are they used for those ends” (AWDF 2016; Okech 2016a; Nzomo n.d.). Murithi (2009) argues that:

“Within the AU, policy is yet to match practice. The majority of decision-makers at the level of the assembly of heads of state and government, the executive council of ministers, and the permanent representative committee of ambassadors are still overwhelmingly men. While there are increasing numbers of women serving in AU peace operations, for example in Darfur, they do not occupy a significant number of the leadership positions in these missions. Women continue to be excluded from high level peace negotiations and are underrepresented as Special

Envoys of AU in conflict situations,’ (Murithi 2009 cited in Okech 2016b, 15).

Illustrating this in history, Okech (2016a) argues that although women have played important roles in informal governance in all of the countries being studied, with independence movements such as the ANC relying on “gendered citizenships”, which did not grant political membership to women for the first 30 years of its existence, have not been gender neutral (Okech 2016a). Women are still overwhelmingly kept in the informal political sphere – one that they must demand to evolve out of.

The contention over the two-thirds gender-inclusive clause in Kenya, mentioned in the Kenya case study, is an example of how constitutional requisites to advance women’s rights encounter great difficulty when efforts are made to translate them into action. This is a clear demonstration of how women’s politics are often still confined to the informal sphere. Furthermore, though more women than ever before are running in elections, it is still a “testosterone-fuelled” area that can attract significant anti-woman violence (Berry *et al* 2017).

The critical mass of women in power is not always able to overcome institutionalised patriarchy to productively intervene in politics for the benefit of women. In addition, the gains have not been uniform across the continent. Examples are the chronic underfunding of the Zimbabwe Gender Commission (<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2017/02/06/manyenyeni-offside-councillors/>) and the reduction of maternity leave to six weeks in 2013 by a majority female legislative house in Rwanda reveals the inequalities and paradoxes at this level.

According to Okech 2016a, Kyeamfong and Fofack 2013, and UN Women 2017, a number of factors reveal structural impediments to equality and governance for women on the continent. The following stand out:

- persistent feminisation of poverty and overwhelming informality of women’s work on the continent
- African women still account for more than half the deaths of women worldwide
- 28% of African women with university degrees migrate because they are unable to find jobs

- the gendered impact on climate change
- the gender gap in ICT and access to mobile phones.

However, Africa has more women in positions of authority in the private sector than the global average – in executive committees, as chief executives and on boards. McKinsey (2015) argues that numbers do not equal influence, and also show that most women leaders are not in important sectors.

Although East Africa has the highest number of countries with constitutional regulations guaranteeing equal right to work and equal remuneration for an equal level of work, no “statutory protection granted to equal pay” exists in these countries (AWDF 2016, 62). These workplace statistics highlight the paradoxes of laws for representation that have been fought for and are in place, but that only enable ceremonial rather than substantive equality. These realities draw attention to the need to break through the structural challenges to meaningful female leadership roles.

8.1 Gaps in the literature

While the literature examined focusses on the advancements as well as the persisting structural challenges that impede governance opportunities for women in Africa in general and the case study countries in particular, for the most part, it did not address some variables that merit consideration.

On the research front, the African Women’s Development Fund (2017) found issue with the data they collated for *Futures Africa: Trends for Women by 2030*. They warned of what they called: “a lack of detailed, up-to-date data consistently collected over time”. This trend is also evidenced in the “weakest data collection” in Africa, “and the highest data gaps compared to other regions in the globe,” (AWDF 2017, 11). The lack of consistent data – although this varies from country to country – has made it difficult to track the advancement of women over time and the ebbs and flows of their progress.

Finally, an absence in the literature that was especially glaring for the authors was the lack of empirical connection between African women diplomats and grassroots women. This is particular true in respect of:

- How and if they interact and their relationship.
- The pipeline/trajectories – from grassroots woman to diplomat. Perhaps this is an aspect of research that is best discerned from interviews.

However, the fixation on numbers and the lack of qualitative narrative about what it takes to be an Africa woman diplomat does not allow one to make the connection between the fates of grassroots women and

women diplomats – a phenomenon especially acute for African women. This gap made it difficult for the authors to pursue their initial goal of only focussing on African women in diplomacy.

To enhance the gains made in African women’s empowerment, continued reporting, analysis and research on the role of women in diplomacy are required.

8.2 Canada – Africa women’s leadership collaborations

In early June 2017, Canada launched its first Feminist International Assistance Policy (FIAP), which was dubbed “unapologetically feminist” (Oved 2017). The Minister of International Development and La Francophonie, Marie-Claude Bibeau, states:

“Focussing Canada’s international assistance on the full empowerment of women and girls is the most effective way for our international assistance to make a difference in the world. Sustainable development, peace and growth that work for everyone are not possible unless women and girls are valued and empowered.” (Global Affairs Canada, 2017).

This new policy pledges that, in five years – by 2022, 95% of all Canadian foreign assistance will go to initiatives that focus on gender equality and empowerment for women and girls. What is more, 50% of this aid will be directed towards initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa. These new targets were catalysed by the 2016 consultations in 65 countries with Canadian and international stakeholders at various levels – government, donor, NGOs and ordinary citizens (Zillo 2017; Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC), 2017),” and will also be instrumental in helping Canada meet gender commitments in other pledges to which it is a signatory, such as SDGs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017).

The \$5 billion pledged for international assistance has not changed for a number of years, and remains at an all-time low (Oved 2017). With 0.26% of the national budget dedicated towards overseas development assistance, Canada is still a long way from the 0.7% target of all donor countries (CIDP, 2017). The launch of a feminist international policy at this time is fortuitous since the African Women’s Diplomats Forum sees justification in improving the numbers of female diplomatic practitioners from the continent. In adopting a human-rights based approach, this policy focusses on six priority areas:

- gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls
- human dignity
- growth that works for everyone

- environment and climate action
- inclusive governance
- peace and security (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2017; CCIC 2017).

While all key action areas in the FIAP are important entry points for dialogue and cooperation, it is the inclusive governance priority area that overwhelmingly connects to the work being undertaken by the AWDF. In this regard, the focus on increasing the participation of women in decision-making institutions and supporting the leadership of women in different areas of society aligns well with the mandate the AWDF has adopted. It is this priority area that offers the best window of opportunity for cooperation, especially as this policy is supplemented by a Women's Voice and Leadership Programme that will allocate \$150 million to support local women's organisations advancing women's equality across the multilateral agencies, including Canada/Africa interventions in governance.

The same window of opportunity will capitalise on the gains, while also building on and sharing the lessons learned from implementing the pioneer achievements in women's leadership seen on the African continent, and especially in the African case studies. Joint interventions can:

- Build on the Women's Voice and Leadership Programme and the work on the status of women Canada is embarking on to support mentorship programmes and to increase the number of women on boards. To these ends, there can be best practices multilateral/bilateral exchanges coordinated through relevant ministries to share experiences and improve public- and private-sector initiatives in/between countries.
- Be dedicated to electing more women at all levels of government in Canada, initiate forums where comparative research can be undertaken to see if measures adopted in Africa that have led to an increase in female legislators, could inform their initiatives in Canada and vice versa.

Attending to the systemic barriers to women's participation in governance in African countries operating within the multilateral realm could support both national targets to increase education, economic opportunities and the peace and security of young women and girls on the continent, while also empowering and harnessing the energies of grassroots government.

One important example from Canada that can be adopted for the work in Africa is the comprehensive chapter on women with disabilities in the seventh edition of *Women in Canada: A Gender-based Statistical Report* (Status of Women Canada 2017).

In a review of the new FIAP, the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) states that: "delivering on the government's intentions will require more than just a bold new vision and policy. It will require new programs and partnerships ..." (CCIC 2017). The above proposals are novel directions that may be taken into consideration in heeding the call for bold visions and new collaborations. Transforming our world by 2030 and achieving SDG5 will take more than the empowerment of women in political leadership. It will require every country to include its women in international relations and diplomacy. Targets may be set as parity rather than equality (50%) and used as a reference, because it presents a quantified vision. While significant progress has been made according to the Beijing Declaration, "Women's rights are human rights and human's rights are women's rights", public pronouncements are focussed on the uplifting of the woman and her environment; this cannot be guaranteed unless radical alterations take place in the body politic.

The IPU-generated data on the participation of women in political leadership reveals benchmarks of global competitiveness that will probably be useful indicators for future actions. Beyond SDG5, women's active involvement in all sectors, particularly in politics and governance, must not only be encouraged, but must be systematically implemented for the benefit of all.

The world has only used a weak torch to reveal the existence of the potential women have in radically transforming all human endeavours. It is time women turned on a bright light to see the bigger picture. It has been well established on both the national and global stage that women are as capable as men and have the added advantage of introducing a different perspective to tasks in all aspects of life.

The authors note that the majority of countries in Africa are making significant strides in advancing the rights of women; however, much more substantial progress must be made to ensure that women's leadership is encouraged and supported. Highlighting this, the AfDB (2015, 25) states that mainstreaming is not enough and targeted investments at all levels are required. The AWDF, building on the rich histories of African women's struggles on the continent and on the global stage, is keen to ensure more advancement in women's empowerment in Africa. The AWDF proposes using diverse tools to build on the relationship between Canada and member countries.

Though focus should be on the areas where progress has been slow: agriculture, health, peace and security, and economic empowerment Governance opportunities for women in all areas should be prioritised to allow for a cascading impact on all strata of society. What is more, highlighting greater participation of women in diplomacy

may be important for ensuring that the “long walk to freedom” for women on the continent is taken forward.

8.3 Rationale for women’s participation in diplomacy

We would wish to end the book by making a case for the participation of women in diplomacy in Africa and the whole world.

a) Negotiation skills

Most women possess excellent negotiation skills – skills that are needed in diplomacy. This is because:

“women are willing to sit together on the same side of the table ... with the commitment and intention of not getting up until – in respect and reciprocity – we can get up together and begin our new history.” (Figueroa-Talyn Rahman 2012).

This suggests that women are willing to negotiate and find solutions to problems. Negotiations sometimes take a long time and require patience, cooperation, careful listening and mutual understanding. Here are some of the reasons women should be involved in diplomacy.

b) Accessibility to communities and rural populations

Women have access to wider population groups partly because of their social roles as mothers and carers. This accessibility is deemed important in a diplomatic career, especially in societies where gender segregation restricts male and female interaction. Rahman (2012) observes that:

“as part of preventive diplomatic measures, diplomats must be able to tap into the whole of society in order to

analyse and anticipate future threats in vulnerable areas. In certain parts of the world where gender segregation is prevalent, men are not able to openly reach out to women and, therefore, are only able to consider half the population within their analysis. As women, female diplomats have access to the other 50% of the population, specifically in rural and conservative societies, and are hence able to ensure that the voice and concerns of women are not ignored.”

AWDF looks for partnerships with other institutions geared towards empowerment of girls and women in Africa.

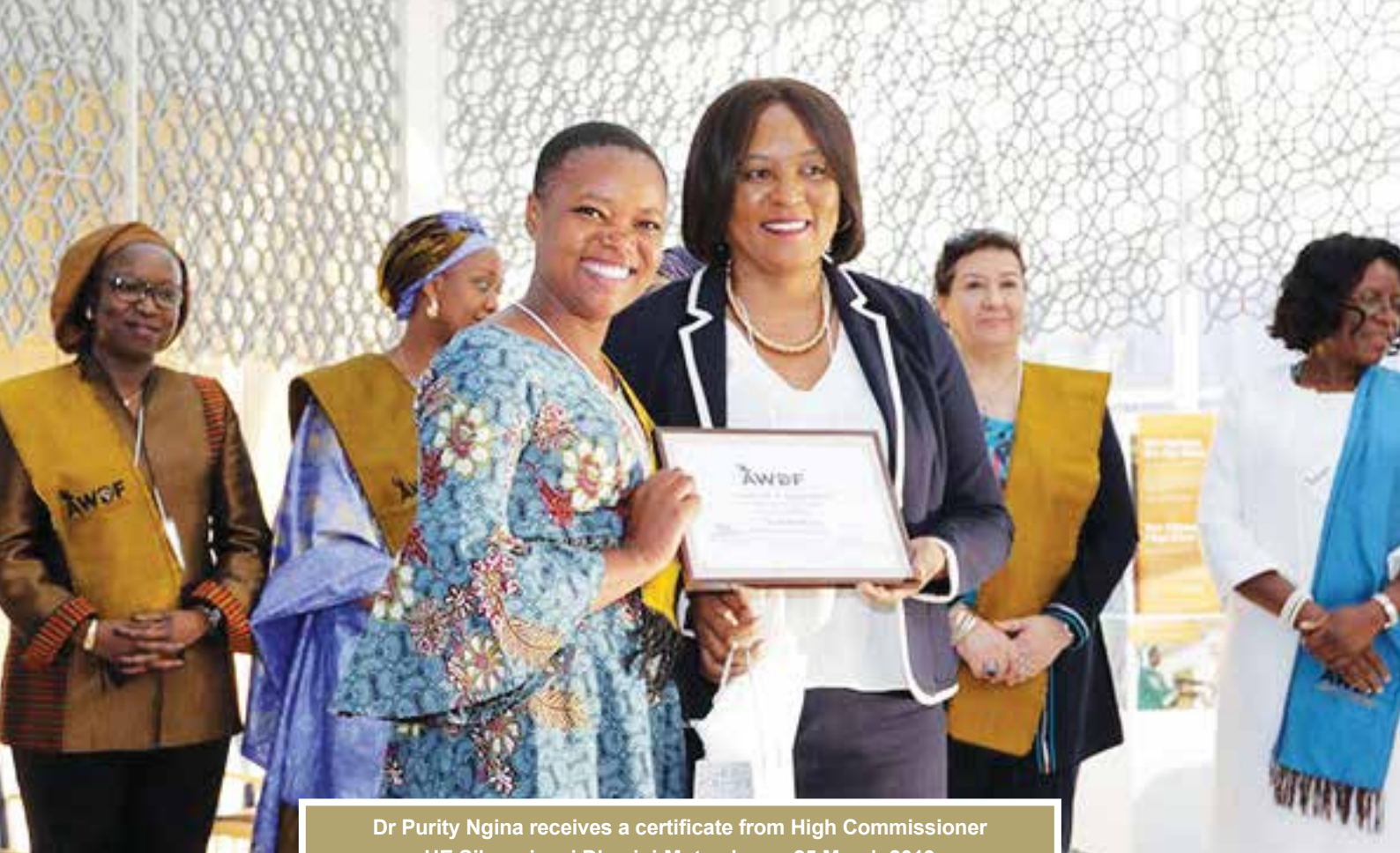
c) Role-modelling for other women and girls

The presence of a female diplomat can be considered symbolic and a rallying point for local women, especially if she is the only female ambassador serving in a country. They can serve as role models for young women and girls who wish to join the diplomatic service. Internship programmes such as the Model United Nations project the expected role model image of secondary school youngsters and help to boost confidence at that young age. AWDF organises seminars and attends activities geared towards mentoring young women. One participant in one of AWDF’s seminars wrote this:

“Your Excellency, allow me to first express my gratitude for the invitation to be part of the African Women Diplomatic Forum seminar in Ottawa, Canada. Honestly, I felt humbled, and happy at the same time for being chosen to speak for women in STEM, it was overwhelming and for many reasons I consider this the best experience ever. I got the opportunity to meet and interact with other young scientists in STEM who are doing incredible things in research but most importantly it was a humbling moment



AWDF members during a meeting with the Director: Gender and Diversity, Ms Misha Baudisch-McCabe, (second from right) of the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences Women in STEM Initiative on 24 January 2019



Dr Purity Ngina receives a certificate from High Commissioner HE Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo on 25 March 2019

me getting the opportunity to interact with ambassadors and deputy ambassadors of different country. Thank you. In a special way allow me to single out Ambassador. Prof. Kerubo, Deputy Head of Mission of Kenya in Ottawa, Canada, for believing that I had something to contribute and to learn from AWDF. *Dr Purity Ngina, Youngest Doctor of Philosophy graduate of Biomathematics, aged 28 years. A lecturer and motivational speaker at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences (SIMS), Strathmore University, Nairobi, Kenya*

d) Championing women's rights

Female diplomats integrate issues of concern to women into their bilateral relations, including advocating for the girls education and supporting projects that target women's empowerment. During community engagements, they are likely to meet groups of women who are willing to share their problems freely because they are women. The diplomats are then able to bring the women's issues to the table. Several countries have instituted a Ministry of Women's Affairs, which could be instrumental in having a say in the general upward mobility of women across the spectrum, including being catalytic in diplomatic nominations.

e) Different leadership/diplomatic style

Women lead differently from men and their leadership style is useful for diplomacy and international relations. Shoma Chatterji, cited in Figueroa (2012), argues that because women as a gender have been "structurally disempowered, excluded and subjugated", they provide

different perspectives and insights into situations where unequal power relationships exist.

f) Openness to new perspectives

Research shows that male board members rely more on normative reasoning – that is, they prefer to make decisions based on rules, regulations and traditional ways of doing business. Women are more likely to be disruptors. They can be more open to considering new ideas and a broader set of solutions. Women are more likely to cooperate, collaborate, build consensus and take into account the interests of multiple stakeholders.

g) Strength in ethics and fairness

On average, women score more highly than men on complex moral reasoning tests, suggesting they are more likely to make consistently fair decisions when competing interests are at stake. Women have been said to have greater moral strength, higher ethical standards and a particular ability to establish and maintain relationships with people (Figueroa 2012). These qualities of women are needed in the diplomatic world to enhance good relationships between states.

8.4 Way forward

Women and men bring different experiences to constructing a prosperous and inclusive society. To enhance the gains made in African women's participation in diplomacy, some of the following considerations should be taken into account:

- Continued reporting, analysis and research on the role women play in international diplomacy are needed. The research should document the gains made and indicate the persisting gender disparities.
- African countries should make deliberate efforts to enhance women's participation at all levels of decision-making by enhancing the mobilisation, from all sources, of financial and technical assistance to achieve goals set in their national targets.
- National efforts should ensure women's full, equal and effective participation and access to leadership and high-level positions, including putting in place temporary special measures, as appropriate, in economic decision-making structures and institutions at all levels.
- Education, professional training and higher learning should be fostered. The foreign services should develop human capital as it serves as the obvious reservoir of role models, hope and possibility to junior officers. These strategies should be bolstered by women drawn from other spheres such as the social sciences for ambassador grade material. It is important to have a systematic, global and prospective vision for the foreign services. Education is the cornerstone of any development. As such, the authors recommend strengthening tailor-made programmes of cooperation in higher education, research and professional training
- Spousal roles should be carefully revisited. Traditional, gender-assigned roles need not always be adhered to. Lack of flexibility may result in losing potentially excellent candidates – discouraged or insufficiently motivated
- Diplomats' children often become virtual children. They may or may not share their parents' careers, yet they grow up with no fixed abode and they may need sensitive psychological handling to keep them

grounded and to encourage them to acquire skills that will help them to integrate in their often fluid social environment.

The future is bright for African female diplomats, but deeply entrenched stereotypes must be addressed. The patriarchal mentality has to be combatted for women's role in diplomacy to be realised. Diplomatic services, in their efforts to retain and maximise the efficiency of female diplomats, should work to empower and build capacity through gender mainstreaming practices. Women's equal participation in diplomacy plays a crucial role in the advancement of women in any field in the global context.

Bibliography

1. African Commission on Human and People's Rights. 2003. *Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa*. Available at: http://www.achpr.org/files/instruments/womenprotocol/achpr_instr_proto_women_eng.pdf
2. African Development Bank. 2015. *African Gender Equality Index 2015*. Abidjan: African Development Bank
3. African Women's Development Fund. 2017. *Futures Africa: Trend for Women by 2030*. Accra, AWDF
4. Akyeamfong, Emmanuel and Hippolyte Fofack. 2013. *The Contribution of African Women to Economic Growth and Development in Post-Colonial Africa*
5. AU Women Gender and Development. 2017. Official Website, available at: <https://au.int/en/wgd>
6. Berry, Marie, Yolande Bouka and Marilyn Muthoni Kamuru. 2017. "Kenyan Women Just Fought One of the Most Violent Campaigns in History." *Foreign Policy*. Available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/07/kenyas-female-politicians-just-fought-the-one-of-the-most-violent-campaign-in-history-election/>



Ambassador Florence Chideya, Dean of the Diplomatic Corps, at the launch of the Ambassador of the Year Award on 24 January 2018

7. Bloch, J.C 2004. *Women and Diplomacy in The Ambassadors Review* Fall pp 93-100
8. Buchard, Stephanie. 2014. "Women's Political Participation in Africa: An Upside of Conflict." *Africa Watch*. Institute of Defence Analyses: Alexandria, Virginia
9. Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC). 2017. *Reviewing Canada's New Feminist International Assistance Policy*. Ottawa: CCIC. Available at: http://ccic.ca/resources/IAP_Analysis.pdf
10. Canadian International Development Platform (CIDP). 2015. Official Website, available at: <http://cidpnsi.ca/>
11. Centre for Citizen's Participation in the African Union. 2010. *General Report on CSO's Consultation on the Year of Peace and Security in Africa CCP-AU*. 20 – 21 January 2010, Addis Ababa.
12. Commonwealth Secretariat. 2005. *The Commonwealth Plan of Action for Gender Equality 2005 – 2015*. London: Commonwealth Secretariat
13. Copeland, Daryl 2009. *Guerrilla Diplomacy, Rethinking International Relations*. Lynne Rienner Publishers. Boulder London 2009
14. Dakar Platform for Action. 1994. Available at: http://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/cap_women_dakar_1994.pdf
15. Economic Commission for Africa. 2011. *The African Gender and Development Index 2011: Promoting gender equality in Africa*. Addis Ababa: UNECA.
16. Figueroa-Talyn Rahman 2012. *Celebrating the Rise of Women in Diplomacy*. *Diplomatic Courier*. Available at <https://www.diplomaticcourier.com/Celebrating-the-rise-of-women-in-diplomacy/> accessed on 31 July, 2018
17. Global Affairs Canada (GAC). 2017. *Canada Launches New Feminist International Assistance Policy (News Release)*. Available at: https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2017/06/canada_launches_newfeministinternationalassistancepolicy.html
18. International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. 2006. *Protocol on the Prevention and Suppression of Sexual Violence Against Women and Children – International Conference on the Great Lakes Region*. Available at: <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/final-protocol.sexual-violence-en-rev-2.pdf>
19. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2017. Development Priorities. Available at: http://international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_developpement-enjeux_developpement/priorities-priorites/policy-politique.aspx?lang=eng
20. Nzomo, Maria. (n.d.). *Women in Political Leadership in Kenya: Access, Agenda Setting & Accountability*. Nairobi: Institute of Diplomacy & International Studies, University of Nairobi
21. Okech, Awino. 2016a. *Statecraft and Pursuing Women's Rights in Africa*. Accra: African Women's Development Fund
22. Okech, Awino. 2016b. *Gender and Security in Africa*. Accra: African Women's Development Fund
23. Oved, Marco Chown. 2017. "Trudeau's new 'feminist' plan commits 95% of foreign aid to gender, women and girls by 2022." *The Star* newspaper, 6 June, 2017. Available at: <https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/06/09/trudeaus-new-feminist-plan-commits-95-of-foreign-aid-to-gender-women-and-girls-by-2022.html>
24. Solidarity for African Women's Rights. 2017. Official Website, available at <http://www.soawr.org/>
25. Stein Gross Janice. *Diplomacy in the Digital Age, Essays in Honour of Ambassador Gotlieb* pp 259
- 16 Stewart, Elizabeth. 2012. "Women envoys on the rise." *Embassy Magazine*. Available at: http://www.embassymagazine.com/barometer/bar_issues/emb38_bar.html
26. Talyn Rahman-Figueroa, 2011. *Women in Diplomacy*. Available at www.grassrootdiplomat.org/news/talyn-rahman-figueroa-women-in-diplomacy
29. UN Women. 2017. *Women's Economic Empowerment in the Changing World of Work*. Commission on the Status of Women, Agreed Conclusions
30. United States Agency for International Development. 2015. "Women and Girls Lead Global Partnership." Available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment/women-and-girls-lead-global>
31. Veberyte Erika (2017): *The Value of Individual Leadership to Advance the Sustainable Development Goals*. March 31.
32. Vincent, Louise. 2000. 'Bread and honour: White working class women and Afrikaner nationalism in the 1930s', *Journal of Southern African Studies*
33. Western Drew. *The Political Brain. The Role of Emotions in Deciding the Fate of the Nation*, Public Affairs. New York. 2007
34. Womankind. 2017. Official website (Focus on Zimbabwe). 2017. Available at: <https://www.womankind.org.uk/where-we-work/zimbabwe>
35. Women in Diplomatic Service. 2009. Official Website, available at: <http://www.wds-uk.org.uk/>
36. Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU). 2017. Official Website, available at: <http://www.wipsu.co.zw/>
37. Women's University in Africa. Official Website, available at: <http://www.wua.ac.zw/>
38. World Bank Group. 2016. *Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth: 2016 –2023 Gender Strategy*. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
39. World Bank. 2015. *World Bank Group Gender Strategy (FY16-23) : Gender Equality, Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Growth*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.



About the authors



Ambassador Florence Zano Chideya

Ambassador Florence Zano Chideya was, until 31 July 2018, the sixth Ambassador of the Republic of Zimbabwe to Canada. She guided bilateral relations between Zimbabwe and Canada for almost 13 years, during which period she was a co-founder member of diplomatic-related organisations, became Dean of the Africa Diplomatic Corps and subsequently, overall Dean of the Corps.

She was proud to have been awarded the prestigious Ambassador of the Year in Public Diplomacy in Ottawa, Canada, by the International Institute of Public Diplomacy in The Hague in 2018.

Ambassador Chideya completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Public Administration and Public Policy from the University of Zimbabwe and Bachelor of Science in Business Administration/Management from the State University of New York at Buffalo, United States of America.

Over several decades, Ambassador Chideya shared diplomatic experiences spanning the Nordic region, United Kingdom (UK), Ireland and Canada. She has been active in serving as a board member on several boards: Urban Development Corporation, National Arts Council, Anti-Corruption Commission, Trustee of the President's Fund, a philanthropic organisation, and remains a life member of several organisations.

Her humble beginnings can be traced to when she began her basic education at Hartzell High School, Old Mutare, (Zimbabwe), followed by enrolment for State Nurse Registration in East Anglia in the UK. Later, she joined the administrative stream following which she accumulated over 20 years of experience in both private and public sector administration in the areas of health, industry and commerce, and with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations. She is a proud mother of two and a grandmother of three and author of "Echoes of Favour."

Copyright@2012 A Biography:
ISBN 978-1-55483-956-8 ISBN 978-1-555483-956-8,

About the authors

The South African High Commissioner to Canada assumed her duties in Canada in 2017. She is the Chairperson of Women Heads of Diplomatic Missions in Ottawa and the Vice President of the Ottawa Diplomatic Association. She also chairs the Southern African Development Community Group in Canada.

Armed with a University Diploma in Education, High Commissioner Dlamini-Mntambo started her career as a teacher in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in 1993. She left teaching to pursue a career in the fields of communication, marketing and advertising, working in the fast-moving consumer goods and in the mining and metals industry. She was also the Public Affairs and Communication Adviser for the Chamber of Mines of South Africa. While at the Chamber of Mines, she chaired the Mining Industry Public Affairs Committee and led the industry communication team within the Mining Industry Growth and Development Task Team, whose mandate was to develop a national growth strategy for the mining industry.

She has held executive positions within the South African Government such as at the Department of Economic Affairs and Tourism, the Department of Minerals and Energy, and the Department of Higher Education and Training. Skilled in strategy development, and as a seasoned marketing professional, High Commissioner Dlamini-Mntambo counts among her most successful career achievements, the coordination and management of the communication and marketing campaigns for South Africa's 2004 national and 2006 provincial and local government elections while at the Independent Electoral Commission of South Africa.

High Commissioner Dlamini-Mntambo holds a BA degree and a BA (Honours) degree, both in Communication Science. She has a University Diploma in Education and a Master's degree in Business Leadership (MBL) obtained from the University of South Africa.

She is the proud mother of two daughters and a son.



**High Commissioner
Sibongiseni Dlamini-Mntambo**

About the authors



Ambassador Jane Kerubo

Jane Kerubo was appointed Deputy Head of Mission at the Kenya Mission, Ottawa, Canada, in July 2015. She was a member of the AWDF Executive Committee and has served as Treasurer since January 2016. She has also served as a member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities Gender Programme Advisory board since January 2019.

Before joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in the Government of the Republic of Kenya, she served as a commissioner with the Ethics and Anticorruption Commission in Nairobi, between May 2012 and March 2015. Ambassador Kerubo also served as Assistant Director: Preventive Services at the now defunct Kenya Anticorruption Commission between

July 2010 and September 2011. Prior to joining the Anticorruption Commission, Ambassador Kerubo served as an Associate Professor of Education at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, for over 15 years. At the university, she also served as the Deputy Director of Research and Head of Undergraduate Studies in Education.

She has been involved in gender-related research and participated in building the capacity of female academics in research and scholarship in various institutions of higher learning in Kenya, Tanzania and Pakistan through the Association of Commonwealth Universities Women's Programme and the Forum for African Women Educationists (FAWE). She has offered research consultancy services to various organisations, including FAWE, Winrock International-South Sudan Programme, the Department of International Development Kenya and Somalia, Save the Children UK-Southern Sudan Programme and World Vision Kenya.

She has published in the area of education, gender and development as well as presented at many international conferences. Ambassador Kerubo is passionate about the empowerment of women, gender equality and equity in education. Some of her publications include: *A Guide to Gender-Sensitive Research Methodology*. Nairobi, FAWE and the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) with Musundi, S.M. & Ayo, C. 2013; *Promoting Gender Equity in Selected Public Universities in Kenya*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) ISBN: 978-99944-55-62-1, 2011; and *A Handbook on Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*. Nairobi. CUEA Press. ISBN: 9966-909-86-9 with Ogula, P.A. 2009.

Ambassador Kerubo holds a PhD in Higher and Further Education from the University College London, University of London, UK, Master's of Arts in Women and Higher Education Management from the Institute of Education, University of London, UK, a Master's of Education (Communication and Technology) and a Bachelor of Education (Arts) from Kenyatta University, Nairobi, Kenya.

About the authors

Ms Umutoni has been a diplomat at the High Commission of Rwanda to Canada since 2011. She is an active member of the diplomatic community in Canada and serves as a member of the Bureau for the Africa Group of Ambassadors and High Commissioners, is Vice President of the Africa Women Diplomatic Forum and a member of the executive of the Women Heads of Mission of Ottawa.

Ms Umutoni is a graduate of the National University of Rwanda and pursued courses and received additional training in many countries around the world. She started her career soon after she graduated. Her first work experience was with national and international NGOs dealing with poverty and disease eradication for sustainable development. She spent a number of years working at the World Bank, United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, USAID and the Global Fund on HIV, TB and Malaria Funded Programmes in Rwanda.

She joined the Rwandan Foreign Ministry in 2007, with her first posting as Counsellor in Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania. She is a passionate women's rights advocate and has always supported women organisations at grassroots level.



Chargé d' Affaires Ms Shakilla K Umutoni

