



# Women's Political Participation in Egypt

Barriers, opportunities and gender sensitivity of select political institutions

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# ABOUT

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## The MENA Transition Fund Project

In May 2011 the G8 (currently G7) launched the Deauville Partnership as a response to the changes underway in several MENA countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. To support the countries in transition to formulate policies and programs and implement reforms, the Deauville Partnership set up the MENA Transition Fund.

The MENA Transition Fund is a broad-based partnership providing grants for technical cooperation to help transition countries strengthen their governance, social and economic institutions by developing and implementing home-grown and country-owned reforms.

This report was drafted in the framework of the following MENA Transition Fund project: “Towards inclusive and open governments: Promoting women’s participation in parliaments and policy-making.” Its objective is to support the efforts of Arab Countries in Transition in fostering inclusive growth and good governance by leveraging open government policies and mainstreaming gender perspectives in parliamentary and local council operations to maximise women’s integration in public life and the policy-making process.

## More information

Find more information on the MENA-OECD Governance Programme:

<http://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/aboutthemena-oecdgovernanceprogramme.htm>

Find more information on the OECD’s work to support gender equality and related working fields:

[www.oecd.org/mena/governance/gender-equality-in-public-life.htm](http://www.oecd.org/mena/governance/gender-equality-in-public-life.htm)

Find more information on NCW’s work at [www.ncw.gov.eg](http://www.ncw.gov.eg)



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) have seen an increasing demand from citizens for greater transparency and inclusiveness in public life in order to foster more equitable growth and sustainable development. In this context, stronger emphasis has been placed in mobilising and maximising the potential and talent of the entire population, including women, in all spheres of public life. The OECD research underlines the critical role of gender equality in stimulating inclusive growth and national well-being (OECD, 2012).

Politically, Egyptian women have been on the frontlines of two revolutions, calling for social justice and equality. Their substantial participation was determined to be one of the main reasons explaining the success of both revolutions<sup>1</sup>. Today, women in Egypt enjoy the highest level of female political representation in the history of the country. Nevertheless, while the proportion of women in the national legislature has substantially increased, since the Arab Spring, from 1.9% to 15 %, it remains low compared to other MENA countries. Historically, female representation in local councils has also been low with only 4.4% of local council seats won by women in the last local elections held (2008)<sup>2</sup>. A new constitutional clause reserving 25% of seats in all local councils to women, the appointment of Egypt's first woman governor in 2017, and the unprecedented increase of women ministers in the Presidential Cabinet to 25% portends an impressive advancement for women in the upcoming local elections.

Women's increased political participation in Egypt is linked to commitments made by the country to the promote gender equality through the ratification of international gender equality standards. These include the International Convention on the Political Rights of Women (ICPRW); International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR); the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); and the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325). Egypt was the first Arab country to ratify CEDAW. Moreover, Egypt has made substantial gains in the fields of education and health. Infant mortality rates dropped from 162 deaths per 1 000 live births on average in 1970 to 20.3 deaths per 1 000 live births in 2015 (World Bank, 2016). Similarly, female literacy rates in Egypt have increased from 22.4% in 1976 to 68% in 2015 (World Bank, 2016).

However, conformity with these standards remains uneven, which may impede further progress in women's political and economic empowerment. Egypt retains reservations to Articles 2(para 9), 16 and 29 (para 2) of the CEDAW. Moreover, Egyptian domestic law remains limited and unequal, notably with regard to inheritance, consent to marry and maternity leaves, which can have a strong impact on women's access to public life and political opportunities. Although Egypt has made considerable efforts to improve compliance of national legislation with international standards, further action is thus needed to enable equal access to justice, to eliminate violence against women, and to ensure that men and women enjoy equal access to opportunities and rights.

Importantly, the elimination of gender-based legal discrimination only constitutes a first step. Legal frameworks must be supported by gender-sensitive public institutions to ensure the sustainability of gender equality policies. The National Council for Women (NCW), which is affiliated with the Presidency, is the central agency tasked with promoting women's status and closing socio-economic gender gaps. Parliament can also play a strong role in the oversight and promotion of policies that increase women's equal political representation and participation. Currently, the Egyptian Parliament does not have a parliamentary committee dedicated to gender issues, but could consider establishing one in order to strengthen its capability in the monitoring and oversight of gender equality initiatives and legislation. Political parties in Egypt are also yet to fully embrace the promotion of gender equality and greater female representation within their ranks. Therefore, greater commitment to developing gender-focused institutions and tools is needed in order to integrate gender considerations into the mainstream policy cycle and enable women's greater political participation

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- H.E. Dr. Aly Abdl Aal, President of the Egyptian House of Representatives.
- H.E. Omar Marwan, Minister of Political and Parliamentary Affairs (formerly Acting Secretary-General of the High Elections Commission)
- H.E. Ambassador Mervat Tallway, Former President of Egypt's National Council for Women & Former Director of Egypt's Arab Women's Organisation (AWO)
- Soliman Wahdan, Undersecretary, Egyptian House of Representatives
- Ahmed Saad Eldin Muhamed, Secretary General, Egyptian House of Representatives
- General Refaat Komsan, Former Advisor to the Prime Minister for Election Affairs
- Counsellor Mahmoud Fawzy, Legal Advisor to the President of Parliament
- Fayka Fahim, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Mona Mounir, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Mai El-Batran, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Heba Hagres, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Marianne Azer, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Ahmed El-Segeeny, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Karim Salem, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Alaa Abed, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Ahmed Helmy El-Shereef, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Nancy Nossier, Member of Egyptian house of representatives
- Dina Abd El Aziz, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Eman Khedr, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Mona Gaballah, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Ghada Sakr, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Hend El Gebaly, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Neamaat Kamr, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Thoraya El Sheikh, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Rania Elwany, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Anisa Hasson, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Serien Farrag, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Lamis Gaber, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives
- Aymen Abo El Ela, Member of Egyptian House of Representatives
- Ibrahim Hegazy, Member of Egyptian House of Representatives



- Medhat El Sherief, Member of Egyptian House of Representatives
- Shadia Khodeer, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives and former local councillor
- Sanaa Barghash, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives and former local councillor
- Soulaf Darwiesh, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives and former local councillor
- Nadia Henry, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives and Head of women's wing of Massryeen El Ahrar Party
- Saher Sedky, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives and Head of women's wing of Mostakbel OWaten Party
- Alaa Aabed, Member of Egyptian House of Representatives, and Representative of Massryen El Ahrar Party
- Ahmed Helmy Elsherief, Member of Egyptian House of Representatives and Representative of Moaatmer Party
- Mohamed Osama Abu El Maged, Member of Egyptian House of Representatives and member of Homat El watan Political party
- Mohamed Anwer El Sadat, Former member of the Egyptian house of representatives and Head of El Eslah and El Tanmyia Party
- Sanaa El Saeed, Member of the National Council for Women , Former MP & Head of the Political Participation Committee, NCW
- Counsellor Sanaa Khalil, Member of NCW, Head of NCW's Legislative Committee
- Dr. Maged Osman, Member of NCW, Director of the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion Research & Former Minister of Communication
- Dr. Nabeel Samuel, Member of NCW, Head of NCW's Committee for Civil Society Organisations & Expert in social development and civil society
- Dr. Suzanne Kelleni, member of NCW, Head of NCW's Media Committee & Dean of Ain Shams Univeristy Faculty of Arts
- Dr. Georgette Sobhi Kelleni, Former MP & Vice-President of the Administrative Prosecution Authority (APA)
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- Refaat El Saeed, Head of El Tagomaa Party
- Farid Zahran, Head of Egyptian Democratic Party
- Galal El Hareedy, Head of Homat El Waten Party
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- Riham Felfela, Women's Activist
- Heba Adel, Attorney and Women's Activist
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AWO	Arab Women's Organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EMB	Electoral Management Body
HEC	High Elections Commission
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
GBV	Gender Based Violence
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MP	Member of Parliament
NCW	National Council for Women
NEC	National Election Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
VAW	Violence Against Women

# BACKGROUND

This report was prepared under the framework of the G7 Deauville Partnership MENA Transition Fund project on “Promoting women’s participation in parliaments and policy making” (“Project” thereafter), with a view to identifying targeted policy recommendations that can be implemented to accelerate progress towards gender equality and women’s political empowerment in Egypt.

The report is based on a peer-review assessment of the current opportunities and challenges encountered by women in Egypt when participating in political and electoral processes – as candidates and members of parliament. Following an analysis of the current situation of women’s political participation, this report presents both the enabling factors and obstacles in the election of more women to the political arena. The report reviews Egypt’s current legal framework, including its adherence to international standards, assesses the existence and effectiveness of the country’s institutions promoting women’s political participation, and identifies the remaining obstacles to women’s participation in decision-making processes. It also offers tailored recommendations to support the strengthening of women’s leadership and equal participation in public life.

In particular, following an account of the representation of women in key political institutions such as the parliament and local councils (Chapter 1), the report presents an overview of the legal (Chapter 2) and institutional (Chapter 3) frameworks promoting women’s political participation in Egypt. In each of these chapters, the report provides a number of action-oriented recommendations addressing key stakeholders. These recommendations aim to support gender-sensitive improvements to the Egyptian political system while at the same time developing tools and mechanisms to enable and increase the capacity of Egyptian women to equally contribute to decision-making in their country.

The report is based on the following four key pillars critical to promoting women’s political participation<sup>3</sup>:

1. **Transforming gender norms so that women are accepted as legitimate and effective leaders.** The 20-year review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action pointed to the continuing debilitating effect of gender stereotypes and discriminatory norms that work to exclude women from participating in public life. This pillar is concerned with the status of women, and community perceptions of women’s participation in public life, shaped by political leaders and the media.
2. **Designing and implementing robust legal frameworks and administrative arrangements that facilitate women’s participation at all levels.** A strong electoral and policy framework may include reforms to constitutions, gender equality laws or party statutes, and policy actions such as setting numerical targets for women in leadership positions with temporary special measures and reforming party statutes. This dimension reflects the need to entrench legal standards and women’s right to political participation, as stipulated in numerous international conventions and resolutions.
3. **Expanding the pool of qualified and capable women to run for election.** This pillar is concerned with the range of activities that aim to increase the supply of qualified women candidates by supporting them in overcoming a range of barriers – social, financial, psychological and political – in nomination as prospective electoral candidates. The activities may include initiating programmes that boost women’s confidence and capacity to lead, enhancing their campaign strategies and techniques and promoting linkages with supportive civil society organisations.
4. **Supporting leaders in political institutions,** including parliament, political parties and Electoral management bodies, to attract, promote and retain women leaders, and highlight the constructive contribution they make to decision-making.



## Assessment methodology

In May 2016, a team of experts in gender mainstreaming and gender equality, including senior peers from OECD and MENA countries, conducted a fact-finding mission to gather relevant information and participate in technical consultations. Interviews were conducted with the support and guidance of the National Council of Women of Egypt, together with the Project's Steering Group and Civil Society Advisory Group.

Two assessments guided interviews with stakeholders (See Appendix 1 and 2).

Selected respondents reflected different approaches and perceptions towards women's participation in policy making, and included:

- Members of parliament and former members of local councils
- Members of Egypt's parliamentary secretariat
- Political party leaders, members and heads of political party women's wings
- Potential candidates for future local elections
- Electoral management practitioners
- Representatives from government ministries affiliated with Parliament, local administration and elections
- Civil society, non-governmental organizations and gender activists
- Academics and think tanks that monitor women's political and/or electoral participation
- Media journalists and other election commentators, including on social media
- Representatives of international and regional organizations

The report is also based on the legal assessments, focusing on Egyptian legislation and regulations and its alignment with international standards. It highlights advancements made by Egypt, other MENA countries in transition and OECD countries and identifies examples of good practices as benchmarks.

# 1 Women's political participation in Egypt

## Introduction

Women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth and sustainable development. Women's political empowerment is an essential requirement of democratic governance and can be measured in terms of both the legal rights afforded women to vote, express their opinion, and run for elected (or other) office, as well as the practical exercise of these legal rights.

Participating in public institutions – such as parliaments, local councils or government – allows women to contribute to the decision-making and law making that impact on people's rights, behaviours and lives. Arguments about women's participation in these institutions are often premised on the question of rights (women represent half the population, and therefore have a right to contribute to decision-making on issues that affect women's lives), and on the question of impact or value (women bring a particular perspective to decision-making which should be heard). OECD research has shown, for example, that inequality rates tend to decrease in countries with a greater share of women in legislatures (OECD, 2014a) and that women's inclusion in executive government (as ministers, for example) can strengthen public confidence in national governments (OECD, 2016). In local government as well, research shows that more balanced representation among men and women in local councils ensures that local policy and service delivery issues are examined from a broader perspective, recognising the needs of minority and underrepresented groups. Some research has shown women members of local council are often seen as more sensitive and responsive to community concerns and voters.

Evidence also highlights that greater political empowerment of women often leads to higher standards of living and positive developments in education, infrastructure and health. Indeed, women's inclusion at the decision-making table is associated with increased spending in these sectors (Mavisakalyan, 2012). Further, and according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), women politicians have been “the main drivers of progress in gender equality” (Ballington, 2008), often bringing attention to such issues as gender-based violence, family-friendly policies and responsiveness to citizen needs (OECD, 2014a). In this sense, women's inclusion in politics ensures that decision-making bodies “reflect the diversity of the societies they represent and can provide a balanced perspective in designing and implementing rules, thus enabling an inclusive approach to policy making and service delivery.”(OECD, 2014a)

This chapter explores the presence (and absence) of women from political and public institutions in Egypt – notably the parliament, local councils, political parties, non-governmental organisations and trade unions. While women's presence in these institutions has varied over time, more often than not, women are represented in relatively small numbers compared with women in other countries of the MENA region and the OECD. The chapter presents an initial discussion of the current situation, through an analysis of women's overall socio-economic status in Egypt, and the pervasive gender norms which often appear to conflict with a public role for women.



### Box 1.1. HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN EGYPT

For nearly a century, women have played an ever-increasing role in the political landscape of Egypt. Women's participation in the 1919 revolution was at least in part responsible for the development of a pluralistic political system, later entrenched in the 1923 constitution. Women won the right to vote and stand for election in 1956 under the regime of Gamal Abdel Nasser, and just one year later, in 1957, Rawya Ateya and Amina Shokry became the first women elected to the Egyptian parliament. Since then, the promotion of women's political participation has been aided by the establishment of women's trade unions (in 1964), the adoption of legal quotas for election to the House of Representatives (first introduced in 1979), laws granting women equal rights in marriage, divorce and child custody, and the establishment of a National Council for Women (NCW) in 2000. These have all been fought for by an active and vibrant women's movement. Key milestones in this journey include:

- **The Revolution of 1919:** At this time of independence and the "Egyptianisation" of a new parliamentary system, women were able to raise awareness of the importance of women's inclusion in political leadership. Specifically, women of the Al Wafd Party argued for stronger partnerships between men and women. A pluralist political system was entrenched in the 1923 Constitution, enshrining principles of equality, freedom and civil, democratic and political rights for all. Campaigns led by the Egyptian Women Union and women members of the Al Wafd Party succeeded in establishing "compartments" for women in the 1925 Egyptian Parliament, and (two) in the 1926 Parliament (Kamal, 2004).
- **January 16, 1956:** Women in Egypt are granted the right to vote and stand for elections. Eight women ran in the 1957 elections and in July of the same year, women were elected to Parliament for the first time. In the 1964 parliamentary elections, women won 8 of 360 seats (or 2.3%). Several 'firsts' followed, namely the first woman Minister of Social Affairs was appointed, the first women labour union was formed, the first women acceded to the Higher Consultative Council for Work and Workers, and the first woman farmer was involved in cooperatives' Board of Directors (Kamal, 2004).
- **President Anwar Al Sadat issues Law 21/1979:** This law allocated thirty parliamentary seats for women, leading to a significant shift with regard to women's parliamentary representation, increasing from eight to thirty-five women (out of a total 392 Members of Parliament) (Abou-Zeid, 2006). This moment was accompanied by a series of political and socio-economic developments in Egyptian society, including a shift from a one-party system to a multi-party system and from a central to a market economy. The Personal Status Law amendments were also adopted at this time, granting women a number of family rights.
- **President Hosny Mubarak issues Decree Number 20 of February 2000:** This decree established the National Council for Women (NCW) as an independent institution affiliated to the Presidency, concerned with women's development and empowerment. Together with the NCW, a number of gender equality-related NGOs, research centres and governmental administrations also played an active role.
- **January 25, 2011 Revolution:** In partnership with men, women participated in this revolution calling for freedom, equality, justice and democracy. The political circumstances of the post 2011 period have shaped women's political, economic and social needs and interests; and the public space has widened to encompass all forms of right claims. Egyptian women have emerged as important political actors; participating in elections as voters or candidates in greater numbers than ever before. Women's, especially young women's, increased participation is particularly evident through their: Membership of traditional NGOs, voluntary work and charity associations and activities;
- **2010 Parliament:** Re-introduced a women's quota, which lasted until the 25th of January revolution. It guaranteed women 64 parliamentary seats.
- **Involvement in the work of political parties:**
  - Establishment of youth-related and politically-active cultural organisations, as women were able for the first time to deliver artistic and cultural presentations in streets as well as effectively using the Internet to attract wide audiences; and
  - Developing initiatives to raise awareness of political and social issues, including violence against women (VAW).

A second wave of the 25th January revolution erupted a mere two years later with the aim of deposing a regime that threatened to dismiss the many rights women had fought for and reverse the gains made toward equality between men and women. Women were again at the frontlines to defend their country, their rights and the well-being of their society. As stated by NCW "The people of Egypt responded to the wake up call of 30 June 2013 revolution, starting a renewed wave of its revolution; and as always, women were at the front lines, reiterating the legitimate demands and dreams of all Egyptians for their country; a country where all its citizens would enjoy freedom, justice and a dignified living under a system that respects the rule of law" (NCW, 2014).



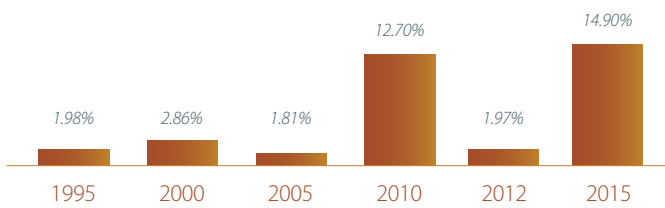
# Participation in Parliament

Parliamentary democracy has a long, if fragmented, history in Egypt. While the concept of a parliament has deep roots in Egyptian civilisation, various parliamentary structures have been in place over time as a result of successive revolutions. The current parliament, known as the House of Representatives, was established in 2014, replacing the previous, bicameral system that had included a Shura Council (or upper house). This House of Representatives is currently composed of 596 seats: 448 seats are directly elected through an individual system, 120 are elected through four multimember district party-lists subject to quotas (for women, youth, Christians and workers, people with disabilities, Egyptians living abroad) and the President can appoint a number of members that does not exceed 5% of elected seats (Article 102, 2014 Constitution). In the case of the 2015 parliamentary elections, the President appointed 28 members, half of which were women (Sanyal, 2016).

The change in parliamentary systems has had an impact on the story of women's representation in the national parliament in Egypt. As is clear from Figure 1.1, over the past 20 years, the level of women's representation has

either remained under 3% (following elections in 1995, 2000, 2005 and 2012), or at 13% and 15% (following elections in 2010 and 2015). The key determinant in these levels has been the implementation, or abolition, of an electoral gender quota. In 1979, parliamentary seats – 30 in total – were reserved for women for the first time. The quota was kept intact for the 1979 and 1984 elections which resulted in women representation reaching 8%. Once the quota was removed, women's representation in parliament declined and remained stagnate, until a quota system was reinstated for the 2010 and 2015 parliamentary elections. The Law on the House of Representatives (No. 46/2014) allocates 56 of the 596 parliamentary seats (almost 10%) to women (see Chapter 2, Box 2.4) (El Baradei, Laila and Wafa, Dina, 2013). In addition to the 56 women elected through party-lists subject to a women's quota, 19 women were able to win open seats previously held by men, 14 were appointed by the president in full parity with another 14 men which were also appointed by the president. In total, women currently represent 15% of parliamentary seats<sup>5</sup>, the highest proportion of women ever to serve in Egypt's parliament.

FIGURE 1.1. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTS SINCE 1995

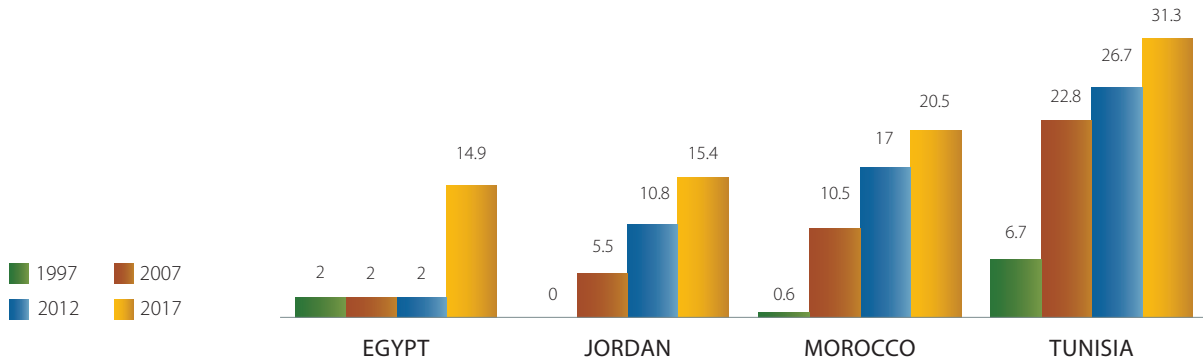


Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif-arc.htm>

Similarly, since 1997, the level of women's representation in Parliament has increased in every MENA Transition Fund Project country (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan). The most significant progress has been recorded in Egypt, where the increase in women's representation grew by almost thirteen percentage points between 2012 and 2017.



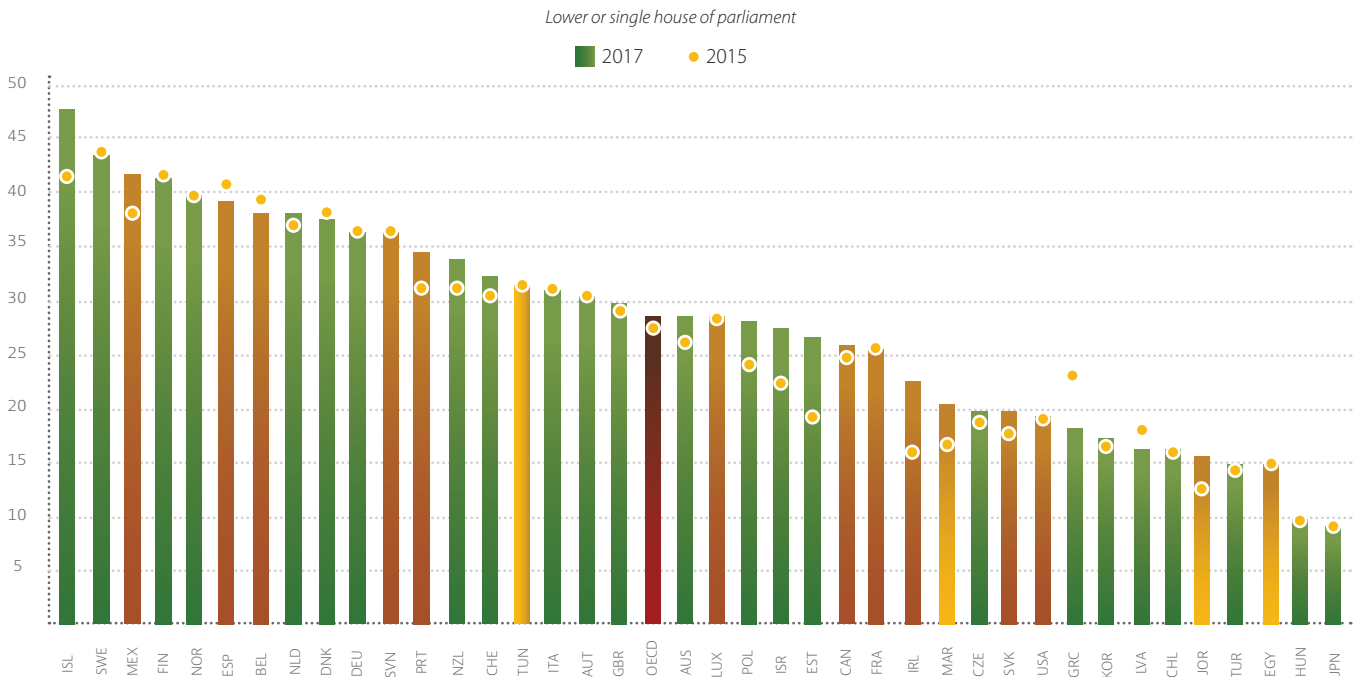
FIGURE 1.2. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION INCREASING IN PARLIAMENTS OVERTIME



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), data based on figures from 1 September 2017, 30 September 2012, 30 September 2007, and 10 November 1997

While these improvements are encouraging, the proportion of elected women parliamentarians in Egypt remains the lowest of the four countries from the Transition Fund Project and comparatively low among countries of the OECD (see Figure 1.3).

FIGURE 1.3. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS AND LEGISLATED GENDER QUOTAS, 2015 AND 2017



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) PARLINE (database), and IDEA Quota Project (database).

Bars in light green represent OECD member countries with lower or single house parliaments with legislated candidate quotas as of as of March 2017; bars in light orange represent the four countries from the Transition Fund Project (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan). All four countries have a legislated gender quota. The bar in red represents the OECD average. Data refer to the share of women parliamentarians recorded as of 1 January 2017 and 1 December 2015. Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

## Participation in local councils

As with the national parliament, the structure and composition of local councils in Egypt has seen some change over time. Various laws on local administration<sup>6</sup> had been in effect until the 2011 Revolution. A new law for local administration was subsequently submitted to the Parliament to redefine articles related to elected local councils and any other proposed amendments. At the time of publication of the report, this law is still being debated in Parliament but is expected to be passed by the end of the 2018 parliamentary session (Mahmoud, 2017). Local council elections are expected by the end of 2018. These elections are also expected to adhere to a provision in the 2014 Constitution under Article 180, whereby women should hold a quarter of all local government seats, and young people should hold a quarter of these seats (an entirely new provision). The Constitution also requires that local government seats be distributed fairly among workers, farmers, Christians and persons with a disability.



### Box 1.2. ARTICLE 180 OF THE 2014 CONSTITUTION

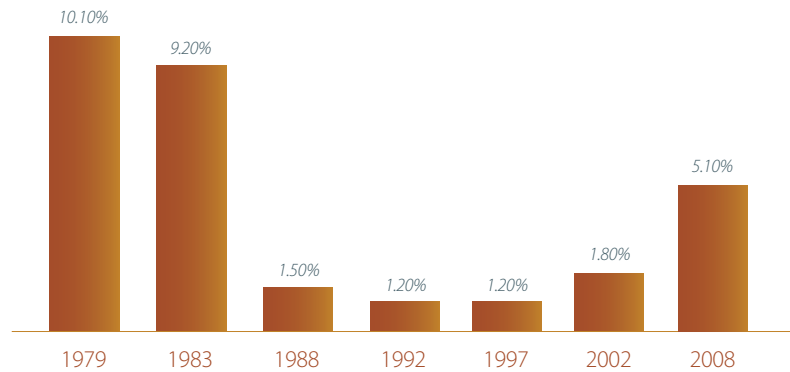
Every local unit elects a local council by direct, secret ballot for a term of four years. A candidate must be no younger than 21 years old. The law regulates other conditions for candidacy and procedures of election, provided that one quarter of the seats are allocated to youth under 35 years old, one quarter is allocated for women, workers and farmers are represented by no less than 50 percent of the total number of seats, and these percentages include a proper representation of Christians and people with disability.

Secret ballot Local councils are responsible for developing and implementing the development plan, monitoring the activity's different aspects, exercising the tools of monitoring the executive authority such as proposals, and submitting questions, briefing motions, interpellations and others, and withdrawing confidence from the heads of local units, in the manner organized by law.

Source: [www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt\\_2014.pdf](http://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf)

The last local council elections for which there is data are those of 2008. Of a total 51,402 local government members, 44,000 were elected by acclamation or appointed. Approximately 5% of these 44,000 non-elected members were women. In fact, since 1979, women have never represented more than 10% of a local government body in Egypt (see Figure 1.4). Again, as was the case with women's parliamentary representation, higher proportions of women in local government have coincided with the implementation of a quota system (1979, and 1983) (Wahbi, 2008).

FIGURE 1.3. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN EGYPTIAN LOCAL COUNCILS (1979 TO 2008)



Source: Wahbi, Azza. "Women in the local elected councils", *The National Council of Women*, 2008.

Prior to 2014, local councils in Egypt had been comprised of five separate levels: governorate, district, city, neighbourhood, village; each responsible for supervising and inspecting different aspects of the facilities and work that fall under the overall jurisdiction of 'local councils'. These levels of councils were legally mandated to supervise, monitor and approve the activities of their

communities (Rahman, 2012). Women's representation at each of these levels was again dependent on the existence and implementation of a quota: while in 1983 women accounted, on average, for just under 10% of all local council representatives (i.e. across all levels), this reduced to less than 2% in each successive local council election (see Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1. REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN EACH ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL (1983 TO 2002)

LOCAL COUNCILS	1983		1988		1992		1997		2002	
	Total N°	% of women	Total N°	% of women	Total N°	% of women	Total N°	% of women	Total N°	% of women
Governorates	1 798	15%	2 436	5.6%	2 508	4.4%	3 172	3.2%	3 227	3.5%
Districts	6 652	15.2%	8 752	1.8%	9 834	4.4%	12 707	1.0%	12 969	4.5%
Cities	3 254	11.0%	3 772	2.3%	4 112	1.3%	5 000	1.7%	5 146	2.9%
Neighbourhoods (hay)	656	10.7%	987	4.1%	1 018	3.7%	1 254	4.5%	1 372	5.2%
Villages	15 408	5.6%	17 740	0.5%	20 160	0.6%	25 248	0.7%	24 922	1.3%
TOTAL	27 768	9.2%	33 678	1.5%	37 632	1.2%	47 381	1.2%	47 636	1.8%

Source: Wahbi, Azza. "Women in the local elected councils", *The National Council of Women*, 2008.

The levels of representation of women in local councils did not differ significantly between 2002 and 2008 (see above on the latest data available). Women made the greatest gains at the district level, and the least progress in the villages. One study has suggested that these differences are due to the fact that districts are often located in larger cities, where social norms can be more permissive of women's inclusion in the political sphere<sup>7</sup>. Another study on "Women in Local Councils" carried out by the National

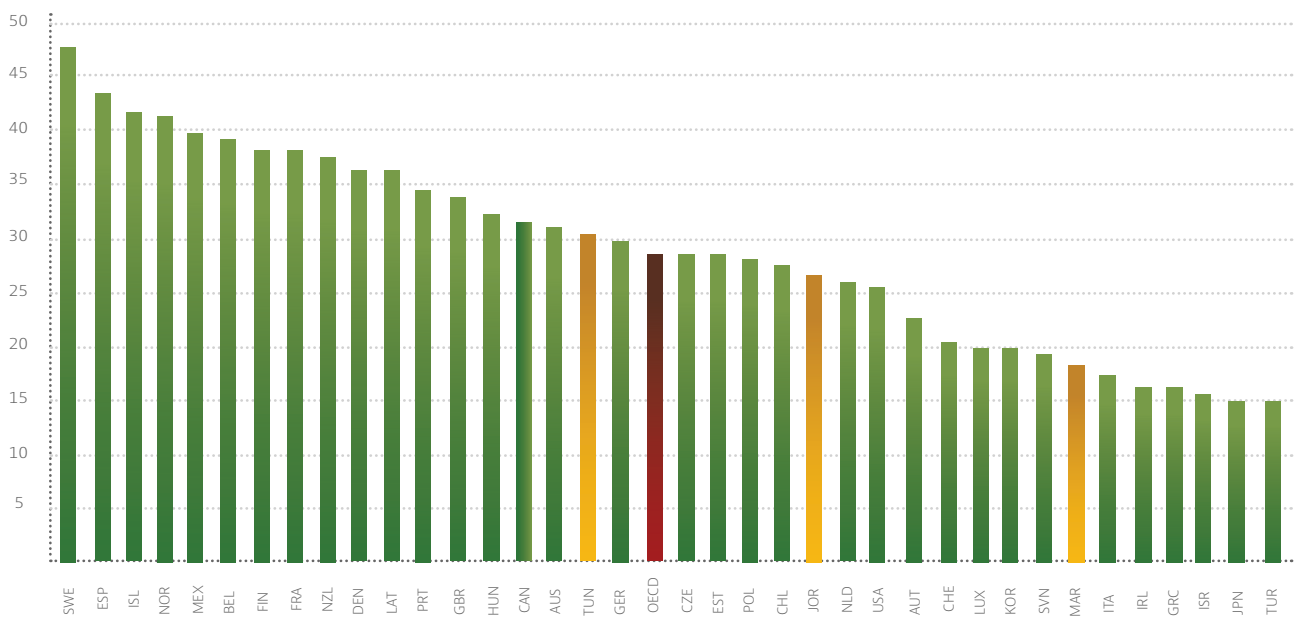
Council for Women (NCW) in 2008 found that women over the age of 50 were more likely to be represented in local councils; indeed women aged less than 40 represented less than 14% of all women elected (Wahbi, 2008). The NCW study also found that 73% of local council members maintained their positions of government employees, which had an impact on public perceptions of local council members' accountability and transparency.



Interestingly, decentralisation had been endorsed, in principle, through the 1971 Constitution, but never fully implemented. High rates of illiteracy, poor social services and infrastructure, weak performance of local government members, and significant disparities between urban and rural governorates all became catalysts for public outcry in the lead up to the 2011 Revolution.

Article 180 of the 2014 Constitution requires allocating one quarter of local council seats to women in the anticipated 2018 local elections. If this requirement is fulfilled, the proportion of women in local government in Egypt would be on par with the OECD average of 25.7% (see Figure 1.4).

FIGURE 1.4. WOMEN'S SHARE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT SEATS ACROSS MENA AND OECD (%)



Sources: Data has been collected from multiple sources\*.

Bars in green represent OECD member countries; bars in light orange represent the four countries from the Transition Fund Project (Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan); the bar in red represents the OECD average.

Data refers to the share of women in local councils at the following dates: United States, Canada and Morocco – as of 2015; Turkey – as of 2014; Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom – as of 2013; Chile – as of 2012; Australia – as of 2011; South Korea and Tunisia – as of 2010; Egypt – as of 2008.

\* ComunidadMujer (2014), El Kharouf, Amal Mohammad Ali and Al-Jribia, Mohummad (2017), Eto, Mikito (2013), European Parliament (2012), Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2015), Ministry of Social Development, Government of New Zealand (2016), Nagid, Moran (2013), OECD (2018), ONU Femmes Maghreb (2015), Parliament of Australia (2012), Savas-Yavusçehre, Pinar and Cigeroglu-Öztepe, Misra (2016), Status of Women in the United States (2015), Sundström, Aksel (2013), and United Nations Development Program (2014).





## Participation in political parties

In line with its long-standing tradition of parliamentary democracy, political parties have flourished in Egypt. Since 2011, 103 parties have been created and it was in 2011 that one of Egypt's major political parties (Dostour) elected a female leader (Kingsley, 2014). Nevertheless, the high number of political parties makes for a crowded stage and all are jostling for a position in a new democracy, with the priority being to win popular support and seats. The underlying fear of the extreme parties and the natural political rivalry between the others means that practical politics takes priority over gender issues.

As might be expected, political parties have differed in their approach to women's political participation. There are some shining examples, such as the Egyptian Social Democratic Party<sup>8</sup> that has adopted an internal party quota of 30% women, across all party structures and decision-making positions within party by-laws. Representatives from the party said the quota is strictly enforced across all governorates and this has resulted in women accounting for 38% of party leadership party also aims to reach 25% of women candidates in the local council elections. At the local level, the (ruling) National Party has tended to nominate a certain percentage of women on its lists. The 25% quota for women in local councils appears to have incentivized some political parties to invest in building a pipeline of potential female candidates through

capacity building. By and large though, political parties show relatively little enthusiasm for actively identifying, training or supporting female candidates. Further, most parties do not report having clearly defined targets for women's participation in leadership or as candidates, nor do they reference gender equality and promotion of women's political participation in their manifestos or by-laws.

Women's representation in political parties established after the 2011 Revolution is significantly higher compared to their representation in older political parties. Women's representation in social democratic or socialist parties was found to be higher than in liberal parties, irrespective of when the party was formed. Women's representation in religious parties was found to be low or nil where women's participation is often used as décor to meet legal requirements. OECD interviews revealed that most political parties often mainly focus on "strongman leadership" or a single male figure or personality as opposed to encouraging broader engagement and input into party leadership. This can serve as a barrier for women seeking to take on a more significant role within a party.

In the 2015 parliamentary elections, 681 women ran as candidates (out of 6331). Some 275 women (out of 5441)



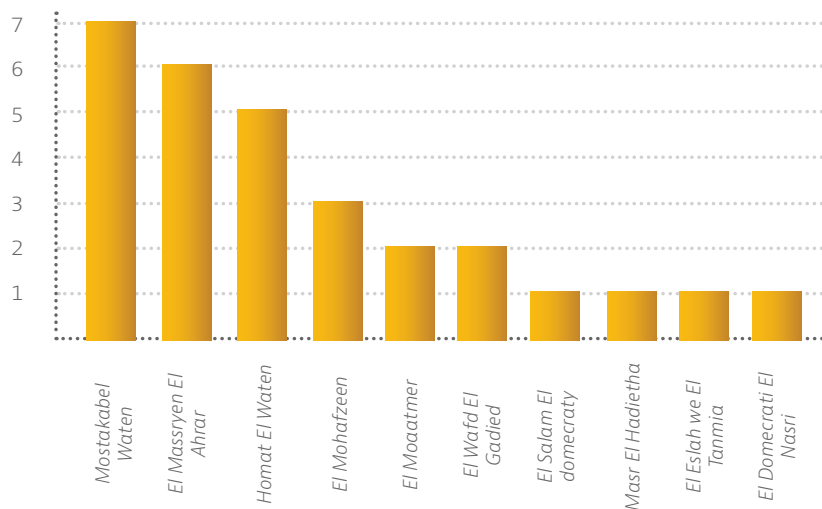
ran for individual seats and 406 women (out of 870) ran for party-lists. Overall, women represented 10.8% of all parliamentary candidates in 2015 (Refaat-Komsan, 2016). In the 2015 elections, it appears that political parties mainly opted for supporting the number of female candidates deemed necessary by the quota stipulated in the law (AUEOM, 2016). For the 120 party-list seats to which the quota is applied (i.e. districts with 45 seats must have 21 women on their list, districts with 15 seats, must have 7 women on their list) women comprised 46.7% of candidates – exactly the amount mandated by the quota. Without a mandated quote, political party support for female candidates running for one of the 448 independent seats was low. Most nominated very few for independent seats and 23 parties did not nominate any women as individual candidates (AUEOM, 2016). Additionally, to make more space for male candidates on the four district lists, an effort was made to incorporate women that could meet more than one characteristic mandated by Article 5 of Law No 46/2014 (See Box 2.3). For example, a Christian, disabled woman accounts for only 1 place on a 15 or 45-person list, as opposed to three places. Due to the quota, the probability of a woman getting elected under the 120 seat party-list system was much higher than for women

running for one of the 448 independent seats. Having the support of a political party is more advantageous in that it provides a candidates with financial and campaign support, a platform and protection. Women's limited access to finance in Egypt means the cost of running a campaign is a particular impediment for them and this is especially for women running for an independent seat without political party support.

Another often cited reason why husbands or families discourage women from running for election is reputational risk. Several interviewees brought up gender-based political violence during elections targeting independent female candidates (e.g. disruption of their campaign rallies, intimidation, defamation of character etc.). Under the umbrella of a political party, women candidates are less likely to face personal attacks.

Extending the quota so that it applies to both party-list and independent seats would provide incentive for political parties to support and nominate more female candidates, ultimately increasing their chances of winning in elections and their representation within decision-making bodies.

FIGURE 1.5. CLASSIFICATION OF WOMEN MPS ON THE BASIS OF POLITICAL PARTIES



Source: Komsan, Refaat, "Representation of women members of political parties as Members of Parliament", 2016.

# Participation in Civil Society Organisations and Syndicates

## Women in non-governmental Organisations

The 2011 January Revolution came with new opportunities for women to participate in the public sphere. Nearly 4,000 organisations and initiatives were created in the aftermath of the Revolution, including new non-governmental organisations, interactive electronic sites, and artistic youth movements. Multiple coalitions were formed between women's and human rights organisations, the most important of which was the Egyptian Coalition for Women's Participation (made of 454 women associations and organisations) that today supports women's participation in public life. Partnerships were also forged through the Egyptian Feminist Organisations Coalition, comprised of 11 associations calling for freedom, dignity and social justice; the "Free Women of Egypt Movement" which included young activist women; the "Together Movement" which included young volunteering educated women in the fight against harassment and abuse; and the "Egyptian Women's Coalition," which aimed at supporting women participation in decision-making inside and outside Cairo (Amany, 2014).

## Women in Syndicates and Unions

Following the 2011 Revolution, Egyptian working women also made a substantive contribution to the increasing number of syndicates and trade unions. Women started organising and establishing their own syndicates and contributed to the establishment of other syndicates along with men. Women, for example, founded the Nursing and Female Rural Leaders Syndicates, which are exclusively composed of female members. They also helped to establish the Independent Teachers Syndicate and Egyptian Postal Workers Union, in addition to other specialised, regional and national organisations.

Despite increasing numbers of trade union and syndicate members – it is estimated that 3.9 million members belong to 24 professional unions in Egypt – women continue to represent a minority of leaders and members of those organisations. According to CAPMAS, women are better represented as members of the Educational Syndicate (28.4%), the Agricultural Professions Syndicate (17.7%) and Commercial Professions Syndicate (16.1%).

While there are no legal obstacles to women's participation and leadership in trade unions and syndicates in Egypt,

these organisations have not implemented special measures to encourage and promote women's inclusion. Trade unions and syndicates are yet to implement quotas or targets; internal policies and procedures to help achieve equal representation in decision-making positions; or provide specialised training to assist women in achieving promotions or recognition. Actions taken by trade unions to empower and support women's increased participation are often a result of leadership dedicated to such a cause. The OECD interviewed some male trade union leaders that embodied this spirit. Nevertheless, leadership can shift, thus there is a need to explicitly codify these good practices into the by-laws of syndicates and trade unions in order to ensure continuity and systematic adherence to gender equality principles in any case and under all leadership.

### Box 1.3. EXAMPLES OF WOMEN IN SYNDICATES IN EGYPT

Despite women's crucial participation in the establishment of the Journalists' Syndicate in 1941, women were not sufficiently represented in the Syndicate's Boards of Directors. Throughout its 74 years old history, only nine female journalists have been elected (Fekri, 2016). Moreover, women represent only one third of the General Meeting. No female lawyers have been elected in the Lawyers Syndicate Board of Directors since 2000. Even in the subsidiary syndicates and unions women have not been given an opportunity to join as members. Since 1974, only two female lawyers have ever been elected (Center for Trade Union and Workers Services, 2013).

In the 2002-2005 session, the General Tourist Guides Syndicate Board of Directors included only one woman among the 9-member Board of Directors. In the 1997-2001 session, the Athletics Federation Board of Directors included only two women. Women seem absent from the syndicates of Boards of Directors, such as the 17 year Medical Syndicate Board of Directors and the Engineers Syndicate, with only one woman succeeding in chairing the Social Workers Union.

Women have had more success in accessing the labour unions' Boards of Directors. Across a total of 17,000 labour unions, working women have been appointed to leadership positions in only 9 unions, but on some of these, there have been more women than men on the Board, such as in the Private Education Union. Overall, women's membership in labour unions stands at around 53%, while the percentage of women at the top leadership positions of unions (e.g. Board of Directors) stands at only 1% (Center for Trade Union and Workers Services, 2013).



## Challenges to women's political participation in Egypt

The section above shows that despite women's demonstrated enthusiasm for political activism in Egypt, only a few have been successful in reaching positions of political leadership, either elected or appointed. In part, the relative absence of women from leadership in Egypt is explained by some of the following factors that have an impact on the share of women entering and staying in politics.

### *Economic inequality, uneven access to financing and limited candidate supply*

Similar to many countries, both in the MENA region and across OECD members, a common explanation of the low representation of women in politics is the lack of female candidates who are interested in running for elections. At the same, the OECD interviews and research in Egypt, similar to many countries, reveal that many women do have a strong potential and interest in running for public office both at the national and sub-national levels. Yet, some of the main reasons for the discrepancies and barriers to women's participation relate to the economic inequality between men and women and limited access to opportunities to develop and demonstrate their skills.

**Economic inequality:** The disadvantaged socio-economic position has a direct impact on women's ability to pursue a career in politics. It can affect women's ability to mount effective, well-resourced political campaigns and present persuasive arguments in favour of their electability. Limited access to economic resources tends to reduce women's bargaining power at homes thus affecting their ability to make decisions about the participation in politics and public life more broadly. Indeed, as noted in the 2014 OECD-CAWTAR report, "participation in economic life can provide women with more access to and control over resources, enabling them to fulfil individual aspirations with regard to their private and public lives by enhancing their bargaining powers in their families and society" (OECD, 2014b).

Indeed, women interviewed for this study rated financial constraints as the primary challenge in running for election. Campaigns are high-cost exercises, and political parties are less likely to support the electoral campaigns of women where they are unlikely to win a seat. Since parties resort to nominating candidates capable of pooling the highest number of votes, women are often only considered if seen as winning candidates. It is also increasingly clear that some candidates use campaign funds to buy votes.



#### Box 1.4. ECONOMIC INEQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN IN EGYPT

Many women are less economically secure than men in Egypt, as a consequence of several factors, including lower rates of education, and segregated employment. On education, the 2010 Human Development Report found that in Egypt, 16% of girls aged between 18 and 19 years had never been enrolled in school; and that young girls from rural areas are most likely not to be enrolled. In 2012, it was estimated that women accounted for 37% of Egypt's illiterate population, compared to 22% for men; with higher percentages again found in rural areas (UNDP, 2010). Illiteracy rates, for example, among women living in Upper Egypt (rural areas) are three times higher than those of women living in Lower Egypt (urban areas). Overall, only 65% of women can read compared to 81% of men (World Bank, 2016).

Women are also less likely to be in paid, full-time employment than men in Egypt. In 2014, the unemployment rate for women stood at 24%, compared with 9.8% for men<sup>10</sup>. It is noteworthy that these unemployment rates appear to be increasing over time, up from 22.6% in 2010. In 2014, women represented 20.8% of the working population, compared with men's 79.2% (World Bank, 2016). In 2014, women's labour participation represented only 23.8% (World Bank, 2016).

Where women are employed, there are significant differences in the nature of their work compared with men. The public sector represents the main employer for women: it accounts for 56% of employed women and 30% of working men (OECD, 2015a). Public sector employment has been preferred by women as it is considered more socially acceptable (Sayre and Hendy, 2013). Women represent less than 10% of senior and executive positions in either the private or public sectors (ILO, 2015). Moreover, the wage gap between women and men is estimated to be 25%, with particularly high disparities in the sectors of mining (72%), manufacturing (35%) and health and social work (25%) (Tijdens and Van Klaveren, 2012). Vulnerable and informal work is also widely dominated by women. Some 46% of all working women in Egypt have vulnerable or informal jobs, compared with 21.3% of men (World Bank, 2016). This points to a double discrimination: women are paid less than men because of the informal nature of their work, but are also paid less than men when in similar types of employment<sup>11</sup>.

In addition to poor pay and unequal wages women in Egypt have unequal access to resources, credit and land; limited co-ownership of small and medium enterprises and low access to technology<sup>12</sup>. While trade unions have traditionally worked to ensure equality within the workforce, in Egypt they have been less successful in pushing for women's workforce equality. Unions have been dominated by men in leadership positions, and have been reluctant to adopt affirmative action measures that promote women's participation in the workforce<sup>13</sup>.

Moreover, women also differ from men in their attitudes and aspirations towards entrepreneurship. Indeed, women in Egypt, and in the wider region, "have a higher fear of failure, believe less in their own capabilities, are less connected to other entrepreneurs and are less optimistic about potential business opportunities" (OECD, 2017b). This has a direct impact on women and their interest in business ownership: in Egypt, only 16% of women own a business (World Bank, 2016).



**Limited exposure to politics:** Women also often report difficulty to understand the political process, and the different entry points for action. They noted a high level of unfamiliarity with the legal and political process – particularly with respect to the parliament. Low levels of education and exposure to public life will make it more difficult for many women to see how they can have a voice in politics.

**Limited networking opportunities:** While not always a disadvantage, women's segregated experience of the 'workplace' has meant women candidates in Egypt also tend to be more reliant on family relations, and their work in voluntary roles, to build their political capital. Working with NGO and charity associations has allowed many of the women currently elected to parliament to build broad networks of support. Other elected women have used their previous work experience to understand their constituencies: Dr Hend Al Gebaly, MP for Al Montazah constituency in Alexandria, used her academic work as a sociologist to form networks with relevant groups and institutions, while former engineer Iman Khedr, MP for Al Qenaia and Zagzig districts, used her contacts with the Ministry of Irrigation to understand power dynamics in her constituencies.

### *Culture, limited encouragement, party dynamics and gender stereotypes*

Gender equality "implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognising the diversity of different groups of women and men." To achieve this, the UN definition specifically notes that "women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female." Culture and gender norms that dictate the appropriate roles for men and women (e.g. that women remain in the private sphere, while men assume responsibility for the public sphere) represent a direct challenge to the achievement of gender equality. Women's ability to break into the political sphere in Egypt is constrained by culture and social norms, which also manifest in violence against women and stereotypical and derogatory depictions of women in the media.

**Patriarchal culture and social norms:** As in many other countries, Egyptian society has been influenced by strong cultural arguments that discourage women's participation in public life. Hala Kamal has argued that serious resistance to gender equality reforms has been premised on the argument that "women are considered the source and momentum of cultural values and social norms" in

Egypt (Kamal, 2004). Women's participation in public life can be seen as a challenge to traditional social roles for women, and for some an attempt to dismantle the social fabric of Egypt.

OECD interviews have also shown that patriarchal attitudes to women are still too frequent, evident in the view that political work is best left in the hands of men: women are often said to lack the ability to convince others, argue, negotiate and create effective political alliances. Moreover, these attitudes can make it particularly difficult for women to campaign in certain parts of the country. Men and women may take advantage of social occasions such as funerals and weddings to introduce themselves to voters, but social norms, for example, are reported to have dictated that coffee shops in villages and governorates are appropriate locations for male politicians to campaign in, but not women. Mosques are reported to be particularly difficult for women to campaign in, which reduces the opportunities available to women to convince citizens to vote for them.

#### **Box 1.5. FIGHTING RESTRICTIVE GENDER ROLES TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN EGYPT**

In Egypt, the NCW launched its first nationwide campaign to promote women's empowerment, called "TaaMarbouta." The campaign is based on an innovative approach that focuses on women's strengths, addresses misconceptions, redefines gender roles, and fosters women's participation in all spheres of life, including in decision-making bodies and in the labour market as active contributors to the economy. "TaaMarbouta" reached out to more than 48 million viewers on social media since its official launch; 12 million viewers on TV; and made close to 498,000 interactions on the ground as of November 2017. Its slogan is: "TaaMarbouta is , your strength."<sup>14</sup>

During the 2015 parliamentary election, the NCW developed a website for women candidates. The website, called "Egypt parliamentarians", aimed at providing a platform for all women candidates to promote their electoral campaigns and raising awareness among voters of women candidates running in their constituencies. The website provided information on each candidate, their electoral program, and a short video by each candidate. The website represented a means of indirect financial support to women in their campaign, and succeeded in increasing these candidates' reach through a social media campaign.



**Internal party dynamics and limited encouragement:**

Political parties play a major role in enabling women's access to politics. Yet the party dynamics was reported as one of the deterrents to women's participation, as they were found often unwilling to include women at the top of their party lists, particularly if they believe that women are unlikely to win their seat. Representative of Egyptian Democratic Social Party, Nadia Abdel Wahab Afify remarked on the perception of party leaders "that putting women at the top of the lists will lead to [the party's electoral] failure."<sup>15</sup> Similar to many countries in the region and beyond (OECD, 2014a), such resistance could be linked to gender stereotypes and lack of awareness about women's performance (in view of their statistically lower representation), which may be self-perpetuating. In addition, the participants in the study underlined that women are often held to a higher standard and less frequently encouraged to participate in politics, which may further discourage them from running for public office.

**Stereotypical media representation of women:** Media channels all over the world have been found to treat men and women in politics differently<sup>16</sup>. Globally, women politicians are subject to more commentary on their looks and dress than the content of their policies and the way they conduct politics. In the Egyptian context, male politicians are often more prominently covered in the media, particularly at election time. To some extent, this is both a factor of the numbers (there are more men than women in Egyptian politics), and the media's perpetuation of a stereotypical view of women politicians. For example,

a 1999 study found that almost 40% of its respondents did not believe women were a credible source of information on political, religious or economic media programs. Media channels are reported to often propagate the traditional image of women, based on their roles as 'giving mothers', 'submissive wives' or 'obedient daughters' (Awatif, 1999).

Women's relative absence in the media has an impact on their political success. The fewer women are visible in political discourse, the less accepted women in politics will be and the fewer role models will be available to women political aspirants, especially young women. The media has a responsibility to cover all political candidates fairly and accurately.

### Box 1.6. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN MEDIA IN MENA AND OECD COUNTRIES

**In Lebanon**, the 'Use your Voice' nationwide media campaign "aimed at promoting women's participation in the electoral process. The campaign featured five prominent Lebanese women who appeared on television, radio, public transportation, and billboard advertisements." The campaign was organised by the National Democratic Institute and the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections.

**In Jordan and Yemen**, workshops were conducted to train reporters on gender-sensitive reporting. The Jordan Media Institute partnered with UNESCO while the European Commission allied with the UNDP to form the "Joint Election Assistance Project," which oversaw the trainings in Yemen.

**In Egypt**, NCW has mainstreamed training for media personnel in its annual training packages.

**The United Kingdom** has promoted mentoring programmes for women working the film and television industry. The UK WFTV, for example, has an annual 6-months scheme for 20 women to receive mentoring, training workshops and networking opportunities. Each participant is provided with a high-level mentor from the industry<sup>17</sup>.

**In the Netherlands**, VIDM (Vaker in de media – More often in the media) organises training courses for women experts. It aims at giving them the tools to understand the news-making process and how gender inequalities develop within the field of media. Trainees are able to get concrete and practical experience in how to conduct themselves in a media-related environment (e.g. television set, radio show...). VIDM also acts as a mediator between women experts and the media as it helps journalists find female experts for their shows<sup>18</sup>.

### *Barriers to women's participation in local councils*

Many of the challenges faced by women competing for election are exacerbated at the local level in Egypt. Research has shown that citizens are less aware of the political system operating at the local level, and have little understanding of how they can work with local councils. Particularly in rural areas, more faith is placed in the workings of the central government in providing essential services. This, coupled with the idea that local councils are connected to predominantly male environments such as 'the streets and markets', has led to reduced engagement in local politics, particularly among women.

Former local councilors – men and women alike – provided qualitative stories of women's participation in local councils. Several mentioned that women are relegated to specific committees such as the Social Committee, the Education Committee, and the Population Committees – and are excluded from others. Fewer women have been appointed, for example, to the Economic Committee or the Religious and Cultural Committees. Women leaders of local councils remain quite rare. Until recently, no woman had been appointed a governor or deputy governor, or district or governorate secretary-general. Hana Abdel Aziz previously served as Assistant Secretary-General, and is currently the Secretary General of the BeniSuef Governor. No more than five women are heads of cities, districts and villages across all of Egypt.

### *Structural barriers, gender-based violence and access to justice*

**Structural barriers:** These types of reported barriers tend to include (perceived or real) lack of work-life balance in politics, limited social infrastructure (such as childcare or parental leaves), and working arrangements. Participants of the study reported that, in view of the expectations of women as being the primary caregivers within their families and households, many women may deliberately opt out of running for politics due to the inability to balance work and life. These views are influenced by the meetings of the political parties in the evenings (especially in the local branches), difficulties to predict the working hours of parliamentarians, travel requirements, and uneven access to quality childcare. Former female local councilors from Gharibiya governorate recounted that attending council meetings held in the evening was difficult and they were wary of suggesting to change meeting times for fear male councilors would dub them as unfit for their position.

**Gender-based violence:** Gender-based violence is a manifestation of patriarchal attitudes. Acts of violence against women, particularly by intimate partners and family members, are especially pervasive and are considered permissible because of the relationship of the woman to the perpetrator. A 2015 study found that rates of intimate partner violence were quite high in Egypt: almost half of ever married women age 18-64 years in Egypt reported experiencing some form of spousal



violence, with 32 percent reporting physical violence and 12 percent sexual violence (CAPMAS 2015). Traditional and harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation (FGM) and early or forced marriages, take an economic as well as a psychological toll on women. A 2015 survey on the Economic Cost of Gender Based Violence in Egypt estimated that 9 out of 10 women aged between 18 and 64 were exposed to FGM; 27% of women were married before they turn 18; and 21% of women in Upper Egypt (rural areas) were forced into their first (or current) marriage (UNFPA, 2016). The total cost of violence against women in Egypt is estimated at EGP 2.17 billion annually (UNFPA, 2016)<sup>19</sup>. The incidence of gender-based violence against women plays a key role in both discouraging women from running for politics, and in making campaigning more difficult for them.

**Access to justice:** the issue of gender-based violence can be perpetuated by inefficient justice system, which can take a long time to deal with the cases, including on violence and alimony settlements. Penalties for breaches of the law are also differentiated between men and women: the Penal Code, for example, waves any penalty for men found guilty of adultery, but not for women<sup>20</sup>.





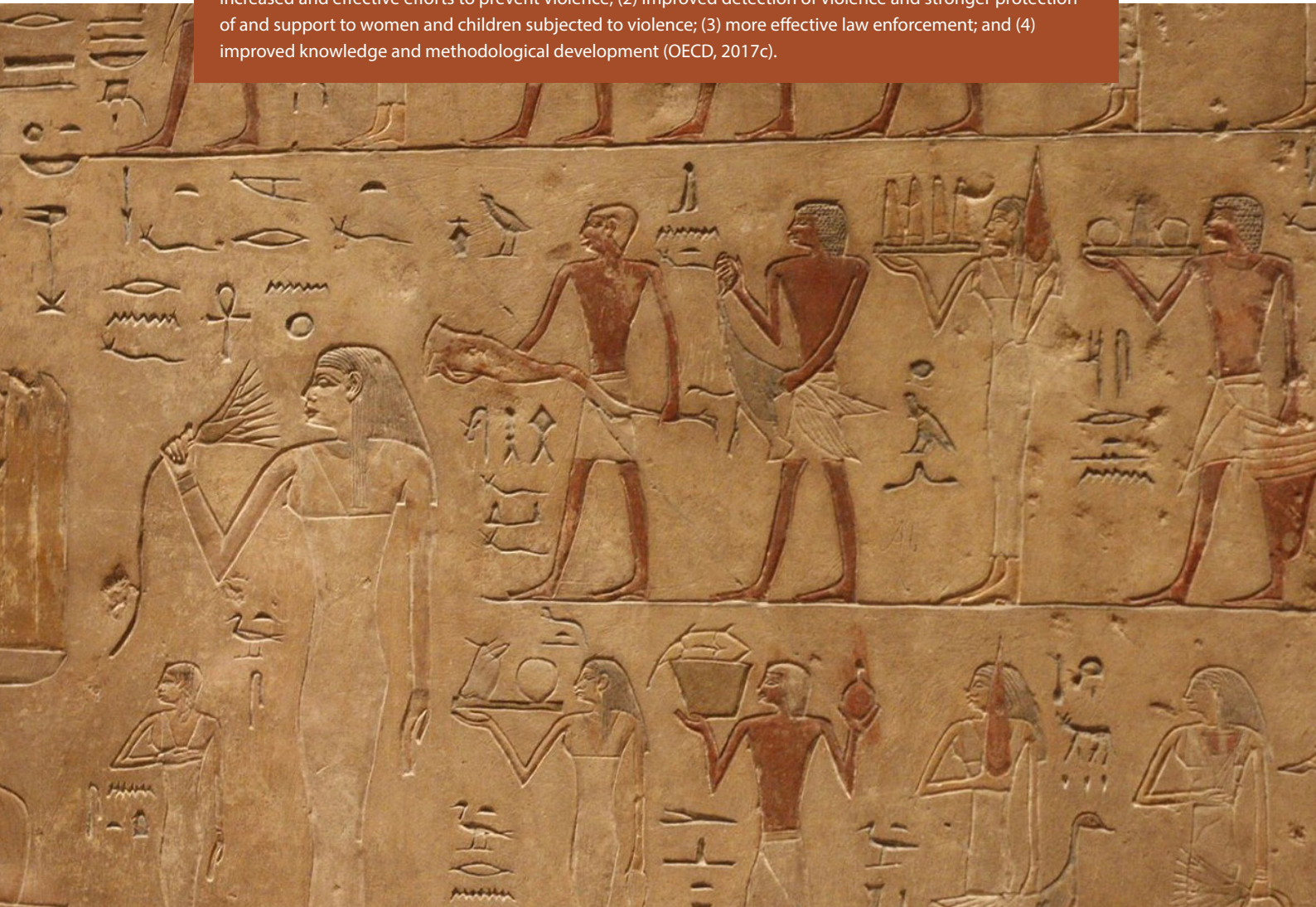
### Box 1.7. COMBATTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN OECD AND MENA COUNTRIES

**Mexico** has adopted a multifaceted approach: The Integrated Programme to Prevent, Address, Sanction, and Eradicate Violence Against Women. It involves numerous governmental actors at all levels of government. An example of policy measure adopted is the Secretariat of Interior's new ability to issue "gender alerts," which oblige authorities to implement measures that protect women's rights and physical security, conduct more comprehensive investigations into acts of VAW, and increase efforts to address the problem in areas where violence is prevalent. Specialised and publicly-funded justice centres have also been created under the programme to help women victims of violence at the local level. Not only do they offer psychological and medical care, they also provide legal advice and anti-violence trainings (OECD, 2017c).

**Australia** has set up a National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children for 2010-2022. It aims at achieving a significant and sustained reduction in violence against women and their children. It sets out six national outcomes for the entire government to deliver within the 12 years of the plan: (1) communities are safe and free from violence; (2) relationships are respectful; (3) indigenous communities are strengthened; (4) services meet the needs of women and their children experiencing violence; (5) justice responses are effective; (6) perpetrators stop their violence and are held to account. In addition to the National Plan, Australia has granted AUD 100 million to the Women's Safety Package, a system of funding to improve support and services to women and children at risk of experiencing violence (OECD, 2017c).

**Egypt** has launched the national strategy to combat violence against women 2015-2020 in partnership with concerned governmental organizations and civil society. It drafted a framework law that expands the forms of violence to include deprivation of education and in heritage and put more sanctions for violence acts. The law has been submitted to the parliament in the current cycle.

**Sweden** has adopted, in 2016, a ten-year strategy to prevent and combat men's violence against women, including domestic violence, honour-based violence, prostitution and trafficking. The objectives are: (1) increased and effective efforts to prevent violence; (2) improved detection of violence and stronger protection of and support to women and children subjected to violence; (3) more effective law enforcement; and (4) improved knowledge and methodological development (OECD, 2017c).





## Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter has shown that despite significant improvement, the number of women remains low across a range of political institutions, including the parliament, local government and political parties in Egypt. Where women have represented slightly greater proportions of the membership, some form of electoral gender quota has been applied. Importantly, more common pathways for women's leadership, such as attaining positions in local government, have been restrictive for women in Egypt. Women are, however, more likely to be involved in grassroots, community-based work, and members of trade unions and syndicates in the so-called 'soft' portfolio areas such as education and women's affairs.

Key barriers to greater women's political representation in Egypt relate to their socio-economic status (low levels of education, segregated employment, gender pay gaps) and discriminatory gender norms that encourage women to remain at home and out of the political spotlight. Because of the high cost of elections, women who are

successful in politics are often from wealthy or political families. Restrictive gender norms make it particularly difficult for women to see themselves as legitimate actors in the public sphere. Few women are encouraged to run for elections, whether for student body elections, local elections, parliament elections, and/or union elections.

In combatting these significant obstacles, governments, civil society organisations, and the international community have a role to play.

It is recommended that:

- **Political parties** showcase the achievements of women in their ranks through political advertising in the pre-election phase.
- The **mainstream media** is encouraged to run positive stories of women leaders from all political parties.
- The **National Council of Women** update its website on women candidates at the 2015 election and promote it widely; identify female candidates for local elections early on and use the youth quota to identify young women; identify male leaders (like the President of Parliament) to promote women.
- The **Government of Egypt** to link in with the education system to produce teaching materials for schools to use in their discussions of civic responsibility, to encourage young people's understanding of the value of women in politics, to promote public speaking, school councils and participation of young girls in matters that affect them; produce more gender-disaggregated data on education and economic activities in order to improve already-existing policies and inform upcoming ones in a more systematic fashion; and assesses the impact of these policies on female employment and entrepreneurship and identify the causes of economic and social inequalities.
- **Women political leaders** engage more profusely with target audiences, including through social media, and that training be provided in effective and efficient communication.
- In cooperation with international agencies, including the OECD, and the private sector, **non-governmental organisations** develop effective programmes to assist women in raising sufficient funds to run successful campaign, implemented the year before an election is held.





# 2 Legal framework to promote women's political participation

## Introduction

There is a comprehensive global framework by which many states have agreed to promote women's political empowerment, and have made commitments to act. This framework is composed of international norms and standards, regional commitments, national laws and policies.

Egypt is no exception in this regard, and as this chapter will outline, Egypt has taken several steps in the last few years to adapt and reform its legal and policy framework to support women's political participation. There are, however, some gaps in both the legal and policy framework, and its implementation, which also account for women's relatively low rates of political participation in Egypt.

## International commitments

International standards form the backbone of any legal framework wishing to promote women's political participation. Indeed, they "provide a set of benchmarks and policy guidance," notably in regards to civil and political rights as well as anti-discrimination provisions, and thus strengthen women's participation in decision-making processes (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014).

Strong benchmarks and policy guidance relating to women's political empowerment are found in numerous international conventions and human rights instruments on civil and political rights, and the elimination of all forms of discrimination. States that are parties to these international conventions share the responsibility of upholding and implementing these obligations across a range of institutions. On one level, Egypt has met many of these standards, having ratified or adopted the UN:

- International Convention on the Political Rights of Women (ICPRW) in 1981 without any reservations;
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) in 1982;
- Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (CSOP) in 1959;
- Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1981;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in 1982;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in 1990; and
- Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (UNSCR1325) in 2000.



### Implementation of CEDAW

As is evident in Table 2.1, Egypt was the first of the MENA countries to ratify CEDAW in 1981. Like most of its neighbours, Egypt eventually removed reservations it had previously placed on the right of women to share their nationality with their children. These milestones notwithstanding, there remain areas for continued improvement. Egypt is yet to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CEDAW, and the First and Second Optional Protocols to the ICCPR. Moreover, as noted in the 2014 and 2017 OECD reports, Egypt has issued a blanket reservation

“on provisions which are in conflict with the principles of Islamic sharia,” (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014) most notably in relation to CEDAW articles 2 and 16 on marriage and family relations (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014). It is notable that both Morocco and Tunisia have removed reservations on article 16. Egypt also has a reservation on article 29, which prevents it from being bound by the Convention and excludes it from the internal system of arbitration in case of interstate dispute (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014).

TABLE 2.1. STATUS OF RATIFICATION AND RESERVATIONS TO CEDAW OF MENA COUNTRIES

	ALGERIA	EGYPT	JORDAN	LYBIA	MOROCCO	TUNISIA
Governorates	1996	1981	1992	1989	1993	1985
Optional Protocol				2004	2016	2008
Reservations to Art.2 (application of the convention / general declaration)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Reservations to Art.9 (rights to nationality)	Yes (removed in 2008)	Yes (removed in 2008)	Yes (article 9 para. 2)	No	Yes (removed in 2011)	Yes (removed in 2014)
Reservations to Art.15 (women's equality with men and legal capacity)	Yes (para. 4 on freedom of movement)	No	Yes (removed in 2009)	No	Yes (para. 4 on freedom of movement)	Yes (removed in 2014)
Reservations to Art.16 (marriage, family relations)	Yes	Yes	Yes [para. 1(c) (d) and (g)]	Yes [para. 1(c) and (d)]	Yes (removed in 2011)	Yes (removed in 2014)

Source: OECD (2017c), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en>; CEDAW ratification [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg\\_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtdsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&lang=en) and reservations <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm>

### Implementation of ILO conventions

Active political participation can be expensive for women and men who wish to stand for elections, run campaigns, and work as a full-time political representative (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014). Indeed, there is a strong link between participation in the formal economy (paid workforce) and political participation. The more women are able to secure their own economic empowerment and financial independence, the more likely they are to be able to run for political office. International labour standards help ensure the protection of workers and gender equality through the ratification of international conventions and protocols (OECD, 2017b).

Egypt has ratified the following International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions:

- The Equal Remuneration Convention in 1960;
- The Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention in 1960;
- The 1948 Night Work Convention in 1960;
- The Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention in 1993.



These ratifications notwithstanding, there are gaps in implementation. Egypt has yet to ratify the:

- clauses of the 1962 Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention related to family benefits;
- 1952 Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention,
- 1981 Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention,
- 1985 Occupational Health Services Convention,
- 2000 Maternity Protection Convention, and
- Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised).

Table 2.2 presents the status of ratification of gender-focused ILO conventions across the MENA countries. It is clear that stronger advocacy is required around women's economic empowerment in this region, with some of the worst rates of women's economic participation in the world (OECD, 2017). No MENA country has ratified all of these conventions; while Tunisia and Libya appear to have ratified the greatest number, they have yet to each ratify four conventions.

TABLE 2.2. STATUS OF GENDER-FOCUSED ILO CONVENTIONS ACROSS MENA COUNTRIES

	ALGERIA	EGYPT	JORDAN	LYBIA	MOROCCO	TUNISIA
Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951	1962	1960	1966	1962	1979	1968
Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952	1969	No	2014 (has accepted parts V, VI, IX, X)	1975 (has accepted parts II to X)	No	No
Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958	1969	1960	1963	1961	1963	1959
Equality of Treatment (Social Security) Convention, 1962	No	1993 (has accepted branches a. to h.)	1963 (has accepted branches c. d. f. g.)	1975 (has accepted branches & to i.)	No	1965 (has accepted branches a. to g. and i.)
Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981	No	No	No	No	No	No
Occupational Health Services Convention, 2000	No	No	No	No	No	No
Maternity Protection Convention, 2010	No	No	No	No	2011	No
1948 Night Work Convention	1962	1960	No	1962	No	1957
Protocol of 1990 to the Night Work (Women) Convention (Revised), 1948	No	No	No	No	No	2000

Source: OECD (2017c), *The Pursuit of Gender Equality: An Uphill Battle*, OECD Publishing, Paris.  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264281318-en> and NORMLEX Information System on International Labour Standards,  
[www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11001:::NO::](http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=1000:11001:::NO::)

## Constitutional rights

While necessary, adherence to international conventions is not sufficient in guaranteeing gender equality. These commitments and rights must be 'localised'; enshrined within national legal systems, including the constitution (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014). The 2014 Constitution includes a range of provisions that relate to the political rights and freedoms of both women and men, in addition to provisions that specifically aim to eliminate gender-based discrimination (Box 2.2).

### *Provisions working towards the elimination of gender discrimination*

Article 9 requires that the State shall “ensure equal opportunities for all citizens without discrimination”. In outlining aspects of discrimination that would be “punishable by law”, Article 53 includes “sex” (Egyptian Constitution, 2014).

Article 11 provides for the equality between women and men “in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights”. The same article also commits the State to the “protection of women against all forms of violence” and to ensuring that women are able to reconcile work and family obligations (Egyptian Constitution, 2014).

Finally, Article 93 states that the State is “committed to the agreements, covenants, and international conventions of human rights that were ratified by Egypt. They have the force of law.” This acts as a legal obligation for Egypt to comply with CEDAW and other international agreements related to women issues, ratified by Egypt, excluding the articles of reservation.

### *Provisions working towards the political empowerment of women*

The Constitution also provides for the political empowerment of women and men. Article 11 commits the State to “ensure appropriate representation of women in the houses of parliament.” While the Constitution does not specify any specific quota or means to guarantee such representation at the national level<sup>21</sup>, it provides mechanisms to strengthen women's political empowerment at the local council level in the governorates, districts, cities and villages. Article 180 states that “one quarter [of local council seats] is allocated to women



(Egyptian Constitution, 2014).” Women's participation at the local level is important on two fronts: first, Article 176 of the Constitution provides for greater decentralisation of authority from central to local government, ensuring more connection between citizens and their local authorities; second, some studies have noted that women's election to local government can be a significant stepping stone to other levels of government<sup>22</sup>.

The Constitution also provides safeguards to protect the independence, transparency and integrity of the National Elections Commission (Article 208), which was found to strengthen confidence among citizens and the participants in the electoral process. Electoral management bodies have a particular role to play in promoting women's political participation. They can ensure that the electoral process is conducted fairly and freely, in accordance with international standards and obligations, and highlight instances where women have been discriminated against – as candidates, voters, and polling officials. They can also ensure that their own internal processes are gender-sensitive by: establishing gender bodies responsible for gender mainstreaming across the organisation; recruiting and promoting women to positions of leadership and visibility in the community; and systematically consulting



women's organisations in their administration of electoral processes such as voter registration and voter/civic education (UNDP and UN Women, 2015).

### *National Councils*

Article (214) “The law shall specify the independent national councils, including the National Council for Human Rights, the National Council for Women, the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, and the National Council for Disabled Persons. The law shall state the composition, mandates, and guarantees for the independence and neutrality of their respective members. Each council shall have the right to report to the competent authorities any violations pertaining to their fields of work. These councils shall have legal personalities and shall be technically, financially, and administratively independent. They shall be consulted with respect to the bills and regulations pertaining to their affairs and fields of work”.

#### **Box 2.1. GENDER PROVISIONS IN THE 2014 CONSTITUTION OF EGYPT**

- **Article 9 - Equal opportunity:** “The state ensures equal opportunity for all citizens without discrimination.”
- **Article 11 - The place of women, motherhood and childhood:** “The state commits to achieving equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution.

The state commits to taking the necessary measures to ensure appropriate representation of women in the houses of parliament, in the manner specified by law. It grants women the right to hold public posts and high management posts in the state, and to appointment in judicial bodies and entities without discrimination.

The state commits to the protection of women against all forms of violence, and ensures women empowerment to reconcile the duties of a woman toward her family and her work requirements.

The state commits to the protection of women against all forms of violence, and ensures women empowerment to reconcile the duties of a woman toward her family and her work requirements.”

- **Article 53 - Equality in public rights and duties:** “Citizens are equal before the law, possess equal rights and public duties, and may not be discriminated against on the basis of religion, belief, sex, origin, race, colour, language, disability, social class, political or geographical affiliation, or for any other reason.

Discrimination and incitement to hate are crimes punishable by law.

The state shall take all necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination, and the law shall regulate the establishment of an independent commission for this purpose.”

- **Article 93 - International agreements and conventions:** “The state is committed to the agreements, covenants, and international conventions of human rights that were ratified by Egypt. They have the force of law after publication in accordance with the specified circumstances.”

Source: Egyptian Constitution (2014). [https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt\\_2014.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Egypt_2014.pdf)



## Legal Reforms affecting civic and political rights

Following the January 2011 and 2013 revolutions, specific legal reforms were enacted in Egypt to further consolidate the civil and political rights of women.

In many countries, a 'fast-track' measure to improve the number of women elected to political decision-making bodies has been the adoption of electoral gender quotas – namely reserved seats or candidate quotas. Indeed, some form of electoral gender quota has been used in 128 countries at the national and/or sub-national level<sup>23</sup>. Quotas represent one of many types of 'temporary special measures' specifically recommended under Article 4 of CEDAW to accelerate equality between men and women.



### Box 2.2. HISTORY OF POLITICAL REPRESENTATION QUOTAS IN EGYPT

Electoral gender quotas have had a long history in the Egyptian political context, and were first introduced as a result of the 1956 Constitution, which initially granted women the right to vote and stand for election (Inter-Parliamentary Union Archive (n.d.)). An amendment to the 1977 Political Parties Law established a quota of 30 seats for women – roughly 9% of the total seats of the People's Assembly. In the 1979 elections, 30 women were elected through the quota seats, an additional 2 women won open seats, and the President appointed 2 women. Women won a similar proportion of seats (in total, 36 seats) at the following election in 1984.

The constitutionality of the law was later challenged, however, on the basis that it contradicted the principle of equality between men and women, expressed in article 8 of the Constitution. The law was eventually repealed in 1987. Women's representation subsequently decreased. In the 2005-2010 People's Assembly for example, of the total 454 Members, 9 were women (4 elected and 5 appointed) – representing just 2% of the parliament.

The Egyptian People's Assembly adopted a new quota law in June 2009, allocating 64 parliamentary seats to women. The so-called "women's quota law" established 32 electoral constituencies in which only women would run. Two women candidates were to be elected in each of these constituencies; with at least one woman to be a representative of labour and/or farmers. Women were also free to run for elections in 'open' constituencies (the total number of constituencies was 222, and to compete over 444 seats at the People's Assembly). Under this quota law, 62 women candidates won seats in.

2012 People's Assembly elections (State Information Service, 2015). Again, this quota law was subsequently repealed following the elections.

A new quota (beyond gender) was introduced under Law 46 of 2014, following significant changes to the political system in Egypt (see Box 2.5).

While Egypt has seen the introduction and repeal of quota laws in the past (see Box 2.4), in 2014, Law 46/2014 on the House of Representatives was passed, providing a guaranteed number of seats for women in the newly established House of Representatives via "winner takes all" party-lists (see Box 2.5). The Law reflects the intention of Article 11 of the Constitution that the State take "measures to ensure the appropriate representation of women in the House of Representatives." By virtue of Article 11, positive

discrimination should carry forward in future elections, but in what way and to what degree is unclear. The use of the word "appropriate" creates unpredictability as it is left to be defined by law. By international standards, the UN Economic and Social Council resolution 1990/15 and Beijing Platform for Action call on governments, political parties, trade unions etc. to adopt a 30 percent minimum proportion of women in leadership posts with a view to working toward parity between men and



### Box 2.3. ARTICLE 5 OF LAW NO. 46/2014 ON THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Article no. 5 of Law No. 46/2014 focused on the appropriate and adequate representation for Egyptians, where it stated that each electoral list must include a number of candidates equal to the number to be elected for the constituency as well as an equal number of substitutes' candidates. There are four lists: two with 45 candidates each and two with 15 candidates each.

The list with 15 seats must at least include the following numbers and designations:

- Three candidates who are Christian;
- Two candidates who are workers or farmers;
- Two candidates who are youths;
- A candidate who is a person with a disability;
- A candidate who is an Egyptian residing abroad.

Provided that these groups or others shall include at least 7 women.

The lists with 45 seats must at least include the following numbers and designations:

- Nine candidates who are Christian;
- Nine candidates who are workers or farmers;
- Six candidates who are youths;
- Three candidates who are persons with disabilities.

Provided that these groups or others shall include at least 21 women.

women (ECOSOC, 1990). The women's quota adopted for the 2015 parliamentary elections, by design, only guaranteed 56 seats under party-lists and 14 presidential appointments – or around 11.7% of parliamentary seats for women. Indeed it was a victory for women to capture 15% of parliamentary seats, but a continued increase in their representation in parliament without concrete and longer-term special temporary measures is uncertain.

Comparing Egypt's electoral gender quota with those in other MENA countries shows that it bears some similar marks: no quotas in the region are enshrined in a national constitution but rather in specific electoral laws. While quotas need not be constitutional to be effective, legislating quotas in a separate electoral law can mean that they are more easily subject to repeal or amendment, as clearly demonstrated in the case of Egypt. Under Article 5 of Law No. 46/2014, the party-list quotas are only meant to be applied "in the first election of the House of Representatives," thus there is an air of ambiguity about what quotas or special measures – if any – will be applied in future parliamentary elections. It is obvious that Egyptians are very proud of the advancement of women in parliament due to the list system, however there is no sense that the last Parliamentary elections were a beginning rather than an end. Egypt's historical precedence shows that removing quotas prematurely has

led to the immediate decline in women's representation. Entrenched social and cultural norms that work against women's political participation, as well as changing voter preferences, will not be overcome in one electoral cycle. An opinion poll conducted by the Egyptian Center for Public Opinion (BASEERA) during the 2015 parliamentary elections asked voters if they voted for a woman candidate and if not, why. An average of 22% of respondents said they had voted for a woman and 78% said they did not. The top reason why the latter chose not to elect a woman was "her inability to work as a man" (HEC, 2015). This illustrates the importance of quotas as a tool to guarantee women's representation during a societal shift away from patriarchal rule and toward gender parity – a process that takes generations and that cannot be measured by electoral cycles.

Law 46/2014, however, also differs from some of its regional counterparts. Unlike the candidate quotas in Algeria and Tunisia, there is no 'placement mandate', meaning the legislation does not require political parties to alternate the names of men and women, discourage the placement of men at the top of the lists and/or women at the bottom of the lists. For the 120 "party-bloc" or "winner takes all" closed party-lists, this is a non-issue, but if the electoral system changes in the future to open-lists, placement mandates should be encouraged. Moreover, Law 46/2014 does not

impose any sanction (or penalty) for non-compliance with the legislation, as is the case again in Algeria and Tunisia (see Box 2.6 for good practices in electoral gender quota laws). Good enforcement mechanisms can be the rejection of party lists by the electoral management body, or a financial penalty imposed on the party. A further difference with quotas that result in high numbers of women elected is the ambition of the target – quotas that essentially only require 10% of seats to be filled by women generally result in a legislature of only 10% women. Where the quota requires at least 30%, legislatures naturally tend to be more inclusive of women.

Lastly, the women's quota under Law 46/2014 is not specifically separate from other quotas mandated for Christians, workers and farmers, youth, persons with a disability, or Egyptian residing abroad. As such, political parties can seek out women that fulfill several of the criteria. For instance, an Egyptian woman residing abroad, that is disabled, a Christian, young and a farmer would technically meet all six of the requirements for party-lists, but account for only one place on an electoral list, opening up space for five more men. The design of the quota encourages political parties to seek out women candidates that meet two or more of the criteria set out in Article 5 and can diminish the original intent of increasing representation for marginalized groups.

TABLE 2.2. KEY ELEMENTS OF QUOTA LAWS AND GENDER PROVISIONS IN SELECTED MENA COUNTRIES

	APPLICABLE CHAMBER		ELECTORAL SYSTEM	QUOTA TYPE	QUOTA	PLACEMENT MANDATE	ENFORCEMENT
	LOWER HOUSE	UPPER HOUSE					
<b>ALGERIA</b>	Yes	N/A	Proportional	Legislated Candidate Quotas	20% for constituencies with 4 seats; 30% for those with 5 or more seats; 35% for those with 14 seats or more; 40% for those with 32 seats or more; 50% for constituencies abroad.	Yes	Rejection of lists
<b>EGYPT</b>	Yes	N/A	Parallel	Legislated Candidate Quotas	56 seats out of 596 (9.4%)	N/A	N/A
<b>JORDAN</b>	Yes	N/A	Parallel	Reserved Seats	15 seats out of 150 (10%)	N/A	N/A
<b>LIBYA</b>	Yes		Parallel	Reserved Seats	32 seats	N/A	N/A
<b>MOROCCO</b>	Yes	N/A	Proportional	Reserved Seats	60 seats out of 395 (15.2%)	N/A	N/A
<b>TUNISIA</b>	Yes	N/A	Proportional	Legislated Candidate	Gender parity on electoral lists (50% women and 50% men)	Yes	Rejection of lists

Source: IPU, PARLINE database: [archive.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp](http://archive.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp); QuotaProject database: <http://www.quotaproject.org/>



## Box 2.4. ENFORCEMENT AND PLACEMENT PROVISIONS OF ELECTORAL QUOTA LAWS IN OECD

In **Belgium**, the two top candidates on candidate lists and on the lists of alternates cannot be of the same gender (Electoral Code, Article 117bis). If a party fails to comply with the gender composition, their list will be refused by the electoral authorities (Electoral Code, Article 119).

In **Spain**, lists of candidates put forward for elections shall have a balanced proportion of women and men, so that candidates of either sex make up at least 40 per 100 of total membership. Where the number of seats to be covered is less than five, the ratio between women and men shall be as close as possible to equal balance (Ley Orgánica del Régimen Electoral General, Section 44 bis/para. 1). The political parties are given a short period to adjust lists that do not meet the quota requirement. If they fail to do so, the lists will not be approved by the Electoral Commission (section 49).

In **France**, the penalty for non-compliance with 50 % parity rule (only 2 percent of margin allowed) will result in a financial penalty (Law n°88-227, Article 9-1).

In the **Republic of Korea**, lists registered by political parties that do not comply with the quota provision will be considered invalid (Article 52, paragraph 2, Electoral Law).

### *Legal reforms to address economic and social barriers to women's political empowerment*

Gender equality is more than the promotion of greater numbers of women in politics and public life. While laws that ameliorate women's opportunities to participate are important, so too are laws that aim to improve the quality of lives of women and societies which in turn can support women's political empowerment. A number of laws have been passed in relation to women's healthcare and employment, gender-based violence, and in relation

to their marital status. For example, with regard to sexual or gender-based harassment, a decree on 5 June 2013 amended the Penal Code and included provisions which increased the penalty for harassers (imprisonment for a minimum of six months and/or a fine of no less than three thousand Egyptian pounds) and widened the definition of harassment (including phone or online aggressions). A summary of the latest legislative changes in a range of areas spanning public and private lives is provided in Box 2.5.

## Box 2.5. SUMMARY OF RECENT LEGISLATION CHANGES AND GAPS AFFECTING EQUALITY BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

### **Health**

Law 23/2012 made important improvements to the health coverage of working women. This Law obliges the General Authority for Health Insurance to provide health treatment and medical care services, in specific places inside or outside the Authority medical units, for working women (family breadwinners), in accordance with the medical services standards and rules stated via a Decree issued by the Minister of Health and Population<sup>25</sup>.

### **Human Trafficking and Prostitution**

Article 89 of the Egyptian Constitution states that "slavery and all forms of oppression and forced exploitation against humans are forbidden, as [well as] sex trafficking and other forms of human trafficking," are punishable by law (Egyptian Constitution, 2014). Law 64/2010 introduced important legal provisions supporting the prevention and prosecution of people engaged in trafficking of women and children, in conformity with the Protocol on Preventing and Combating Human Trafficking ratified by Egypt in 2003. The Law criminalised all forms of human trafficking and provided legal protection for victims of human trafficking, in addition to safeguarding their fundamental rights<sup>26</sup>. The Law also prescribes imprisonment sentences of up to life imprisonment as well as fines reaching several hundreds of thousands of Egyptian pounds<sup>27</sup>.

### **Family legislation**

In 1979, reforms to Personal Status laws were initiated under the so-called 'Jihan's Laws' (named after the First Lady Jihan Sadat), the most important of which limited polygamy. In 1985, the High Constitutional Court ruled that these reforms violated the Constitution, although this ruling was subsequently overturned following pressure from women's organisations (Kamal, 2004).

In 2000, Khulu Law (No Fault Law) 1/2000 was issued permitting women divorce (Khulu). The Law guarantees that women have the right to ask for divorce based on "incompatibility" between husband and wife without the need to submit a proof on inflicted harm. This Law also allowed the government to provide alimony on behalf of the fathers, who are incapable of bearing wife and children expenses. It further prevents men of divorcing their wives without prior notification (Bernard-Maugiron and Baudouin, 2008).

In 2004, two laws aimed at strengthening women's rights in divorce were passed. One established a specialised family court, which had to consider all family disputes with the aim to provide families with quick issuance and implementation of judgments. The second Law, 11/2004, established a family insurance fund, which ensures the payment of the expenses stated for the wife and children or the like in case of husband decline to pay alimony. The Bank accordingly claims husband payment and takes necessary procedures. In the same year, Law

154/2004 was issued providing the Egyptian mother with the right to give her children, from a foreign husband, the Egyptian nationality. In 2005, a law was also passed raising male and female children's age of custody to 15 years equally (National Council for Women, 2014). In 2008, the law regarding underage marriages was reformed. Child Law 126 was issued, based on which the Civil Code was amended, raising the age of marriage for both male and female to eighteen years, criminalising the documentation of marriage contract prior to such an age and obliging spouses to-be to carry out medical examinations, as a condition for finalising marriage procedures (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014).

Under the Penal Code, more lenient sentencing is prescribed for men in comparison to women in the case of adultery. Men can be found guilty of adultery only if the event occurred in the marital home and can face no more than six months of imprisonment (Article 277) while women can be sentenced to up to two years (Article 274). A husband who kills his wife because she was caught in the act of adultery also faces a more lenient sentence than in other cases of homicides (Article 237).

### Employment

The principle of equality at work based on justice and equal opportunity without discrimination is guaranteed by the state. In 1981, Labour Law 137 was enacted, which applied to all workers. The law afforded broad protection to employees, especially against exploitation and dismissal, of which the latter may only be justified in cases of serious misconduct. Moreover, Article 35 of Egypt's new 2003 Integrated Labour Law states: "It shall be prohibited to discriminate in wages on the basis of different sex, origin, language, religion or creed (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014)."

Women are entitled to 50 days of maternity leave, during which they receive 75% of their salary and have the right to keep their job. Women are not permitted to work during the first 40 days after childbirth. They are also entitled to two additional breaks, of 30 minutes each, for a period of 18 months following childbirth. In companies with more than 50 employees, women are entitled to one year of unpaid leave to care for their children. Employers must also provide a nursery or arrange nursery facilities nearby for the children of employees, although this article is often not applied.

### Violence against women

The law on violence does not contain legal text which punishes domestic violence, and women who seek to obtain a divorce for reasons of domestic violence must demonstrate, through medical reports, the extent of the damage suffered, which excludes any form of psychological violence; even with the availability of such evidence, the final decision remains at the discretion of the judge. The new Constitution adopted in 2014 affirms the state's commitment to protect women against all forms of violence. (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014b).

Female genital mutilation or excisions have been banned since 1996. According to the criminal code: whoever causes a wound or beating to another that results in sickness or disability to perform personal works for a period exceeding 20 days, shall be punished with detention for a period of up to fifteen years or a fine of not less than one thousand Egyptian pounds and not exceeding five thousand pounds. However, if the beating or wound was preceded with malice, or premeditation, or caused by using any arms, canes, machines or other tools, the penalty shall be detention. The penalty shall be imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years if either injury is committed in execution of a terrorist purpose (Article 241). If the beating or the wound does not reach the degree of gravity prescribed in the two previous articles, the perpetrator shall be punished with detention for a period of between five and seven years or a fine of no less than 10 pounds and not exceeding 200 Egyptian pounds. If the beating or wound occurs by using any arms, canes, machines or other tools, the penalty shall be detention. The penalty shall be imprisonment for a period not exceeding five years if any of them is committed in execution of a terrorist purpose (Article 242). Additionally, individuals who are found to have escorted the victim to the perpetrators shall suffer an imprisonment penalty for between one and three years (Library of Congress, 2016).

While Article 17 of the Penal Code criminalises rape, it does not recognise marital rape. Indeed, penalties for rape, if proven, can be reduced "if the crime conditions of the initiated case necessitate judge lenity." Article 291 of the Penal Code stating that a rapist could escape prosecution if the individual married the victim was repealed (Sadek, 2016).

### Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is a crime according to Egyptian law under articles 306 (a) and 306 (b) of the Penal Code. According to Article 306 (a) of the law, any individual who verbally, physically, by means of gesture or via electronic media is culpable of sexual harassment can be given a six-month jail sentence and a fine of between EGP 3,000 and EGP 5,000. For repeat offenders, these punishments can be doubled. Article 306 (b) states that sexual harassment is a crime "committed with the intention of the perpetrator receiving from the harassed benefit of a sexual nature." The article also refers to crimes committed by more than individual and/or those committed under the threat of weapon, which are punishable by no less than 2 years in prison and a fine not less than 20,000 Egyptian pounds<sup>28</sup>.

*Sources: Based on OECD-CAWTAR (2014), Women in Public Life: Gender, Law and Policy in the Middle East and North Africa, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264224636-en> and OECD (2017c), Women's Economic Empowerment in Selected MENA Countries: The Impact of Legal Frameworks in Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia, Competitiveness and Private Sector Development, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264279322-en>*

# Conclusions and Recommendations

Over the past few decades, successive Egyptian parliaments have passed a number of important, gender-sensitive laws. Electoral gender quotas to guarantee a minimum representation of women in parliament have been passed, abolished and reinstated. Laws to improve women's personal economic and social status have been enacted. There is, however, scope for improvement in terms of both the specific provisions of laws, as well as their implementation. There is also scope to improve women's economic and social independence, so that they will eventually be able to fund and run their own political campaigns. In this regard, there is a range of legal reforms that could be encouraged.

It is recommended to:

- Consider amending the terminology used in Article 11 of the Constitution from “necessary measures to ensure appropriate representation of women in the houses of parliament,” to ““necessary measures to ensure parity between men and women in the houses of parliament.”
- Review Law 46/2014 with a view to both continuing the women's quota and extending it to individual seats so as to increase the proportion of women elected to parliament ;
- Consider a review of the electoral system including the majority system; the provision of public funding for all candidates; placing limits on campaign expenditures; and a public disclosure regime of donations and other sources of funding;
- Develop policy proposals that would more strongly encourage girls to attend, and remain in, school until they are at least 17 years of age, particularly in rural areas.
- Develop policy proposals that would more strongly encourage girls to attend, and remain in, school until they are at least 17 years of age, particularly in rural areas.
- Consider recommendations made in previous OECD reports, including to: Lift its reservations to CEDAW ratify the additional protocol, and consider implementing recommendations contained in 2014 OECD-CAWTAR and 2017 OECD reports.
- Ensure the application of constitutional provisions that encourage women's involvement in political and economic activities and ensure diversity in those activities, including in the judiciary through a stronger participation of women judges; developing policies that promote equality in these domains; and monitoring implementation of the principle of gender equality.
- Consider signing up to the 2013 OECD Council Recommendation on Gender Equality in Education, Employment and Entrepreneurship and the 2015 OECD Council Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life.



# 3 Institutional framework promoting women's political participation

A strong institutional framework is essential for advancing gender equality in an effective and coordinated manner and to advance women's economic and political empowerment. It is also critical to successfully and comprehensively implement the regulations and policies set out in a country's legal framework. In this context, the 2015 OECD Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life calls for the establishment of institutional frameworks ensuring the "effective implementation, co-ordination and sustainability of [a country's] gender equality and mainstreaming strategy" to promote women's political participation (OECD, 2015b). Gender institutions can vary in structure, location, role and effectiveness. They are present in both the executive and legislative branches in order to promote gender equality strategies in regulations and legislation as well as within the public sector.

In addition to gender-focused institutions, mainstream (political) institutions must take on the responsibility for advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. This can be a more systemic approach to ensure greater awareness and appreciation of the need for, and importance of, gender equality. Three key institutions that require stronger, overall gender sensitivity are the parliament, political parties and electoral management bodies (EMBs). As specified in the OECD Policy Toolkit for Governance of Gender Equality "when these [political] institutions fully integrate gender into their work, they produce better and more equitable policies for men and women, therefore contributing to good governance" (OECD, 2018). It has been shown that the effectiveness of policies promoting gender equality is linked to the quality of public administrations (OECD, 2014a) and legislatures.

An effective institutional framework should clearly define roles for all actors – both gender-focused and political institutions – and put in place clear coordination mechanisms in order to advance gender equality in politics (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014b).

As such, this chapter aims to highlight the role of different institutional mechanisms in Egypt in promoting and implementing the legal framework around gender equality. The chapter begins with an analysis of Egypt's chief gender equality-focused institution,--the National Council of Women (NCW), followed by an overview of other governmental entities with gender focal points. The second half of the chapter analyses the gender sensitivity of the major political institutions of the country, namely, the parliament, political parties, and EMBs.





### Box 3.1. KEY PROVISION OF THE OECD RECOMMENDATION ON GENDER EQUALITY IN PUBLIC LIFE

**Recommendation II.2:** Establish an institutional framework to ensure the effective implementation, co-ordination and sustainability of the gender equality and mainstreaming strategy, by:

- i. establishing clear roles, responsibilities, mandates and lines of accountability of key governmental and oversight bodies in implementing gender equality and mainstreaming initiatives;
- ii. bolstering the capacities and resources of gender equality institutions to facilitate a consistent response at appropriate levels of government and to develop, implement and monitor gender-sensitive programmes and policies throughout the government, based on gender-disaggregated statistics and indicators. Effectiveness of gender equality institutions can also be strengthened by placing them at the highest possible level in the government (see also recommendations II.2 and III.2);
- iii. ensuring the capacity and resources of public institutions to integrate gender equality perspectives in their activities, for example, by identifying gender equality focal points across governmental bodies, by investing resources in training and promoting collaborative approaches with knowledge centres to produce gender-sensitive knowledge, leadership and communication, by ensuring the collection of gender and gender-disaggregated statistics in their areas of responsibility and by providing clear guidelines, tools, communication and expectations to public institutions in this area (see also recommendations II.2 and III.2); and
- iv. strengthening vertical and horizontal co-ordination mechanisms for policy coherence across governmental bodies and levels of government that involve relevant nongovernmental stakeholders to ensure synergies and effective implementation of gender equality initiatives.

Source: OECD (2015b), *Recommendation of the Council on Gender Equality in Public Life*. OECD Publishing, OECD, Paris.



## Gender-focused institutions

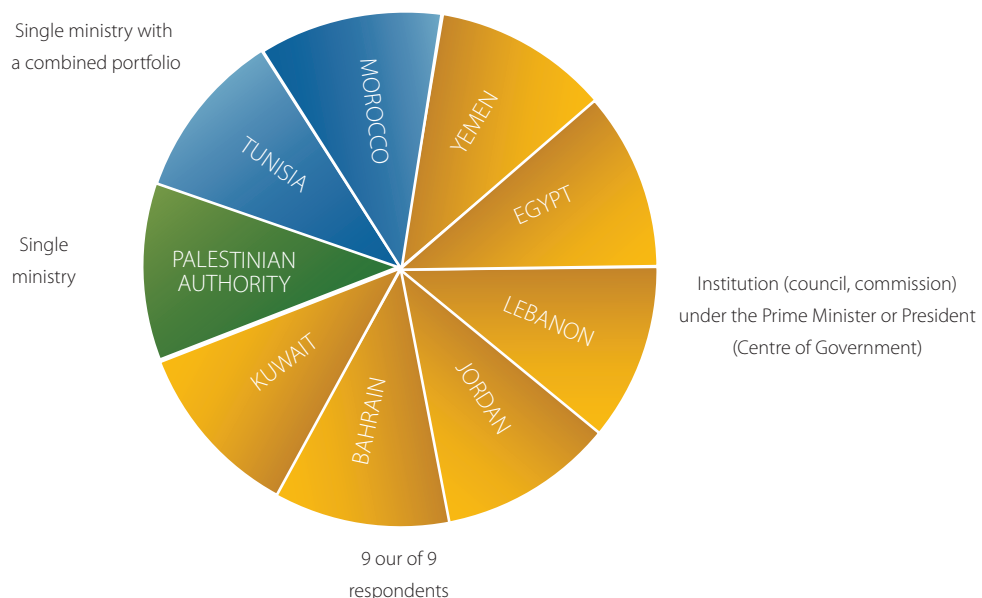
Across the OECD, gender-focused institutions take different forms, and carry out slightly different work. The 2011 Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership, for example, differentiated these bodies as either:

- ombuds offices,
- commissions in the political executive (appointed by the Head of State or Government),
- independent, permanent human rights commissions established by law,
- independent, permanent gender equality commissions established by law,
- the parliament,
- parliamentary committees dedicated to gender equality or women's affairs,
- judicial bodies or commissions, located within the Ministry of Justice, or
- advisory councils comprising of lay people who advise the political executive.

Irrespective of the form of the institution, most were found to be charged with reporting to Parliament (85%), developing tools and guidelines on gender mainstreaming (81%), and providing expert advice ((77%). It was clear, however, that many of these bodies less frequently have the power to enforce the guidelines and recommendations they develop (46%), monitor the implementation of gender equality policy (46%) or review the quality of gender analysis used to inform decision making (42%).

The countries of the MENA region, as elsewhere, have respectively chosen various institutional models by which to promote gender equality and implement gender mainstreaming. In most countries of the region, like Jordan, gender equality is the responsibility of an institution under either the Prime Minister's or President's office, such as a council, gender unit, or committee (see Figure 3.1), while in Morocco and Tunisia, gender equality is one of a number of portfolios in a single ministry.

FIGURE 3.1. INSTITUTIONS FOR PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND MAINSTREAMING IN MENA COUNTRIES



Source: MENA-OECD Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership (updated in 2014)

In Egypt, a range of institutions has been established in accordance with Article 214 of the 2014 Constitution. This law prescribes the structure and mandates of the National Council for Women (NCW), the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM), the National Council for Human Rights (NCHR) and the National

Council for Persons with Disability (NCPD). Moreover, the Constitution clearly guarantees the independence and neutrality of these bodies, and that of their members, providing them with “the right to report to the public authorities any violations pertaining to their fields of work (Egyptian Constitution, 2014).” The establishment of these



institutions and their close relationship with the Executive suggests that gender equality and human rights more broadly are high priorities on the political agenda in Egypt.

### *The National Council for Women*

The NCW was established in 2000 by a presidential decree to consolidate all national efforts regarding gender equality and women's empowerment within one organisation in order to leverage its achievements and results in planning, resource mobilisation and management as well as to monitor and evaluate those outcomes. Today, the new NCW law stipulates that it is composed of: an Executive Board (including 30 public figures appointed by the President of the Republic) headed by an appointed President; a Technical Secretariat; 16 technical committees in diverse specialisation<sup>29</sup>; and 27 branches located in each governorate to implement the NCW's policies, plans, programmes and projects at the local level. With every new project, the NCW sets a target around its sustainability. The NCW has been able to attract continued funding for many of its projects from donors and from the State budget<sup>30</sup>. In accordance with the Constitution, the NCW has a broad mandate to advance gender equality in Egypt (see Box 3.2).

Since 2014, Egypt has launched a number of national strategies including the National Women's Strategy 2030 (by NCW); the National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women; the National Strategy for the Abandonment of FGM (by NCW); and the National Strategy for the Abandonment of Early Marriage (see Box 3). OECD research has shown that the development and adoption of a national, government-sponsored gender equality vision or strategy is "an important step towards achieving gender equality (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014)." Indeed, a gender equality vision can "impact the expectations and behaviours of both men and women." Government strategies allow for the practical implementation of gender equality reforms based on international standards, with the ultimate intention of removing obstacles to gender equality and promoting women's inclusion in the social, political and economic development of the country (OECD/CAWTAR, 2014). In devising its latest strategies, the NCW has worked in coordination and cooperation with a range of civil society organisations, as well as syndicates and political parties.

#### **Box 3.2. THE MANDATE OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR WOMEN**

- Propose public policy matters for the society and its constitutional institutions concerning the development and empowerment of women to enable them to play their social and economic role, and to integrate their efforts in comprehensive development programmes.
- Draft a National Plan for the advancement of women.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation of public policies concerning women's issues and to submit relevant proposals to the concerned institutions.
- Advise on draft laws and decisions pertaining to women prior to their submission to the competent authority and to recommend draft laws and decisions needed for the advancement of women.
- Advise on all conventions related to women.
- Represent women in international fora and organisations dealing with women's issues.
- Establish a documentation centre, to collect information, data and research pertaining to women, and to conduct related research and studies.
- Hold conferences, seminars, symposia and debates on women's issues.
- Organise training sessions to raise awareness of the role, rights and duties of women.
- Issue newsletters, magazines and other publications to inform the public of the goals and functions of the Council.
- Carry out research on issues referred to the Council by the President of the Republic.

*Source: Presidential decree no 90, Establishment of the NCW*



**Box 3.3. NATIONAL STRATEGIES ADVANCED BY THE NCW, 2014-2017****National Women's Strategy 2030 (NWS 2030)**

President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi launched the NWS 2030 as a roadmap by which Egypt would ensure all progress towards the SDGs is gender-sensitive. The Strategy aims to meet the needs of all Egyptian women, particularly those living in rural areas in Upper Egypt, poor female-headed households, the elderly and disabled women. The Strategy has four key pillars of activity: (1) Political empowerment and leadership; (2) Economic empowerment; (3) Social empowerment; and (4) Protection. Within the economic pillar, financial inclusion, energy, training, scientific research and innovation are major priorities. The social pillar focuses on health, education and urban development. The political and leadership pillar emphasises on women's access to elected bodies and decision-making positions. Finally, the protection pillar aims at strengthening law enforcement and access to justice through various interventions. Projects under this Strategy have reached millions of women in rural and urban areas, raising awareness about women's political and economic rights, issuing ID cards to facilitate women's access to social services, and training women.

**National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women**

The National Strategy to Combat Violence against Women (2015-2020) was based on 4 pillars, namely prevention, protection, interventions and legal pursuit. The Strategy provides for a protocol of cooperation and coordination across 12 different ministries and associations, civil society organisations and women's initiatives. As the Government's key strategy in eliminating all forms of violence against women in both public and private lives, the document outlines a series of practical measures and indicators to ensure its implementation on the ground, such as amending related laws and policies, and issuing a comprehensive law criminalising all forms of violence against women. It will be measured against concrete targets such as a 50% reduction in the number of women exposed to violence, female genital mutilation and related risks, and marriage of girls younger than 18 years of age.

In furthering women's political empowerment, a key pillar of the National Women's Strategy focused on political empowerment. The Political Empowerment Program specifically aims to enhance women's political capacities and skills. In achieving this, the NCW has a women's political support unit, responsible for:

- Providing technical and logistical support and consultations to female candidates and parliamentarians in the House of Representatives and local councils;
- Networking and coordinating with the NCW's branches in the governorates to support female candidates;
- Proposing priority issues for further advocacy and lobbying for policy makers to add to the policy agenda;
- Preparing a cohort of women leaders qualified for political participation;
- Identifying the training needs of women political leaders; and
- Showcasing the positive achievements and activities of women parliamentarians within the parliament and the mass media.

The NCW's Political Empowerment Program has made some significant progress. NCW reports that in the lead up to the 2015 parliamentary elections, a door knocking campaign was launched to raise awareness among women about the electoral process, the role of the parliament and local councils, the importance and right of women to cast a free and secret vote in elections, and to help women make informed, independent decisions about their preferred candidate of choice. Women from rural villages and

remote areas have been encouraged to consider a political career in the lead up to the next local council elections under which a quarter of all seats will be allocated to women pursuant to Article 180 of the Constitution. A training manual has been developed for rural leaders, and used to train 125 women from 25 governorates. These women knocked on the doors of 54,000 homes. Of the women currently elected to the House of Representatives, 25% had been trained by the NCW before the election. The NCW has also continued to train and support elected women representatives.

**Other gender equality-focused institutions**

- **National Council for Childhood and Motherhood (NCCM)** - in January 1988, the NCCM was established as the highest national authority entrusted with policymaking, planning, co-ordination, monitoring and evaluation of activities in the areas of protection and development of children, as well as those of safe motherhood. Under the 2014 Constitution, the NCCM is headed by the Prime Minister and has among its members seven Ministers (National Council for Childhood and Motherhood, 2000).
- **National Council for Human Rights (NCHR)** - NCHR was established in 2003 with a mandate to protect human rights in Egypt; develop and submit recommendations to specialised bodies in the protection of human rights; monitor the implementation of international agreements and conventions related to human rights;

and provide necessary technical support to enhance institutional capacity in the field of human rights including trainings of state employees on freedom and social, economic, and cultural rights. The NCHR is also tasked with the organisation of conferences and round-table discussions on issues related to human rights, publishing of reports on the situation of human rights in Egypt, and coordination with the state institutions interested in human rights<sup>31</sup>.

- **National Council for Persons with a Disability (NCPD)** - NCPD was originally established in April 2012 pursuant to Ministerial Resolution No. 410 and its amendments. The Council has a number of responsibilities, including: development of policies and national strategies to promote the rehabilitation, integration and empowerment of persons with disabilities, and monitoring the implementation of these policies and strategies; reviewing draft laws and decisions concerning persons with disabilities; coordinating with all ministries and bodies concerned with persons with disabilities to ensure adherence with the provisions of the UN Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities and any other agreements related to persons with disabilities; and proposing policies, strategies, programmes and projects necessary for community and health awareness, to prevent and improve early detection of disabilities<sup>32</sup>.
- **Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Commission** - the 2014 Constitution also created the Anti-Discrimination and Equal Opportunity Commission. The Commission has a mandate to investigate any form of formal or informal discrimination. The jurisdiction of the Commission and the resources it is given to implement its mandate are subject to law.

### *Gender focal points*

In a 2014 study, roughly half of OECD countries noted that they 'always' (47%) or 'in some cases' (53%) had established gender equality units and staff in line ministries (OECD, 2014a). Responses indicated that these gender units represented "important transitional measure to boost gender equality reforms at the ministerial level" (see example of Spain in Box 3.4) (OECD, 2014a).

In Egypt, the work of the NCW has founded equal opportunities units in different ministries that aim to entrench the principles of constitutional equality and equal opportunities and detect any practices of discrimination

against women in the workplace. These units are now independent from the NCW and affiliated to their respective Minister's offices (NCW, 2014). The 2014 OECD report on Women, Government and Policy Making found that these gender units act as "the focal point for ensuring that questions of gender equality and mainstreaming are brought to the executive table, and for supporting the executive in exercising its leadership on this issue. To fulfil its mandate, the co-ordinator requires ready access to the executive team. Gender units may form an inter-agency network and can participate in government-wide working groups established by the gender equality hub to discuss documents to be adopted at the inter-agency level (OECD, 2014a)."

While the NCW plays a central, coordinating role, the Government of Egypt has established equal opportunities units in 29 ministries, and three additional units in the state apparatus. These units work to support the implementation of gender equality policies by:

- integrating gender perspectives in ministerial plans and programs,
- supporting and monitoring/evaluating progress,
- training ministerial staff in gender mainstreaming across programs and projects, and
- cooperating with the ombudsman office to discuss and settle discrimination related complaints

These units report a number of important results:

- **Equal Opportunities Unit in the Ministry of Finance:** in cooperation with NCW, the unit has raised awareness on gender responsive budgeting, and with the assistance of UN Women, has worked with ministerial staff in the preparation of the State budget<sup>33</sup>.
- **Unit for Combating Violence against Women in the Ministry of Interior:** with branches across the country in Security Directorates and Police Stations. The units include qualified female and male police officers who receive complaints concerning violence against women, follow police reports and assist female complainants.
- **Unit for Protecting Women from Violence in the Ministry of Justice:** Under an agreement with the NCW, this unit is responsible for reviewing and drafting legislation related to violence against women, and carrying out training courses, seminars and workshops for people working in this area. A medical handbook was prepared by the Ministry of Health and Population to deal with women survivors of violence.



### Box 3.4. SPAIN'S MINISTERIAL AND UNIVERSITY EQUALITY UNITS

In order to integrate the principle of gender mainstreaming into all public policies, Spain introduced Equality Units in all ministries through Act 3/2007 of 22 March 2007 for Effective Equality Between Women and Men (Article 77). All ministries, in the scope of their areas of competence, entrust one management body with duties relating to the principle of equality between women and men, and, in particular, with:

- providing gender-relevant statistical information;
- conducting surveys to foster equality between women and men in their respective areas of activity;
- advising the ministry's competency bodies on the formulation of their gender-impact reports;
- improving employees' understanding of the scope and significance of the principle of gender equality; and
- overseeing compliance policies to effectively implement Act 3/2007 and the principle of gender equality.

The Women's Institute supplies training courses for staff working in equality units, which have become the focal points to monitor the progress of gender equality and mainstreaming measures in the State Administration. With the University Reformation Act 4/2007, universities also started to create Equality Units. Nearly 30 Equality Units have been formed in different public universities. In addition, the Women's Institute organised a summer course in August 2010 to evaluate progress on gender equality at the university level (presence of women and men in educational centres' control and governing organs; introduction of new subjects with a gender perspective; creation of specific post-graduate courses, etc.).

*Source: Information provided by the Government of Spain in OECD (2014), Women, Government and Policy Making in OECD Countries: fostering diversity for inclusive growth. OECD Publishing, Paris, p.157. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264210745-en>.*

Gender units and focal points in MENA countries, however, have also faced challenges, and their 'outreach' has been described as "uneven" (OECD-CAWTAR, 2014b). In part, this is due to a lack of political will from ministerial and administrative executives in committing to, and implementing, proposals of the gender units; limited financial resources; as well as capacity constraints of

the staff of the gender units themselves. NGOs in MENA countries have noted that staff of these gender units have been marginalised from "mainstream ministerial planning and budgeting" processes, and are commonly under serious time pressure to achieve (often unrealistic) outcomes:

*The government introduced gender units in ministries as a tool to have [some] gender equality in the government. The role of the unit is to look at the programmes, ensure they are available for both genders equally and to have a gender-sensitive budget. But in reality, [while] the units have been introduced, they do not have any authority to [make] any changes. (OECD, 2014b)*

*The government has established anti-discrimination units in each ministry or governmental institution. The aim of these units is to observe any acts of discrimination in the activities and dealings of the respective ministry (i.e. recruitment or hiring experts, dealing with vendors or service providers, among others). However, slow and minor improvement has been observed since the inception of these units. The reason may be the fact that staff members of these units do not receive the necessary training or do not acquire the knowledge on gender-sensitive issues or practices. (OECD, 2014b).*

# Parliament

Parliaments are mandated to represent and serve the public. To effectively do so, it is critical that such bodies reflect the composition of the population itself. When public bodies lack balanced representation of men and women, critical view and perspectives are lost, diminishing the effectiveness of policies created to support and protect the people they were elected to serve. To apply gender mainstreaming in practice, gender-sensitive processes need to be institutionalised and appropriate tools need to be made available. Without practical application, gender mainstreaming remains an aspiration and often, remains divorced from the everyday tasks and responsibilities of parliamentary actors.

In order to promote government-wide strategies for gender equality reform as well as inclusive policy decisions, a range of tools have been developed specifically for the use of parliamentary members and staff to guide gender mainstreaming efforts and gender analysis. To facilitate and frame this goal the 2015 OECD Council has adopted a set of recommendations on gender equality in public life wherein a key provision states that “Adherents should [...] encourage greater role of parliaments and parliamentary committees to support progress in gender equality, for example, by integrating gender perspectives in parliamentary practices, legislation and budgets, by promoting legislative initiatives focusing on gender equality and by providing oversight of the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and initiatives (OECD, 2015b)”.

There is scope for the Egyptian House of Representatives to play a stronger role in championing gender equality. To date, no dedicated parliamentary committee on gender equality or women's affairs has been established (see Figure 3.3). The absence of such a Committee makes it difficult for parliament to fulfill its oversight role and monitor laws and legislation on women's issues and gender equality.

Research by the OECD shows that in the absence of any permanent, dedicated body, it is more likely a parliament will not comprehensively consider laws and debates from a gender perspective (OECD, 2016).

## Box 3.5. GENDER INSTITUTIONS WORKING WITH PARLIAMENTS IN OECD COUNTRIES

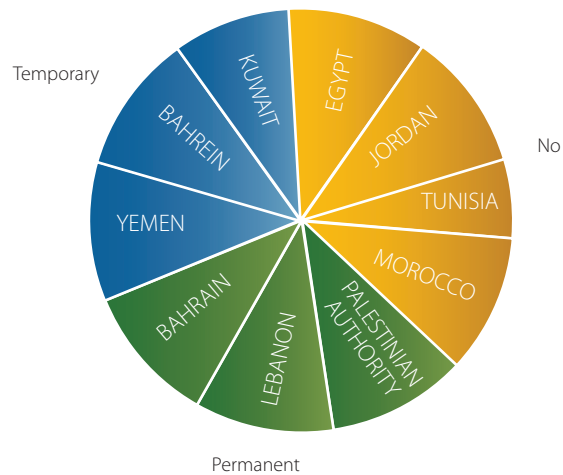
In **Mexico**, the Centre for Women's Advancement and Gender Equity was established to provide “specialised technical support and analytical information services” to help ensure equality between women and men. The centre focuses on gender mainstreaming budgets; advancing legislative harmonisation in conformity with gender equality obligations; and promoting women's political participation, issuing reports on legislation, research papers and analyses as appropriate. Centre staff are trained to provide assistance in the integration of information systems, development of indicators, provision of training and advisory services, and drafting of analytical materials.

Gender advisers in the **Spanish** Parliament's Secretariat provide gender analysis research support to assist parliamentarians in determining the impact of proposed policies and legislation on women and men. Likewise, in **Austria**, a specialised research unit has been mandated to conduct analysis of the budget from a gender perspective, to support MPs in scrutinising budget plans. The research centre in the **German** parliament has established a formal relationship with the gender equality unit at the Humboldt University in Berlin, which provides dedicated gender analysis services to both parliamentarians and staff. The **Australian** Parliamentary Library produces regular publications on women in parliament across all federal and state jurisdictions, and when requested, will include analysis of sex-disaggregated data in client briefings.

In **Norway**, the Stortinget (parliament) has issued a series of white papers and resolutions on gender equality issues. These include white papers on the cultural industry as a means to improve the representation of women in all cultural arts, particularly by recommending measures that link public funding for performing arts and film production to the balanced representation of women and men. Other papers focus on engaging men in gender equality, equal pay, recruiting women into the armed forces, and assessing living conditions for members of the LGBTIQ community.

Source: OECD (2018), *Gender Governance Toolkit* p.72

FIGURE 3.2. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES ON GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MENA REGION



Notes: Bahrain has both a permanent and a temporary legislative committee. Lebanon has a legislative commission that addresses gender equality as well as social rights/children's rights. Tunisia used to have a similar committee before the Jasmin Revolution, but only has a temporary Committee on Social Affairs within its Constitutional Convention, as of 27 May 2013.

Source: MENA-OECD Survey on National Gender Frameworks, Gender Public Policies and Leadership (updated in 2014).

### Box 3.6. LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEES ON GENDER EQUALITY IN OECD COUNTRIES

In **Denmark**, the Parliament has a legislative commission dedicated to gender equality, which is called the Gender Equality Committee (GEC). The GEC uses a Gender Mainstreaming Assessment tool to evaluate the gender impact of all legislative proposals. It also makes use of parliamentary tools to scrutinise and monitor the government, such as public and closed hearing, parliamentary questions, study trips and meetings with civil society organisations. The GEC has thus organised several public hearings on honour-related violence, sexual harassment in the work place and online, human trafficking and the effectiveness of the Gender Mainstreaming Assessment tools. Participants to those hearings are usually independent experts, researchers, field workers, government representatives or responsible ministry representatives. The GEC's public hearings are livestreamed, the videos are published on the parliament's website and the speakers' presentations are also made available online. Recently, the GEC has played an important role in helping drafting and adopting a new draft bill on parental leaves for men and women in case of the newborn's death. The law previously granted 3 months payed leave to mothers and only 2 weeks to fathers. This new proposal aimed at adopting an equal leave for both parents.

In **Mexico**, the Gender Equality Commission of the Chamber of Deputies was established to promote reform on highly gender-sensitive issues – such as violence, health, and political participation – and to encourage state and local governments to adopt public policies on gender equality and equal opportunity. It also lobbies for the approval of budgets that meet the specific needs of Mexican women. Since the lower house's commission came into being, state-level congressional bodies have established similar commissions to promote gender equality at the sub-national level. The Gender Equality Commission of the Chamber of Deputies is also actively campaigning for the use of the budget gender-earmarked for through the elaboration of Annex 13 in the Federal Expenditures Budget.

Source: 2017 OECD Gender-sensitive parliaments survey and [http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Committees\\_and\\_delegations/Committees/LIU.aspx](http://www.thedanishparliament.dk/Committees_and_delegations/Committees/LIU.aspx)

Every Member of Parliament applies to join one committee. These applications are reviewed according to competence, and the Speaker and his/her two Deputies determine how many places are available for each committee. Once the membership is established, committee members elect a chair, two deputy chairs and a secretary. Women MPs interviewed said the process to get elected in committee leadership roles is highly difficult and this shows in their low representation as committee Chairs, Secretaries or Commissioners (See Table 3.3).

There are currently 25 committees in parliament – nineteen are specialized committees and six are general committees. Only one committee is Chaired by a women (Tourism and Civil Aviation Committee). Two committees -- the Suggestions and Complaints Committee and the Committee on Transport and Communications – have no female representation. Meanwhile, only eight committees have women in leadership positions. Fewer women serve on the higher-powered committees within parliament, such as the Legislative Affairs, Economic Affairs and Planning and Budget committees.



TABLE 3.3. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

	FEMALE MEMBERS (#)	TOTAL NO. OF MEMBERS	FEMALE MEMBERS (%)	FEMALE MPS IN LEADERSHIP ROLE	POSITION
Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee	3	51	5.9%	0	
Planning and Budget Committee	3	21	14.3%	0	
Economic Affairs Committee	4	24	16.7%	0	
External Relations Committee	7	16	43.8%	2	Commissioners
Arab Affairs Committee	2	15	13.3%	1	Commissioners
National Defense & Security	4	34	11.8%	0	
Suggestions and Complaints Committee	0	18	0.0%	0	
Labor Force Committee	2	9	10.9%	0	
Committee for Education and Scientific Research	5	16	24.1%	1	Commissioners
Committee of Religious Affairs and Endowments	2	10	20.0%	0	
Committee on Transport and Communications	0	24	0.0%	0	
Committee of Housing, Utilities and Reconstruction	5	46	10.9%	0	
Commission on Human Rights	7	29	24.1%	1	Commissioners
African Affairs Committee	2	10	20.0%	1	Secretary
Industry Committee	1	10	10.0%	0	
Committee of Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises	5	15	33.3%	1	Secretary
Committee on Energy and Environment	4	31	12.9%	0	
Committee on Agriculture, Irrigation, Food Security and Livestock	1	37	2.7%	0	
Social Solidarity Committee, Family and Persons with Disabilities	4	9	44.4%	2	Secretaries
Committee on Culture, Information and Antiquities	3	12	25.0%	0	
Committee of Tourism and Civil Aviation	3	15	20.0%	2	Chair & Secretary
Health Affairs Committee	10	40	25.0%	0	
Committee on Communications and Information Technology	3	17	17.6%	0	
Local Administration Committee	4	38	10.5%	0	
Youth and Sports Committee	4	43	9.3%	0	

Source: Egypt's House of Representatives (2018) "Committees" (website), accessible by [http://www.parliament.gov.eg/committee/Committies\\_MEMBERS\\_SHOW.aspx](http://www.parliament.gov.eg/committee/Committies_MEMBERS_SHOW.aspx).

In the absence of a specialized committee dedicated to gender equality — women parliamentarians are active in their respective committees and take leading roles in discussing legislation pertaining to gender equality and women's rights. Issues pertaining to gender equality and gender sensitivity may, if at all, be addressed through other specialized committees such as the human rights committee where women represent 24% of members. In committees where specialized expertise is not available, women or men parliamentarians may resort to external experts to provide inputs on specific issues.

Finding the time and space for the new parliament to focus on addressing discriminatory legislation or enacting gender equality reforms has been difficult given the huge agenda set before MPs as soon as their mandates began: MPs were tasked with approving or disapproving

342 decrees issued by the President in the absence of a legislative body (Völkel, 2017).

Now, more than two years into their parliamentary terms, women have been successful in raising debates and advocating for amendments to a number of laws that affect women's rights, in part due to their strong collaboration with the National Council for Women (NCW) that has supported their lobbying efforts in the parliament.

In 2017, the Parliament approved amendments to the Inheritance Law (No. 77 of 1943) which now stipulates punishment for those who deliberately refrain from handing over one of the heirs their legitimate share of inheritance, an issue that disproportionately affected women heirs (ECWR, 2017). That same year, the National Council for Women submitted to the Human Rights Committee a proposed draft bill that penalizes violence

against women. The draft law includes articles on domestic violence, rape and sexual harassment (Selim, 2017). In 2018, amendments to the Personal Status Law have also been proposed. Both are set to be discussed in parliament.

NCW has also influenced female MPs to address the lack of specialized gender equality structures in the parliament, but efforts in this regards have been less impactful. In 2016, MP Anisa Hassouna submitted a proposal for the parliament to establish an independent commission against discrimination in sync with Article 53 of the Constitution which “condemns discrimination and incitement of hatred against citizens based on religion, belief, gender, origin, race, colour, language, disability, social class, political orientation or any other reason.” (El Fekki, 2016). The proposal is yet to be discussed.

In April 2016, the parliament passed its Rules of Procedure which eliminated Article 6 as per recommendations of the Council of State. Article 6, based on Article 11 of the Constitution, stated that women must be proportionally presented in parliamentary bodies, including the general committee and specialized committees. Additionally, women Members of Parliament submitted a request to establish a caucus but it was rejected by the Speaker of the Parliament.

In other endeavors, the Speaker has been supportive, but finding male champions that support women's increased participation within parliamentary leadership and garnering enough votes to reach a majority to pass initiatives for women MPs is a challenge. One female MP indicated that “men's silence” was often used as a tool to limit women's access to leadership posts. She shared the story of women MPs banding together to lobby for a woman to fill one of the two Deputy-Speaker posts in the Parliamentary Bureau. Even with all 89 of their votes, they did not have a majority and while a few men opposed their proposal, many remained silent.

Members of the parliamentary secretariat and Permanent Bureau indicated that observing gender balance within official parliamentary delegations is regularly considered. But on average, and according to reports by women MPs, their representation is typically less than men in parliamentary delegations and in 2016, for example, there were six delegations that included no female representation at all.

### *Parliament as an employer*

Parliamentary bylaws have established a new Parliamentary Training Institute within the parliament's organizational structure to provide training opportunities for all MPs. This is particularly significant for new women parliamentarians, many of whom possess no prior experience in political work. On some occasions, the training institute has cooperated with the NCW to offer trainings and seminars dedicated to gender-equality, gender-mainstreaming and gender-sensitive practices.

Rules and procedures on gender-sensitivity in the parliament are very limited. Women MPs, particularly mothers with infants, have submitted multiple complaints regarding late working hours for committee meetings which often did not enable them to attend them. The response was that committee meetings are held late due to parliamentarians' busy schedules and the Speaker has not approved a change in their timing. This is made even more challenging for women by virtue of their expected gender roles at home as wives and mothers who have family obligations.

A small room in the parliament is now dedicated to mothers, nannies and infants. Maternity leaves are also available to women MPs. However, women reported that extended maternity leave or absences taken soon after the end of maternity leave are viewed unfavourably.

Many women MPs perceive the parliament to be a masculine space where there are unwritten and unspoken



rules and codes of conduct regarding their behavior and participation. The language used in formal and informal settings and condescending remarks were seen as often marginalizing female MPs from actively and freely participating in discussions. Nevertheless, NCW reports that the Parliament has taken the complaints against inappropriate statements by male MPs toward female MPs seriously, following an NCW complaint and a report to the Prosecutor.

Office spaces, resources and gadgets given to both male and female MPs are the same. However, because the parliament is a predominately made up of men, certain work spaces are utilized differently by men and women. One specific space is a waiting hall. In theory, such a hall can be used by both women and men. Yet, in practice, it is mostly occupied by male MPs and their assistants engaged in discussions or conducting interviews with journalists, etc. As a result, women MPs mostly opt to use another, small waiting hall where men are much less likely to go.

In summation, the Parliament, as all parliaments, can work to consolidate its role in promoting gender equality by strengthening its support for the women elected to parliament and ensuring they are able to participate in all of the work of the parliament (debates, committees, constituency visits, etc.); establishing a women's caucus and/or dedicated parliamentary committees on gender equality; and engaging more systematically with civil society organisations and gender machinery such as the NCW.

Parliaments can also be gender-sensitive role models, by instituting gender policies and encouraging work/life balance, ensuring gender balance across all positions of leadership and across all committee portfolios, and by guaranteeing professional development opportunities are equally distributed between men and women Members of Parliament and parliamentary staff.

The ability for women parliamentarians to push for a gender equality agenda does not only stem from a greater representation of women, but also the political and economic milieu of a country. Egypt's current transitional period is focused on economic priorities, regional concerns, and an elevated security status in Sinai. This, in turn, has been reflected in the parliament's preoccupation with these priorities which often leaves little room for gender equality issues.

On the bright side, the synergies and linkages forged with non-parliamentary structures such as the NCW and local and international organisations have played a role in building the capacity of women MPs, and identifying ways in which the parliament can work for both men and women.

The achievements of women parliamentarians and the extent to which they can further a gender equality agenda is contingent upon the full parliament sharing the responsibility to advance such initiatives. More broadly, it is contingent upon the political and social will of a country and the degree to which it wants to pursue such an agenda. As such, there is a need to create a space within the parliament that challenges and changes such culture and that recognizes women's political importance and societal relevance.





## Political parties

Political parties also represent important institutional actors in the promotion of women's political participation, notably in their critical role of creating and selecting candidates to public office. Moreover, within Parliament itself, political parties play an important part in distributing leadership positions within parliamentary groups, blocs

and commissions. They also collect data on women's participation as candidates and as elected officials as well as analyse and disseminate this information. Finally, political parties are important in supporting women's professional development and advancement as candidates and representatives (OECD, 2018).

### Box 3.7. GOOD PRACTICES IN GENDER-SENSITISING PARLIAMENTARY CULTURE IN THE OECD COUNTRIES

The parliament of **New Zealand** has established a mentoring system linking incumbents and new parliamentarians. This system has proven useful in building the skills and capacities of new women members in particular, providing them with insight into the informal 'rules of the game' of the parliament.

Childcare facilities are available for the use of parliamentarians' children in the OECD parliaments of **Australia, Germany, Ireland, Portugal, the Republic of Korea** and **Sweden**. In some cases, the crèche is also made available to the children of parliamentary staff and other building occupants.

Several OECD member state parliaments have adopted family-friendly provisions to promote work-life balance. The **Danish** parliament does not allow voting after 7:00pm on sitting days, while **Sweden's** parliament tries to avoid evening voting as well as votes held on Mondays and Fridays. In Finland, a motion was introduced to limit plenary sessions and parliamentary debates. The **Swiss** parliament has taken steps to align sittings with the school calendar and holidays.

*Source: OECD (2018), Toolkit for Gender Equality in Governance: Implementing the 2015 OECD Recommendation on Gender Equality in Public Life (Preliminary Version), OECD Publishing, Paris, pp.84-p.86, <http://www.oecd.org/gov/Toolkit-for-gender-%20equality-in-governance-FINAL.PDF> and Palmieri, Sonia (2011), Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices, Inter-Parliamentary Union, Reports and Documents No.65-2011, Geneva, <http://archive.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gsp11-e.pdf>*

### Box 3.8. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN POLITICAL PARTIES

The internal organization of political parties affects how different needs, interests, and social demands get represented in society. The official documents and statements of a political party are important for providing a gender equality framework – they provide a vision of the party but also entrench the rules for achieving that vision. Internal party organization strategies include:

- Addressing gender equality in the party's legal framework. This can include adopting a statement on gender equality in the party's founding documents;
- Adopting measures, including internal quotas, that ensure women's participation on governing boards;
- Setting targets for participation in party conventions. This can include holding separate forums for women delegates at the conventions;
- Establishing women's wings and sections within parties, which should be formally integrated into the party structure, with defined roles and responsibilities and appropriate funding if needed;
- Ensuring that gender is mainstreamed into all of the party's policies.

*Source: Ballington, Julia (2011), Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and United Nations Development Program, p. 15, <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Empowering-Women-Full-Case-Study-ENG.pdf>*

In 2011, it was estimated that forty to fifty per cent of political party members worldwide were women. This compared with only ten per cent of women holding leadership positions within those parties (UNDP and NDI, 2011). Political parties are the primary and most direct vehicle through which women can access elected office and political leadership. The structures, policies, practices and values of political parties have a profound impact on the level of women's participation in political

life of their country. Ensuring women's equal participation in the decision-making structures of parties is therefore essential for promoting gender equality within them – and, ultimately, within society as a whole.

Following the January 2011 Revolution, a number of new political parties emerged in the political landscape in Egypt. As of 2014, the Political Parties Affairs Committee had registered a total of 103 political parties, many of which

have created internal structures for women. For example, women's affairs committees or women's secretariats have been established, mandated with women's political empowerment in the following parties, among others:

- The **Al Wafd Party** includes a Women's Committee among its specialised committees, The Committee includes both women and men members and conducts a range of activities, such as carrying out investigations, commissioning research, and organising seminars and conferences focusing on women related issues<sup>35</sup>.
- The **Nasserist Party** includes a women's central secretariat, with a woman secretary in each governorate. The Party is currently aiming to recruit a woman secretary in each district.
- The **Liberal Party** also has a women's central secretariat across the governorates. It is concerned with convening a political forum, which periodically meets to discuss public as well as specific women-related issues<sup>36</sup>.
- The **National Party's** women's secretariat is seeking to promote women's inclusion in election lists, enhancing women's participation in the work of the party, supporting the Party candidates in parliamentary and local councils' elections and backing the party women candidates in different public positions. The women secretariat is entrusted with overseeing women secretaries in provinces, districts and governorates,

and reporting women performance to the Party general secretariat<sup>37</sup>.

There is some concern that while these bodies are able to advocate on gender equality issues, they tend to focus on soft portfolio issues of health, education and family affairs. Also, while women's committees encourage and promote women's political participation, they mainly do so within safe women-exclusive environments. This is often welcomed, including by women themselves, as the often conservative social and political context, particularly in rural areas, within which political participation unfolds, does not fully allow women to effectively participate within the gender-mixed spaces of politics. Yet such exclusivity has a risk to isolate women within political parties and limit their political work to the mandate of women-related issues such as personal status law, violence against women, and harmful practices against girls.

### Box 3.9. GOOD PRACTICES IN GENDER-SENSITISING POLITICAL PARTIES IN OECD COUNTRIES

In **Germany**, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) adopted a 33 percent quota for party officials in 1996. If the quota is not met, the internal elections must be repeated.

In the **United States** the Democratic Party has adopted rules for the participation of women delegates at national party nomination conventions. As a result of internal lobbying by women members and support from party leaders, the party's Charter requires that nominating convention delegates comprise equal numbers of women and men.

In **Australia**, the Labor Party's Women's Organization holds its own conference every year to provide women with the opportunity to discuss policy, to lobby on specific issues, and to network with each other.

In **Mexico**, the National Action Party (PAN) transformed its women's wing from a social organization into an effective base for promoting women's leadership positions. For example, during elections, PAN's National Secretariat for the Political Promotion of Women has lobbied local and national party leaders to include more women as electoral candidates. The party also ensures that draft policy documents of the party are sent to the Women's Branch of the party so that they can be reviewed from a gender perspective before being finalized.

Source: Ballington, Julia (2011), *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties: A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation*, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs and United Nations Development Program, pp.15-20, <https://www.ndi.org/sites/default/files/Empowering-Women-Full-Case-Study-ENG.pdf>

## Electoral Management Bodies

EMBs also have a key role in promoting women's electoral and political participation (UNDP and UN Women, 2015). They are responsible for overseeing and organising the electoral process. This includes "voter registration, candidate registration, polling preparations, and voter education and outreach (UNDP and UN Women, 2015)." Their role is central in ensuring free and fair elections. They also often play a part in shaping electoral policies. Thus, EMBs can play a crucial part in promoting gender-sensitive electoral structures, rules and processes and contribute to accelerating women's political participation.

In Egypt, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) acts as the principal EMB. It was officially created in July 2017 under Law No. 198. Prior to this, the electoral process was entirely under judicial supervision via the non-permanent High Elections Commission (HEC) convened when necessary. The 2015 parliamentary elections were governed by the HEC under Decree No. 45/2014, for example.

Articles 208-210 of the 2014 Constitution set the provisions for the establishment of an independent and permanent EMB which led to the NEC's establishment. The NEC's board is composed of 10 members from the judicial sector. It is headed by the President of the Court of Cassation and the rest of its members are senior judges selected from the Courts of Cassation and Appeal, the State Council, the State Cases Authority and the Administrative Prosecution Authority. According to the ratified law, the judicial supervision of the NEC will be suspended by 202438. Article 208 of the Constitution states that it is "exclusively responsible for managing referenda and presidential, parliamentary and local elections, which includes the preparation and update of a database of voters, proposal and division of constituencies, setting regulations for and overseeing electoral campaigns, funding, electoral expenditure declaration thereof, and managing the procedures for out-of-country voting by expatriate Egyptians, and other procedures, up to the announcements of results."<sup>39</sup>

Given that campaign finance, political violence, and sexist or lack of media coverage were all cited as barriers to women candidates, the NEC could issue guidelines/regulations that address all of these issues and take into account gender considerations. For instance, several countries or state-owned media outlets have introduced guidelines for gender-sensitive and balanced electoral media coverage

(see Box. 3.10). In addition to this, the NEC could consider establishing a hotline in which to report illegal activity during elections (e.g. intimidation of a candidate, vote-buying etc.) and more readily respond.



### Box 3.10. GENDER-SENSITIVE AND BALANCED ELECTORAL MEDIA COVERAGE

The Council of Europe's "Study on media coverage of elections with a specific focus on gender equality" recommends looking at the evolution of the media landscape and to identify risks to promote gender equality during electoral coverage. The study provides examples used by countries, EMBs and media outlets to ensure "fair, balanced, and impartial coverage during electoral periods," while maintaining and respecting the media's editorial independence. Some examples cited in the report:

**Morocco:** The High Authority for Regulation of the Audiovisual Media in Morocco developed a monitoring tool to analyse audiovisual media through a gender lens and signed a code of ethics to promote the culture of gender equality in and through audio-visual media.

**Italy:** A 2012 Law ("Par condicio di genere") requires the media to provide balanced coverage of women and men in election campaign coverage.

**France:** the 2014 Law on Gender Equality mandates the National Audiovisual Media Authority to "promote women's rights in the audio-visual field," with special attention paid to the way women are portrayed in view to "combatting stereotypes, sexist prejudice, degrading images, and violence." The High Council for Equality between men and women (Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les sexes) published guidance on "Communication without sexist stereotypes."

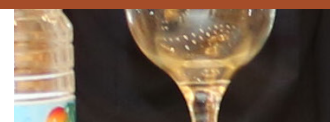
**Canada:** In 2008, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters (CAB) created a code of ethics to overcome "unduly negative portrayal and stereotyping in broadcast programming. The code prohibits messages, based on matters of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, marital status or physical or mental disability."

**Sweden:** Prognosis71 is an online gender equality tracker that monitors social media for gender equality through algorithms. See <http://www.prognosis.se/>.

**UNESCO:** a 2012 publication on Gender Sensitive Indicators for Media provides a framework for gender sensitive media operations and content, not only during electoral periods, but also during other periods.

#### Sources:

- Council of Europe (2017), "Study on media coverage of elections with a specific focus on gender equality: Pluralism and Transparency of Media Ownership (MSI-MED)", accessed by <https://rm.coe.int/study-on-media-coverage-of-elections/1680776164>.
- HCEfh (2015) « Guide pratique pour une communication publique sans stéréotype de sexe » Haut Conseil à l'Égalité entre les sexes, accessed by [http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/hcefh\\_\\_guide\\_pratique\\_com\\_sans\\_stereotype.pdf](http://www.haut-conseil-egalite.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/hcefh__guide_pratique_com_sans_stereotype.pdf).
- CAB (2008) Canadian Association of Broadcasters' Equitable Portrayal Code, accessible by <http://www.cbcs.ca/cab-2008-equitable-portrayal-code>.
- UNESCO (2012) Gender-Sensitive Indicators for Media: Framework of Indicators to Gauge Gender Sensitivity, accessible by <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002178/217831e.pdf>.







## COVERAGE

“specific focus on gender equality” and provides “tools and opportunities to further develop and test examples of guidelines that can be used to address the issue of partial media coverage during elections.”

Morocco (HACA) put together a national convention in March 2017 to address the issue of balanced representation of women in the media.

The National Council (CSA) “to respect the dignity of women and ensure they are portrayed with a balance and fairness against women.” In 2015, the Council adopted the *Charte des femmes et les hommes* (Charter of Women and Men).

The Council adopted an Equitable Portrayal Code to regulate advertising, including commercial advertising, based on age, gender, sexual orientation, and other factors.

The Council also addressed media interactions and gender equality in its 2015 report.

The Council also developed a framework to gauge gender equality in media on a regular basis.

The Council also developed a framework to gauge gender equality in media on a regular basis.

“Quality,” *Committee of experts on Media Operations and Content, Gender Equality in Media Coverage of*

*l’Egalité entre les femmes et les hommes, 2015, p. 11-15, available at: [http://www.haca.ma/codes/cab-equitable-portrayal-code/](#)*

*Quality in Media Operations and Content, 2015, p. 11-15, available at: [http://www.haca.ma/codes/cab-equitable-portrayal-code/](#)*

The NEC Board is also responsible for setting the criteria for the selection of staff members to provide support to the NEC’s Executive Body and for the selection of state civil servants to administer polling and counting during elections (Art. 15 & 19, Law No. 198).

There is no condition in Law No. 198 for the NEC Board, Executive Body or for recruitment by the NEC to be gender-balanced. The NEC’s current 10 member board is composed of all men and the four member Executive Body (supervised by the board and appointed by the President) is also all male. Article 5 of Law No. 198 indicates that members of the Board are to be selected by “the Higher Judicial Council, and respective Special and Supreme Councils of these judicial entities and authorities as applicable.” By design, this approach goes against the grain of gender-balance for leadership of the NEC in that women’s representation in the judiciary steeply drops in the higher level positions that appointees are selected from (for e.g. there are no women in the State Council or in the Court of Cassation). This significantly decreases the likelihood of women being appointed to the NEC board or being able to take part in the selection of appointees. Given that there are no such conditions in Law No. 198, it could be amended to recognize the importance of enabling and promoting women’s equal participation in electoral management and ensure that gender-balance is one criteria used in selection of staff and/or setting a minimum number of female members.

In the same vein – measures to ensure women’s equal participation as candidates, voters and electoral management staff should be included in any by-laws or subsequent regulations produced by the NEC. Article 3 of Law No. 198 refers to ensuring “equality between all voters and candidates during referenda and elections,” but there are no specifics as to how this will be done, hence the regulations and decrees issued by the NEC are an opportunity to champion gender equality in electoral processes and provide clear details.

In the past, each general committee — responsible for supervising polling stations — was required to include at least one woman (HEC, 2015). An election observation report by the African Union of the 2015 parliamentary election noted women’s active participation in the elections, but that their participation was at a lower level. The same report observed a low representation of women at the leadership level of the High Elections Commission and that few polling stations visited had women as presiding officers or judges. For the 2015 elections, there were 205 general committees with between 11 to 15 members each. In all, there were 205 women selected for

general committees, meaning that only the minimum requirement of one woman per general committee was met. The HEC's 2015 summary report of the parliamentary elections did not indicate the total number of poll workers, but 25,981 women participated as poll workers across 11,081 polling centers.

The automatic registration of voters in Egypt's voter database once citizen's reach the age of 18 has been a positive development for enabling women's increased voter turnout. The number of voters registered for the 2015 parliamentary elections included 28,371,091 men (51%) and 27,235,487 women (49%) (Marwan, 2016). Still, the required documents to vote include either a valid digital passport, a valid ID card or an invalid ID card that bears a valid identification number. While this is a normal requirement for most countries, it presents specific challenges for women within Egypt's context. Firstly, women, more so than men – and especially in rural areas – are more likely not to possess an ID card which prevents them from being able to vote. National ID cards are essential for participation in public life in general – they are needed to become a member of a political party, access government and banking services, and to move freely within the country (UNDP, 2015). In response, the government of Egypt has launched the ID project "Your Card...Your Rights" coordinated by the NCW to assist women in attaining national ID cards. Second, OECD interviews revealed that though women may have an ID card, husband's often hold onto their wife's ID card at their behest – and sometimes not. This creates a situation where men could potentially prevent their wives or daughters from voting by refusing to give them their ID card.

Per OECD interviews, the next challenge for upcoming local and parliamentary elections will be to create mechanisms to ensure effective control of electoral spending, curb illegal funding of campaigns, bribery and graft. Former parliamentary candidates and those monitoring the 2015 elections spoke of the enormous amount of money spent by some candidates and use of bribes to garner votes. Women's limited access to financing already makes the cost of running a campaign an impediment, thus instituting spending ceilings, cracking down on the use of "black money", and increasing societal awareness that bribery is unacceptable can help to level the playing field for female candidates.

**Box 3.11. GENDER-SENSITIVE ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES**

A gender-sensitive EMB is one that responds to the needs and interests of women and men in its policies, operations, infrastructure and work. By definition, inclusive, gender-sensitive electoral management bodies have capacity to implement gender mainstreaming and gender-targeted strategies to achieve gender equality. They have the necessary resources – human, financial and structural – to ensure gender equality is considered at every step of the electoral cycle. More specifically, a gender-sensitive EMB may consider:

- Promoting gender equality in all stages of the electoral process and in the EMB's daily work as a strategic objective
- Conducting a mapping or assessment exercise to determine where it is effectively working to achieve gender equality outcomes and where there is room for improvement
- Developing or amending its strategic plan to include gender equality outcomes and activities
- Dedicating infrastructure and resources to gender mainstreaming, such as a committee or a network of gender focal points across the organization
- Aiming for gender balance in all positions, including those of senior management and leadership, and making a concerted effort to ensure gender sensitization of temporary staff at peak polling periods
- Ensuring that its recruitment policies afford equal opportunities to women or men and that staff have the necessary leave benefits and entitlements required to balance work and family obligations
- Providing adequate professional development and training opportunities on gender equality and mainstreaming for all staff and e
- addressed in
- Implementin
- sex-disaggre
- including fro

Source: United Nations Development Programme, *Electoral Processes: A guide to gender equality and women's political participation*, <http://www.un.org/library/publications/2011>





**Box 3.12. GOOD PRACTICES IN GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN EMBS IN SELECTED OECD AND MENA COUNTRIES***Mapping, monitoring and evaluating*

In **Canada**, various post-election reports include a gender equality perspective related to turnout rates, reasons for not voting and women's participation as candidates.

In **Australia**, the Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters (JSCEM) reviews every federal election, inviting submissions from all interested parties. The Australian Electoral Commission prepares a lengthy submission including recommendations for legislative change and its Commissioners appear before the Committee at least twice: at the beginning of the inquiry and towards the end, to respond to some of the evidence received by the JSCEM from other stakeholders. Similar parliamentary committee reviews are conducted in New Zealand (by the Justice and Electoral Committee), and Canada (by the Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee). While these specialized parliamentary committees may not be appropriate in all contexts, they can play an important oversight function.

In **Mexico**, a special Technical Unit for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination (Unidad Técnica de Igualdad de Género y No Discriminación) was created within the National Electoral Institute, while in Tunisia in 2011, a UNDP Gender and Elections Advisor was co-located at ISIE and worked with the staff members, primarily responsible for outreach and training.

*Gender balance in the board and staff*

In **Tunisia**, the ISIE constituted in 2011, is comprised of 16 commissioners, two of whom (12 percent) were women, while in Lebanon, all-women polling stations are staffed by female staff.

*Training and gender awareness*

In **Mexico**, the Electoral Tribunal (Tribunal del Poder Judicial de la Federación, or TPJF) took part in a joint initiative with UNDP, UN Women and the Secretariat for External Relations of the Government of Mexico entitled Gender Equality, Political Rights and Electoral Justice in Mexico: Towards Strengthening the Exercise of Women's Human Rights in 2011. This project included actions:

- to train judges at the Tribunal on incorporating a gender perspective into their work. Staff at the TPJF noted that special training on "judging from a gender perspective" resulted in a series of
- crucial legislative initiatives and very progressive sentences, including on the implementation of the law on quotas.

Source: United Nations Development Program and UN Women (2015), *Inclusive Electoral Processes: A guide for electoral management bodies in promoting gender equality and women's participation*, pp.17-41, <http://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2015/7/inclusive-electoral-processes>





# Conclusions and Recommendations

Institutional frameworks are essential in implementing the legal framework, or political commitments, made by governments to advance women's political participation and gender equality more broadly. Around the world, governments have tended to place responsibility for advancing gender equality with gender-focused institutions such as a relevant ministry or human rights commission. In Egypt, much of this responsibility is placed on the National Council for Women, albeit shared with a range of other national institutes and a network of gender focal points across various ministries.

More recently, research has pointed to the need for 'mainstream' political institutions to become gender-sensitive themselves. The argument here is that a transformed, gender-sensitive parliament and elected councils will better reflect the needs and interests and experiences of men and women in their daily deliberations and outputs (decisions, debates and laws). Political parties and electoral management bodies should also be able to mainstream gender equality in their operations and work.

While the work of gender-focussed institutions in Egypt, including the National Council of Women, is to be commended, there is significant scope for mainstream political institutions to become much more gender sensitive.

It is recommended that the **House of Representatives, political parties and the National Electoral Commission:**

- Consider mechanisms to strengthen women's presence in leadership positions, across all portfolio areas or jurisdiction, including adopting targets for female representation
- Consider incorporating explicit references to the importance of women's increased political participation and champion gender balance in the recruitment, selection and appointment of staff or committee members within internal rules and procedures, mission statements and by-laws.
- Ensure any communication materials, publications, guidelines, policies and laws contain gender-sensitive language.
- Develop adequate mechanisms to implement gender mainstreaming processes, including by

institutionalising relationships/partnerships with gender-focused institutions such as the NCW and the network of gender focal points in government departments

- Ensure that responsibility for gender equality is shared by all male and female members and staff of the organisation and that the strategy for gender mainstreaming is implemented evenly across all its work
- Offer gender awareness training seminars for all members and staff of their institution.

Further recommendations for the House of Representatives include:

- Form a parliamentary committee dedicated to gender equality and women's affairs with the task of reviewing government policies, legislation and budgets from a gender perspective and providing oversight for gender equality initiatives.
- Institute or improve gender-sensitive infrastructure and parliamentary culture by developing and applying anti-discrimination and anti-harassment policies; instituting family friendly hours and facilities such as childcare centres; and sanctioning inappropriate behavior. This could include developing a Code of Conduct that addresses discrimination (including based on gender).
- Re-arrange sitting hours to eliminate late-night sessions or sessions during school holidays.
- Ensure that work in parliamentary departments are not sex-segregated.

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# Appendices

## APPENDIX 1 - QUESTIONNAIRE AND ASSESSMENT 1A

ASSESSMENT 1A: GENDER-SENSITIVE PARLIAMENTS			
DIMMENSION / AREA	SUB-COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER(S)	INTERVIEW GUIDE USED
SHARING RESPONSIBILITY FOR GENDER EQUALITY OUTCOMES	Equality of participation and leadership	MPs, Political parties, CSOs,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What proportion of all parliamentary seats do women hold?</li> <li>■ What factors have enabled the election or appointment of women to parliament/local government? What obstacles hinder women's greater representation?</li> <li>■ Are women elected or appointed through a temporary special measure (e.g. reserved seat) perceived in the same way as those elected through an open competition with men?</li> <li>■ What percentage of leadership positions do women hold?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What positions do women hold?</li> <li>• How are those positions allocated – i.e. what criteria are used?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Are any measures used to guarantee women are in positions of leadership in the parliament/local government body?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, what are they?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ What committees do women tend to participate in?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are they chairs of any committees?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ By what criteria are travel opportunities (e.g study tours/parliamentary delegations) for MPs allocated?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there an agreement that these be distributed equally between men and women?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Male champions of change	Male MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have men been involved in initiating or co-sponsoring legislation on gender equality?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What gender equality issues do men tend to champion?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ How regularly do men take the floor to debate gender equality issues?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How often do men raise their constituents' gender equality-related concerns?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ How receptive are women to men's involvement in, and contribution to, gender equality issues?</li> <li>■ Could, and should, men and women share the leadership of parliamentary committees/bodies on gender equality?</li> <li>■ Are men included on study tours or delegations on gender equality or gender mainstreaming?</li> </ul>
	Commitment from political parties	Political parties, gender experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How gender sensitive are political parties?</li> <li>■ Do their manifestos include gender equality as a policy objective?</li> <li>■ Are women in senior positions of leadership? Do women lead any political parties?</li> <li>■ Do any parties have 'women's wings'?</li> <li>■ How are gender equality issues mainstreamed into policy decisions?</li> </ul>
POLICY AND LEGAL FRAMEWORKS	Gender equality policies	MPs, parliamentary staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does the parliament/local government body have an overarching Gender Equality Policy?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, how is the Policy implemented, monitored and evaluated?</li> <li>• If not, is there scope to design a Gender Equality Policy?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Has the parliament/local government body devised a Strategic Plan that includes gender equality outcomes?</li> </ul>

**POLICY  
AND LEGAL  
FRAMEWORKS**

Policies to eliminate discrimination, sexism and harassment	MPs, parliamentary staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does the parliament/local government body have policies to ensure that the workplace is free from discrimination, sexism and harassment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, how were these policies developed (e.g. were gender experts brought in for advice)?</li> <li>• If not, is there scope to develop these kinds of policies?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Is there a code of conduct? Is it used effectively to monitor behavior in plenary debates? Who is responsible for monitoring behavior in accordance with the code? Are there any penalties? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the code refer to gender-based stereotypes? How could the code be more gender-sensitive?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Is there a mechanism to address complaints of harassment and discrimination? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have any complaints been made? How were these resolved?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Gender Equality Laws	MPs, National women's machinery (or government department officials dealing with GE), CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What national laws ensure gender equality?</li> <li>■ How are gender equality-related laws initiated or amended in parliament? Is there a need to improve this process?</li> <li>■ How does parliament ensure that existing and proposed laws comply with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women, United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 and other international or regional gender equality obligations?</li> </ul>
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Mainstreaming gender equality in the parliamentary process	MPs, parliamentary staff, gender experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does the parliament/local government body dedicate time in the plenary to debate gender equality concerns?</li> <li>■ How are written and oral questions to government on gender equality issues received by ministers (e.g. taken seriously, answered on time, disregarded, responded to with incomplete answers, etc.)?</li> <li>■ Is gender equality mainstreamed in the budget and the budget oversight process? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, what budgetary outcomes have been achieved to date?</li> <li>• If not, what obstacles prevent a gender analysis of the budget (e.g. insufficient expertise, lack of political will, etc.)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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Creating mechanisms of gender equality oversight	MPs, parliamentary staff, gender experts, CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What mechanisms or structures are used to mainstream gender equality in the work of the parliament? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is there a dedicated committee on gender equality or a women's parliamentary caucus?</li> <li>• Are there gender focal points?</li> <li>• Is there a dedicated gender desk or unit to provide information and advice?</li> <li>• Is there a need to establish one or more of the above mechanisms or structures?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ What tools has the parliament created for gender mainstreaming? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the parliament developed checklists by which to assess legislation from a gender perspective?</li> <li>• Does the parliament have access to sex-disaggregated data and if so, how is it used?</li> <li>• Have any other tools proved useful in mainstreaming gender equality concerns in the work of the parliament?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ How effective are the bodies responsible for gender equality in the parliament? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What relationships do they have with national women's machinery, civil society organisations, the private sector, the media, others?</li> <li>• Do they have sufficient powers to work effectively?</li> <li>• How well resourced (i.e. staff, meeting room, budget) are they?</li> <li>• What changes have they been able to make in support of gender equality?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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CULTURAL AND WORKPLACE SENSITIVITY		
Understanding of gender equality	MPs, parliamentary staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ In general terms, how is gender equality perceived in the parliament/local body?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there measures taken to enhance understanding of and support for gender equality?</li> <li>• What other measures would be useful in enhancing this understanding for gender equality (e.g. training, professional development, engagement with civil society)?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ How would you describe the culture (language, customs, dress code)?</li> <li>■ Are there discriminatory and derogatory stereotypes about women in politics?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If yes, how do you think these could be eliminated?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Work/life balance	MPs, parliamentary staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do the parliament/local government body's conditions of work allow MPs to balance work and family obligations?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do sitting hours allow MPs to spend enough time with their family?</li> <li>• Are MPs given sufficient parental, maternity or paternity leave?</li> <li>• What happens to an MP's vote while s/he is on parental leave?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Does the building cater to MPs or staff with babies and small children (e.g. is there a child care centre or a family room; is there a room for breastfeeding mothers; are nannies allowed in the building; are babies allowed in the chamber)?</li> </ul>
Equality in facilities and work space	MPs, staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Can the parliament/local government body be considered a gender-sensitive work space?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What criteria determine the allocation of office space and equipment?</li> <li>• Is there agreement that these should be allocated equitably among men and women?</li> <li>• Do the names of rooms in the building reflect the contribution and leadership of both men and women?</li> <li>• Has the artwork in the building been commissioned by both male and female artists?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Has the parliamentary building ever been reviewed from a gender perspective?               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are basic facilities such as rest rooms easily accessible for both men and women MPs and staff?</li> <li>• Are dining facilities equally open to men and women?</li> <li>• Where do women MPs tend to congregate? Are these areas the same as those occupied by men? If not, why is there a difference?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



APPENDIX 2 - QUESTIONNAIRE AND ASSESSMENT 2A

EXISTING OPPORTUNITIES AND CURRENT CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN CANDIDATES			
DIMENSION / AREA	SUB-COMPONENTS	STAKEHOLDER(S)	INTERVIEW GUIDE USED
CONDUCTIVE ELECTORAL FRAMEWORK	Gender sensitive laws and policies	Ministers, MPs, CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does the Constitution guarantee equal rights for men and women? If yes, what specific provision guarantees their equality? When were these written into the Constitution?</li> <li>■ Do any laws relating to the election and regulation of political parties include references to women and gender equality? If so, provide name of law, and key provisions.</li> <li>■ What electoral system is used and are there any implications for women of using that system?</li> <li>■ Have any temporary special measures been enshrined in legislation (Constitution, electoral law) to ensure women's political participation?</li> <li>■ What have been some of the barriers to the passage of gender sensitive electoral policy and legal frameworks (e.g. lack of political commitment, resistance from 'extremist' sections of the legislature, other – please specify)?</li> </ul>
	Gender sensitive political party internal regulations	Party representatives/ leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do any political parties have platforms on gender equality, or dedicated sections on gender equality in their manifesto?</li> <li>■ Are there any (financial, political) incentives for political parties to place women in electable positions?</li> <li>■ Have political parties adopted any measure (quota, target) to promote women to leadership positions within the party (i.e. not simply as candidates)?</li> <li>■ Do any political parties publish information (statistics, names, term length) on women in internal leadership positions?</li> <li>■ Do any political parties have women's wings? Are these wings considered effective mechanisms by which to channel gender equality concerns into party discussions and decisions?</li> <li>■ How do parties include the views, interests and needs of women in their party? How are these views represented in regulations, policies or political commitments?</li> <li>■ What measures are used by political parties to encourage women's political participation (e.g. outreach to voters, training and mentoring, etc.)?</li> </ul>
	Gender sensitive electoral arrangements	EMBs, gender experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Does the EMB collect sex-disaggregated data on women's political participation – as registered voters, as voters who turned out, as candidates, as elected representatives?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If so, has this data been published and kept over time (for trend analysis)?</li> <li>■ If not, what obstacles prevent the collection of this data? Are there any legal barriers to the collection of data? Is data collection planned in the future?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Has any research been conducted on the 'electability' of women candidates versus men?</li> <li>■ How prevalent are practices like 'vote buying' or 'family voting'?</li> <li>■ Are there campaign related codes of conduct? If so, does the code of conduct refer to gender discrimination, sexual harassment or other gender equality issues?</li> <li>■ What opportunity does the EMB have to participate in post-election reviews? If so, has the EMB provided lessons learned on the participation of women in</li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ the election, as voters and candidates, including recommendations for future elections? Were these recommendations heeded?</li> <li>■ Are there laws or regulations related to sexual harassment, intimidation, violence or discrimination against women candidates and voters?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If so, who or what body is responsible for administering these laws and ensuring accountability?</li> <li>■ Are reports of these kinds of incidences collected and analysed?</li> <li>■ What recommendations would you make to ensure women participate safely and free of violence?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Would you consider the electoral management body to be gender sensitive (e.g. does it have women in leadership positions, is there a gender equality policy or strategic plan, do women staff have access to training opportunities, are all staff trained in gender mainstreaming, are staff able to balance work and family)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>WOMEN HAVE CAPACITY TO RUN</b></p>	<p>Technical capacity</p>	<p>CSOs, current and former women and men MPs, International organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What programs are run to enhance women's technical skills in campaigning for election (e.g. crafting campaign messages, public speaking, engaging with electors, negotiation and political strategy skills, policy development, fundraising)?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How many women participated in these programs prior to the last election? Were evaluation forms distributed, and lessons learned collated? (If so, please provide analysis).</li> <li>■ What were the major lessons learned, and have recommendations been made? To whom?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ What has been men's role in enhancing women candidates' skills in campaigning? Are there any challenges in asking men to share their experiences with women?</li> </ul>
	<p>Campaign funding available</p>	<p>Parties, EMBs, Women MPs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How influential is money in political campaigns?</li> <li>■ Are there regulations that make the allocation of public funding dependent on political parties' fulfilment of gender equality requirements (e.g. women are on the electoral list, women are in leadership positions in the party)?</li> <li>■ Does the EMB regulate (and/or provide any public information on) any aspect of public campaign funding, such as:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Spending bans and limits for political parties and/or candidates;</li> <li>■ Banning contributions from specific sources such as foreign donors for political parties and/or candidates;</li> <li>■ Limiting the length of the campaign period; or</li> <li>■ Requiring that all financial donations to political parties and candidates be disclosed?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ What were women MPs' experiences in fundraising? What were the major challenges and how were these overcome?</li> </ul>
	<p>Supportive networks created</p>	<p>Women MPs, CSOs, academics, supportive media reps</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ (To women MPs) Where has your strongest support come from? What makes it so powerful to you? How do you keep this relationship alive?</li> <li>■ (To others) How do you support women elected representatives? What do you need from the relationship? Do you consider it an equal partnership? In what ways is the partnership sustained (e.g. gender equality proposals are made and passed in parliament, other – please specify)?</li> </ul>
<p><b>ELECTORATE VALUES WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION</b></p>	<p>Increased community awareness of gender equality</p>	<p>CSOs, EMBs, International organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have any research reports been produced on the community's acceptance of women in public life?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If so, what changes are evident over time?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ How would you describe the status of women in the country? Is it broadly the same across the country, or are there differences by region, urban centres, by socio economic status, race, religion, etc.?</li> <li>■ What are some of the key barriers to women's political participation – social, economic, cultural, religious?</li> <li>■ What programs have been run by civil society organisations in promoting women's political participation?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How effective has this advocacy been?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>WOMEN LEADERS CONTRIBUTE TO GENDER EQUALITY POLICY MAKING</b>			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Do civil society groups monitor elections and raise gender equality concerns in this process?</li> <li>■ Have EMBs promoted gender equality when conducting voter outreach campaigns?</li> <li>■ What other groups are involved in voter education, and do they mainstream gender equality issues in their curriculum?</li> </ul>
	Women vote	EMBs, Political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Are there known obstacles in the voter registration process that are disadvantageous to women (e.g. need for photographic identification or documentation to prove eligibility to vote; times and places of registration are difficult to attend, cultural traditions, other – please specify)? If so, has the EMB sought to overcome these?</li> <li>■ Are there known obstacles to women voting? Do these differ at national and local levels?</li> <li>■ What do political parties do to encourage women's voting?</li> </ul>
	Media promotes gender equality	Media, MPs, CSOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How favourably do media organisations report women's participation in elections?</li> <li>■ Have any research reports been written on media coverage of women in elections?</li> <li>■ If so, how often were women candidates reported in the election coverage compared to men candidates?</li> <li>■ What was the content of these reports (policy proposals, dress and presentation, other – please specify)?</li> <li>■ Are media organisations included in CSO trainings on gender equality?</li> </ul>
	Political leaders promote gender equality	Party leaders, MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How have political leaders demonstrated their commitment to gender equality and women's participation in elections (i.e. appointing women to positions of leadership; committing to the passage of gender equality legislation; promoting gender equality in the community; other – please specify)?</li> <li>■ What more could political leaders do to prove their commitment?</li> </ul>
	Women apply leadership skills	Current and former MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How active are women in parliament (or local government bodies)?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have laws been passed to ensure greater women's political participation because of the women currently in parliament?</li> <li>■ Do they advocate and pursue other gender equality reforms – please specify?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Political institution is receptive to women leaders	Senior parliamentary staff, MPs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ How well are women received when they stand up in parliament and make a speech?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Is there silence or are there more interjections than usual; are women heckled for what they are wearing?</li> </ul> </li> <li>■ Does the legislature have a mechanism to mainstream gender equality issues, such as a women's caucus, a parliamentary committee on gender equality, a technical unit or library service on gender equality, or a network of gender focal points?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Is this (or all of these) institution(s) considered effective?</li> <li>■ What outcomes have they produced?</li> <li>■ How well do women and men work together in these bodies?</li> <li>■ What are the major challenges to the passage of gender equality outcomes?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Women are seen as constructive role models	MPs, CSOs, Political leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Have women in the legislature mentored other aspiring women candidates?                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ If so, what has been the experience of the women mentoring, and being mentored?</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

# Endnotes

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<http://esango.un.org/SideEvents/documents/895>
- 2 Local councils were however dissolved in 2011, following the revolution, and are planned to be reinstated in 2018.
- 3 These four pillars form the basis of the assessment tool presented – with a range of interview questions – in Appendix 1.
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- 5 IPU (2017), *Women in national parliaments, Situation as of 1 September 2017*,  
<http://archive.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>
- 6 Prior to 2011, the legal framework around local government consisted of Law No. 43/1979 for local administration, and amendments in Law No. 50/1981, Law No. 154/1988 and Law No. 84/1996. Law No. 43/1979 is available at: <http://issuu.com/parlmany/docs/e9561f6c1dcaca/1?e=19233901/32528488>
- 7 The Arabic Network for Human Rights Information (2010). "Women and Political Participation," No.81,  
<http://anhri.net/?p=8889>
- 8 An Egyptian political party established in 2011. It adopts a social liberal ideology, i.e. working on redistributing wealth for the work and labor in light of the market economy. The party was admitted into Socialist International on August 29th, 2012 (<http://www.egydp.com>)
- 9 Cairo Center for Development and Human Rights (2015), "Towards Appropriate Women Representation in 2015 Parliament Elections – Studying the Case of Egyptian Parties."
- 10 Central Agency for Public Mobilisation and Statistics (CAPMAS) (2014) [com/capmas.gov.eg](http://com/capmas.gov.eg)
- 11 Egypt Vision 2030, accessible by <http://enid.org.eg/Uploads/PDF/egypt2030.pdf>.
- 12 Interview with MP Maysa Atwa, the Chair person of The Secretariat of Working Women and Children at the General Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 United Nations Development Programme (2017), "Mohad Wahba Remarks: International Launch of Egypt's campaign 'Al Taa' Al marbouta'," accessible by  
<http://www.eg.undp.org/content/egypt/en/home/presscenter/speeches/2017/03/15/mourad-wahba-remarks-international-launch-of-egypt-s-campaign-al-taa-al-marbouta/>
- 15 Meeting with Nadia Abdel Wahab Afify at the head office of the Egyptian Social Democratic Party on 08/08/2016.
- 16 International Federation of Journalists (2009), "Getting the Balance Right: Gender Equality in Journalism," International Press Center, Brussels, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001807/180707e.pdf>



- 17 European Institute for Gender Equality (2014), “Women and the Media: Methods, Tools and Good Practices Gender Equality Training,” European Union, <http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/MH0214919ENN.pdf>
- 18 European Institute for Gender Equality (2014), “VIDM – Vaker in de Media: Training courses for female experts in the Netherlands,” European Union, [http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/vidm\\_-\\_gender\\_training\\_-\\_netherlands.pdf](http://eige.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/vidm_-_gender_training_-_netherlands.pdf)
- 19 Asmaa Hamed (n.d.), “Figures from Violence Economic Cost Survey,” <http://wlahawogohokhra.org>.
- 20 Sadek, George (2016), “Egypt: Sexual Violence Against Women.” The Law Library of Congress, Global Legal Research Center, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/sexual-violence-against-women/sexual-violence-against-women-egypt.pdf>
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- 22 See for example, Haley, Nicole and Zubrinich, Kerry (2016). Women’s political and administrative leadership in the Pacific, <http://www.pacwip.org/resources/publications?&page=3>
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- 28 Sadek, George (2014), “Egypt: Rape and Sexual Assault Suspects Referred to Criminal Court,” Library of Congress, Global Legal Monitor, <http://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/egypt-rape-and-sexual-assault-suspects-referred-to-criminal-court/>
- 29 The 16 technical committees are:  
 1. Education Committee. — 2. Training Committee. — 3. Scientific Research Committee. — 4. Health and Population Committee. — 5. Non-Governmental Organizations Committee. — 6. Culture Committee. — 7. Economic Affairs Committee. — 8. Political Participation Committee. — 9. External Relation Committee. — 10. Governorates Committee. — 11. Legislative Committee. — 12. Media Committee. — 13. Environment Committee. — 14. Youth Committee. — 15. Rural Women Committee. — 16. Women with Disabilities Committee.
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