



## **CONSOLIDATED REPLY**

**e-Discussion on:**

**Women's political participation: a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality, democracy and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**

**March 2017**



## LAUNCHING MESSAGE

In September 2015, 193 Member States of the United Nations unanimously adopted a new global agenda to end poverty by 2030 and pursue a sustainable future for all. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDGs) includes a specific goal to achieve gender equality, which aims to end discrimination and violence against women and girls and ensure equal participation and opportunities in all spheres of life.

Advancing women's political participation is crucial for delivering on the SDGs. That is why one of the Targets for Goal 5 is to **"Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life"** (SDG Target 5.5).

This online discussion aims to consult various stakeholders about their experiences of using the Agenda as a roadmap and instrument to ensure that women's political participation is maximized, at global, national and local levels. It will run from **09 January to 12 February 2017** and will be moderated on this page. International organizations, civil society organizations, government representatives and academia are invited to contribute with their expertise and experiences, and answer to one or more of the below outlined questions. Contributions highlighting innovative partnerships and accountability mechanisms established to deliver on Target 5.5. are encouraged. The iKNOW Politics team and partners are looking forward to an informative knowledge-sharing exercise on this topic.

Please click [here](#) to read the full concept note of this e-Discussion.

### QUESTIONS

1. Who are the key actors involved in delivering on the Agenda in your country?
2. What is the role of national and local governments in localizing Target 5.5.?
3. What are some of the key challenges for countries to deliver on implementation and monitoring of Target 5.5.?
4. What measures are being taken to align national laws and development plans with Target 5.5.? What accountability and implementation measures are in place? By whom are these measures taken?
5. What is the role of civil society organizations in the implementation and monitoring of Target 5.5., specifically? Are there consultation mechanisms to foster dialogue with governments and international bodies?
6. Are you aware of any country-specific / regional projects or trainings to advance Target 5.5.?

## CONTRIBUTIONS

From 9 January to 12 February 2017, iKNOW Politics hosted an e-Discussion on [Women's political participation: a fundamental prerequisite for gender equality, democracy and achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). Fourteen experts from Latin America, the Arab region, and Sub-Saharan Africa engaged in the online debate and submitted contributions. The e-Discussion gathered 2 contributions in Arabic, 7 in English, 1 in French, and 4 in Spanish. Comprising of politicians, members of civil society organizations, students, and representatives of government institutions, the participants

commonly stressed the importance of civil society to ensure quality monitoring of the SDGs and of SDG 5 in particular. More details about the experts and their contributions are provided below:

1. [Agripinner Nandhego](#) (UN Women **Uganda**): Provides examples from the Ugandan Parliament and the **Uganda** Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA).
2. [Aida Mahmoud Nouredine](#) (Lawyer and women's rights activist, **Egypt**): Provides insight on the different mechanisms of consultation with the government in Egypt that enable the monitoring of SDG 5.5.
3. [Amin Aassi](#) (Ministry of Women's Affairs representative, **Palestine**): Discusses the work developed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs of Palestine, which is leading the implementation of SDG 5 in Palestine.
4. [Catherine Watuka](#) (Executive Director of WUSETE and iKNOW Politics Expert, **Kenya**): Elaborates on the connections between gender equality and other development issues, and writes about the role of women lobby groups.
5. [Deyaniro Galindo](#) (INE **Mexico**): Explains different initiatives developed by Mexican authorities in order to achieve higher levels of participation of women in politics.
6. [iKNOW Politics member 'AB9'](#): Stresses the importance of local government in implementing the SDGs.
7. [iKNOW Politics user 'Adham Ehab'](#): Suggests seminars and awareness raising campaigns in rural areas to promote the role of women in political life.
8. [iKNOW Politics member 'Alexajl'](#) (Student at the University of Cincinnati, **USA**): Discusses the effectiveness of quotas as a tool to increasing women's political participation at all levels.
9. [iKNOW Politics user 'Eslam'](#): Argues that increasing women's political participation can be best achieved by involving all stakeholders, including parliaments, governments, civil society, and international organizations.
10. [León Huarancca](#) (Red de Hombres Contra la Violencia, **Peru**): Analyses the importance of cultural change, and stresses on the education of men and boys in order to reduce sexist behavior.
11. [Marie Misukyo](#) (Civil Society Activist from the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**): Provides insight on the relevance of women's political empowerment in order to solve issues like gender-based violence, development, etc.
12. [Marta Gaba](#) (Transparencia Electoral, **Argentina**): Details the role played by civil society organizations in Argentina for the successful implementation of SDG 5.5.
13. [Rumbidzai Kandawasvika-Nhundu](#) (Senior Programme Manager at International IDEA and iKNOW Politics Expert, **Sweden**): Highlights the relevance of SDG 5 as a powerful tool to eliminate gender inequalities globally.
14. [Teresa Chara de los Ríos](#) (Regional Director of Production in the Region of Huánuco, **Peru**): Interacts with León Huarancca, creating a debate on the importance of men as active agents for gender equality.

## DISCUSSION SUMMARY

The iKNOW Politics team would like to extend its thanks to all iKNOW Politics members and experts who took the time to answer the questions of this e-Discussion and share experiences, practices and recommendations, which are summarized below.

## Key actors involved in delivering on the 2030 Agenda in each country

There is a general agreement among participants on the necessity of strong commitments, both political and budgetary, of governments to make the delivery of the Agenda possible. Sometimes these commitments come in the form of state agencies, while there are also examples of national or regional action plans and frameworks.

In **Uganda**, the Ugandan Parliament passed the Public Finance Act which has a provision for a gender equality certificate issued to ministries and sectors that show compliance to gender equality in their budgets before they are passed by parliament. Every year budgets are scrutinized for their compliance to this requirement. The main actors active in achieving the sustainable development agenda in **Egypt** are all ministries, especially the Ministry of Planning and National Mechanism for Women (National Council for Women), as well as all units of equal opportunities within ministries and the gender units of some ministries. In the case of **Palestine**, the Ministry of Women's Affairs is considered to be the official actor in the country, which also works in partnership with all relevant government institutions and national unions. In **Mexico** there are different governmental bodies and programmes dedicated to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda and, in particular, of Target 5.5. Thus, in the Executive branch, there are three key actors involved in monitoring and delivering the 2030 Agenda:

1. Secretariat of Foreign Affairs
2. Secretariat of Social Development
3. National Institute of Women (INMUJERES)

This last agency, INMUJERES, holds a specific mandate oriented towards promoting and supporting women in all fields, including, but not limited to: health, social development, education, legislation. The agency has promoted a series of programmes and worked with different entities of the Federal Republic for the adoption of laws on gender equality and protection against acts of violence. For more information, please refer to an interview of INMUJERES President [Lorena Cruz](#), conducted by iKNOW Politics in November 2016.

The Mexican legislative branches have promoted a series of laws that support women in a transversal way as well. In the Federal Congress, both Chambers of Senators and Deputies have commissions dedicated to women's issues. These are inclusive of migrant women, of indigenous women, and of women's social rights. In electoral matters, the National Electoral Institute (INE), as well as the Federal Electoral Tribunal (TEPJF), with the aim of applying the law, have put in place several provisions, such as a quota requiring political parties to present 50% of each gender in candidatures. A fine has recently been imposed on various parties that chose not to participate in elections because they did not comply with the quota. Despite this law, the 2015 intermediate elections for the Chamber of Deputies resulted in 217 women and 283 men deputies. Advances have not been achieved at the sub national level in local governments, mayorships, and congresses.

INE-Mexico has taken a series of internal actions in order to promote gender equality, reduce gender-based violence, and ensure balance in decision-making and participation. These include:

- In the 2008-2009 changes to public funding that each political party receives, 3% should be dedicated to activities that promote women's political participation. The INE is responsible for distributing funding to political parties and monitoring their spending. Sanctions can be imposed if the use of the funds is found to be inappropriate.

- In 2013, as a measure of affirmative action, 100 reserved seats for women were opened in the National Professional Service. Although the overall proportion is still unbalanced, this measure has narrowed the gap.
- With the 2014 reform, the INE selected the members of local electoral councils (each of the 32 federal entities has an electoral institute), for which they sought gender parity. There are approximately 112 women electoral advisers and 112 women counselors.
- Internally, the Technical Unit for Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination has been created, promoting a series of measures ranging from the provision of training courses with a gender perspective to all staff members - at the technical, administrative and executive levels - as well as for the Members of the National Electoral Service.
- Elaboration of a protocol against harassment at the workplace, sexual harassment, in which terms are defined, cases, mechanisms for identification, and presentation of complaints are presented.
- In the case of international cooperation programs, gender issues are part of a transversal analysis on general issues.
- The INE, through the Executive Directorate for Electoral Training and Civic Education (DECEyEC), works with various civil society organizations to promote the political participation of women. These actions include hiring women as trainers of citizens who will serve as election officers at voting stations; who will participate as public servants; who will participate as candidates for public office, etc. INE develops general programs and organizes calls or contests with civil society organizations.

### The role of national and local governments in localizing Target 5.5

There is general agreement among the e-Discussion participants on the importance of translating achievements made at the global level into effective frameworks at the national and local levels. Implementation at the local level allows for transformative changes in the status of women and girls, making it possible to change their position in society in a more sustainable way.

In the case of **Egypt**, it is argued that the government should consider removing all forms of discrimination against women both in the law and in the masculine and patriarchal cultural heritage. This includes adopting prevention, protection, and intervention policies to end violence against women and taking the necessary measures to empower women economically by for example eliminating the specific challenges women face and all gender gaps. A participant from Egypt argues that women need to have access to the same opportunities as men and to assume more leadership positions. In fact, despite the increase in women's numerical representation in parliament, women are almost non-existent in important committees. Although many women have proven their abilities as deputy governors, no woman has held the position of governor.<sup>1</sup> In the case of **Palestine**, the Palestinian government formed a national committee to follow up on the implementation of the national policy agenda. The Ministry of Women's Affairs is member of this committee and is leading Goal 5. The ministry has worked to form a technical committee to follow up on the implementation of the goal with all partners.

### Measures taken to align national laws with Target 5.5

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<sup>1</sup> This [contribution](#) was submitted on 22 January 2017. The [first woman governor in Egypt](#) was appointed on 16 February 2017.

The **Uganda** Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA), with the support of different development partners, is involved in constituency outreach to monitor the implementation of laws and raising the awareness of communities on these laws. This has proved effective and as a result, a number of measures have been put in place to address gaps. Women lobbying groups are considered to be key factors in **Kenya** because they ensure that laws aligned with Target 5.5 are put forth and debated in parliament.

There is agreement among the participants that despite the presence of international agreements, instruments, and declarations on gender equality, they are not always as effective as they should be. In the case of **Palestine**, a committee created by a decision of the president enabled the Council of Ministers to take decisions harmonizing all signed agreements, including CEDAW.

### Challenges to deliver on the implementation and monitoring of Target 5.5

One of the main conclusions of this e-Discussion is that Target 5.5 cannot be adequately implemented or monitored without paying attention to other relevant areas of gender equality. These include gender-based discrimination in law and practice, violence against women and girls, and women's unequal participation and representation in private and public decision-making.

Some of the key measures needed to achieve a successful implementation of Target 5.5 include addressing gender inequality within political parties and other private and public institutions. Thus, participants point towards the necessary establishment of gender-sensitive internal rules and regulations within those institutions. In this sense, one of the remaining key challenges would be to uncover how women perform visible and instrumental roles in democracy building and, particularly, as voters and members of political parties.

**Uganda** is currently implementing the necessary provisions for gender responsive budgets. However, there is a challenge of inadequate capacity of the members of parliament (MPs) to analyse these budgets from a gender perspective. UN Women has supported partners to work with MPs on developing tools for analysis and also budgeting their capacity.

A contributor from **Palestine** pointed to additional challenges in the implementation of SDG 5 because of the ongoing political situation and subsequent limitations of state capacity.

### The role of civil society organizations in the implementation and monitoring of Target 5.5.

There is a consensus in the e-Discussion around the idea that target 5.5, which aims to ensure full and effective decision-making of women may have potential impact on reaching other SDG 5 targets, such as ending gender-based violence and discrimination. There is also agreement around the role played by civil society as a necessary actor for the creation of gender-sensitive education policies. A contribution from **Kenya** highlights the importance of the work done by women in community organizing and networking for women's rights. In a contribution from **Egypt** the role of civil society organizations in implementing and monitoring Target 5.5 is summarized into five points:

1. Monitor the implementation of the state of what has been planned in its plan regarding Goal 5
2. Monitor the mechanisms, policies, and laws that have been decided and evaluate their implementation
3. Make reports on monitoring, evaluation and recommendations available to decision-makers
4. Partner with state institutions in the implementation of the goal

5. Organizations with a consultative status at the United Nations can provide a parallel report to the competent committees to achieve this goal such as the Women's Committee, the CEDAW Committee and the International Council on Human Rights.

In the case of **Palestine**, it is pointed out by a representative of the Women's Affairs Ministry that there is a full partnership between the government and civil society organizations on Goal 5.

Cultural stereotypes can also hamper the delivery of the 2030 Agenda. Contributions from **Peru** signaled the relevance of the education system as a tool for changing these stereotypes. The Network of Men Against Violence of Ica (Peru) is working to promote democratic behavior and attitudes towards women's political participation. The Network aims to change social stereotypes and build masculinities supportive of gender equality, but financial restrictions make its mandate difficult. The initiative stirred up debate among participants in the e-Discussion, and spurred interest from other Peruvian contributors interested in the spread of the Network throughout the country.

In **Argentina**, the NGO [Electoral Transparency](#) works on issues related to women's political participation. In 2016, this organization launched a [Diploma on Gender and Political Participation](#) featuring an international faculty that tries to motivate, empower, and inform students on the importance of women's political empowerment. Electoral Transparency has also launched a website on Electoral News featuring a [weekly column focused on Women's Electoral Participation](#). All these initiatives share the same objective: educate both women and men on the importance of women's political empowerment.

#### Country-specific and regional projects and trainings to advance Target 5.5.

It has been pointed out that in **Uganda** there is political will to promote gender equality, although there are gender equality bills that have stagnated for a long period of time. In **Egypt**, there are various mechanisms of consultation with the government, such as the coordinating ministerial meeting concerning the Sustainable Development agenda with the different ministries through the National Population Council. There are also capacity building trainings for women and youth on political participation, especially by some local civil society organizations and the National Council for Women. Some contributors state that there is a lack of regional cooperation to advance Target 5.5. The participant from **Palestine** raised particular concern that there is no current mechanism to know what is happening in other countries of the region. A participant from the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** highlighted the importance of implementing the government's "Strategic Document for Poverty Reduction and Growth", as a way to foster women's political empowerment in strategic areas at all levels.