



Women's Environment  
& Development Organization



# Women's Participation in UN Climate Negotiations

2008-2012

## Women at the UNFCCC

Women's equitable participation in climate change decision-making is an important step toward more gender-responsive and thereby more effective policies that reflect and respond to the needs of the global community. This report, tracking data from 2008 through the 2012, presents the trends in women's participation at the major negotiating meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

In 2001 in Marrakesh, the first decision (Decision 36/CP.7) to recognize gender equality was adopted by the Conference of Parties (COP), particularly noting the importance of women's participation in achieving progress on mitigating and adapting to climate change at all levels. Progress on implementing this decision has been slow, as demonstrated by the current numbers of women on UNFCCC boards, bodies and delegations. Women continue to be underrepresented on the delegations of many countries of the world, particularly in high-level positions, as well as on the delegations of countries most vulnerable to climate impacts.

As highlighted in the following pages, there is also good news to report: women's participation in the process has increased over the last five years, both in overall involvement and at the highest levels of decision-making. At the recent COP18 in Doha, Qatar, a new decision on promoting gender balance in the UNFCCC was adopted by all Parties, this time with a commitment to enhanced capacity building and actions to ensure effective implementation and review of progress made.

Increasing women's participation alone will not transform climate change decision-making, automatically make the process more gender-responsive or lead directly to gender equality. But research shows that diversity (of genders, ages, cultures, etc.) in decision-making processes leads to more effective and sustainable solutions. Especially when efforts to increase diversity are supported by capacity building and an emphasis on empowerment and leadership, as with the Women Delegates Fund, policy-making toward a more just and sustainable world is possible.



*"First and foremost, women have a right to be at decision-making tables – especially on issues that so deeply affect their lives. Moreover, to really reflect and appropriately respond to the realities of climate change in every country, women simply must be there."*

**- Cate Owren, Executive Director, WEDO**

### The Women Delegates Fund

In an effort to increase the direct participation of diverse women from the global South, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), a women's global advocacy organization that includes promoting women's participation and leadership in global decision-making spheres among its priorities, coordinates the Women Delegates Fund (WDF). A project of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) launched in 2009 with support from the Government of Finland, and more recently, the Government of Iceland, the WDF has evolved from a travel fund to a comprehensive leadership program; organizing networking events, communications opportunities and trainings on a range of issues, from technical climate change themes to diplomacy, legal language, negotiating techniques and media skills. Although the number of women directly supported by the WDF is small relative to the number of participants in UNFCCC meetings, the impacts of the WDF are more widely evident. In quantitative terms, 28 women who may not have otherwise been able to participate in UNFCCC meetings have been supported to attend, and initiatives and networking led by WDF participants contributed to groundbreaking text references on women's rights and gender equality included in the Cancun Agreements of COP16 and strengthened in Durban at COP17.

## Data Collection

The data for this study was collected from official UNFCCC participant lists for each meeting during the years 2008-2012, including all intersessional and COP meetings. Data collection is restricted to official government delegation members; non-governmental stakeholders have not been taken into account. Data is given in a combination of raw numbers and percentages. Averages are given when several countries are described together in one group, and yearly averages have been



reported from the combined average of each meeting taking place in the given year, which does vary.

Listed below, find each UNFCCC meeting included in the report. Several meetings are combined according to the organization of UNFCCC participant lists. Additionally, abbreviations are used later in this report when looking at figures for participation by negotiating block and on boards and bodies of the UNFCCC. Please use below tables for reference.

Source: [http://unfccc.int/documentation/document\\_lists/items/2960.php](http://unfccc.int/documentation/document_lists/items/2960.php)

### UNFCCC Meetings by Year (2008-2012)

2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Bangkok and Bonn	Bonn I	Bonn I	Bangkok and Bonn	Bonn
Accra	Bonn II	Bonn II	Panama	Bangkok
COP14- Poznań	Bonn III	Bonn III	COP17- Durban	COP18- Doha
	Bangkok and Barcelona	Tianjin		
	COP15- Copenhagen	COP16- Cancun		

### UNFCCC Negotiating Blocks included in Report

OPEC	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
AG	African Group
G77	Group of 77 and China
BASIC	Brazil, South Africa, India and China
AOSIS	Alliance of Small Island States
UG	Umbrella Group
ALBA	Alianza Bolivariana de Nuestra America
EU	European Union

### UNFCCC Boards & Bodies included in Report

AC	Adaptation Committee
AFB	Adaptation Fund Board
CGE	Consultative Group of Experts on National Communications
CDM	Executive Board of the Clean Development Mechanism
GCF	Green Climate Fund
LEG	Least Developed Countries Fund
TEC	Technology Executive Committee
SC	Standing Committee

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

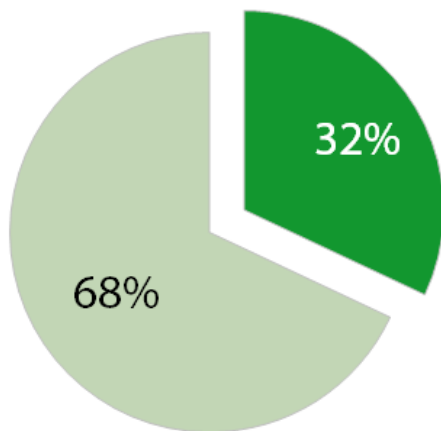
1. Women's Participation on National Delegations
2. Women as Heads of Delegation
3. Gender Balance on Delegations
4. Participation by Country
5. Participation by Region
6. Participation by UNFCCC Negotiating Block
7. Participation in UNFCCC Boards & Bodies

# Women's Participation on National Delegations

The figures and graphs below portray the overall percentage of women's participation as members of national delegations to the UNFCCC. In the last 5 years, women's participation has remained steady at around 30%, while 2012 saw the highest number of women on delegations to date. Figure 3 shows women's participation at both the COP and intersessional meetings throughout each year, noting that, on average, women's participation at COP meetings is slightly less than at other meetings. (Additional figures from earlier years have been collected by GenderCC, accessible here: <http://www.gendercc.net/policy/conferences.html>)

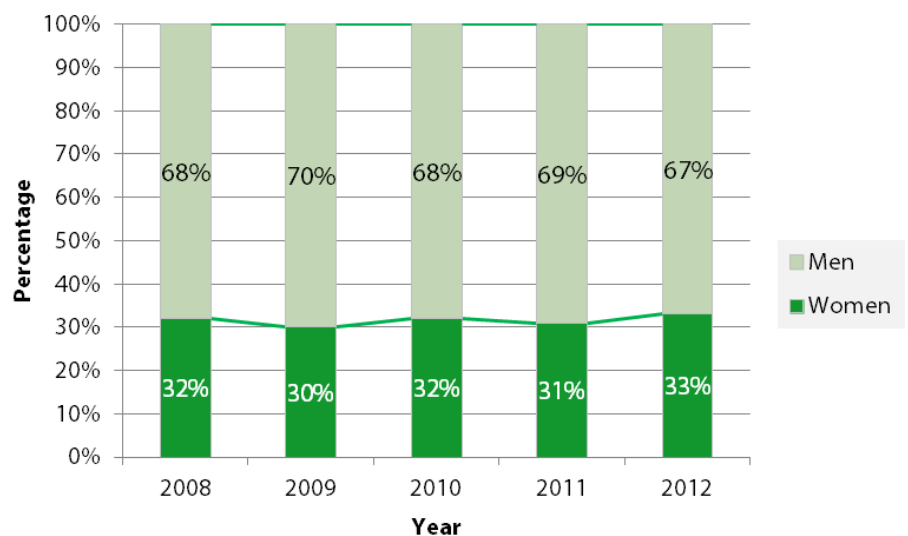
**FIGURE 1**

**5-Year Average of Women on National Delegations in UNFCCC (2008-2012)**



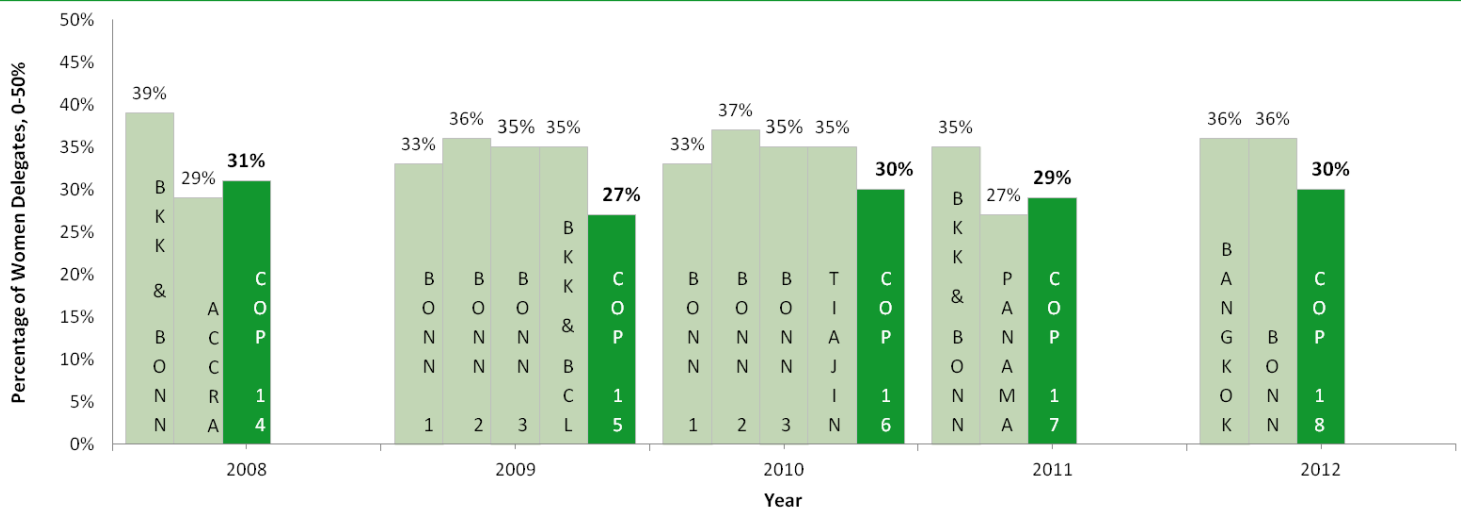
**FIGURE 2**

**Women on National Delegations in UNFCCC (2008 -2012)**  
Average by Year



**FIGURE 3**

**Women's Overall Participation on National Delegations**  
Percentage per meeting per year

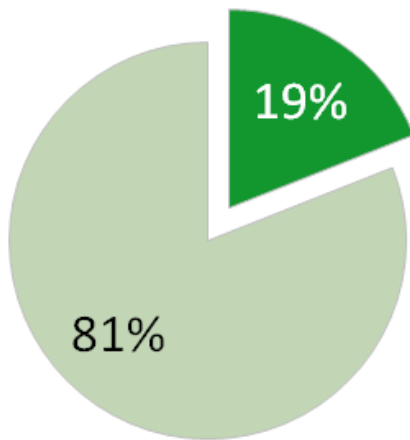


# Women as Heads of Delegation

Similar to the figures and graphs on the previous page, the below data reflects women's leadership as Heads of Delegations to the UNFCCC. In the last 5 years, women's participation as Heads of Delegation has averaged 19%. As with overall participation, 2012 shows the highest participation of women as Heads of Delegations, with a 6% increase from 2011. Figure 6 shows women's participation as Heads of Delegation at the COP is also at an all time high, reaching 20%. Here too, however, it is clear that women's participation is lower at COPs than at other meetings.

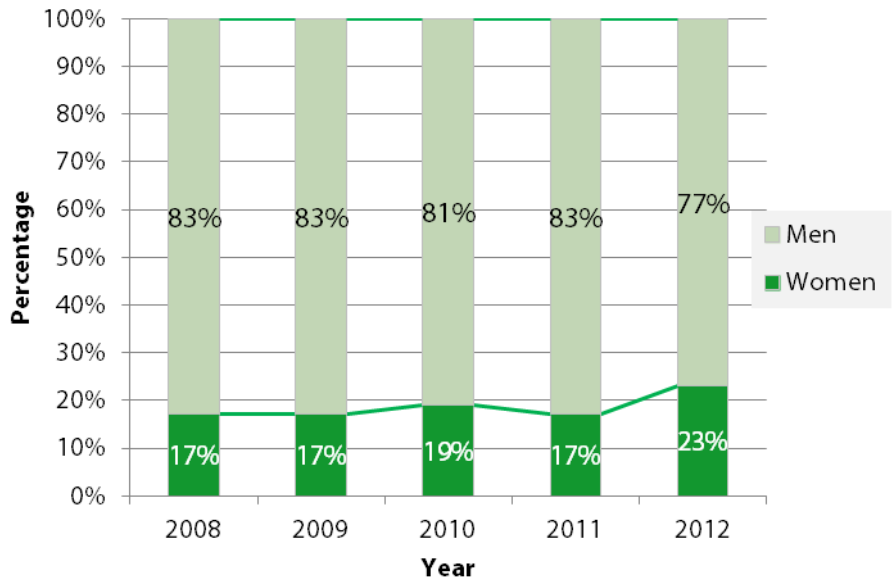
**FIGURE 4**

**5-Year Average of Women as Heads of Delegations in UNFCCC (2008-2012)**



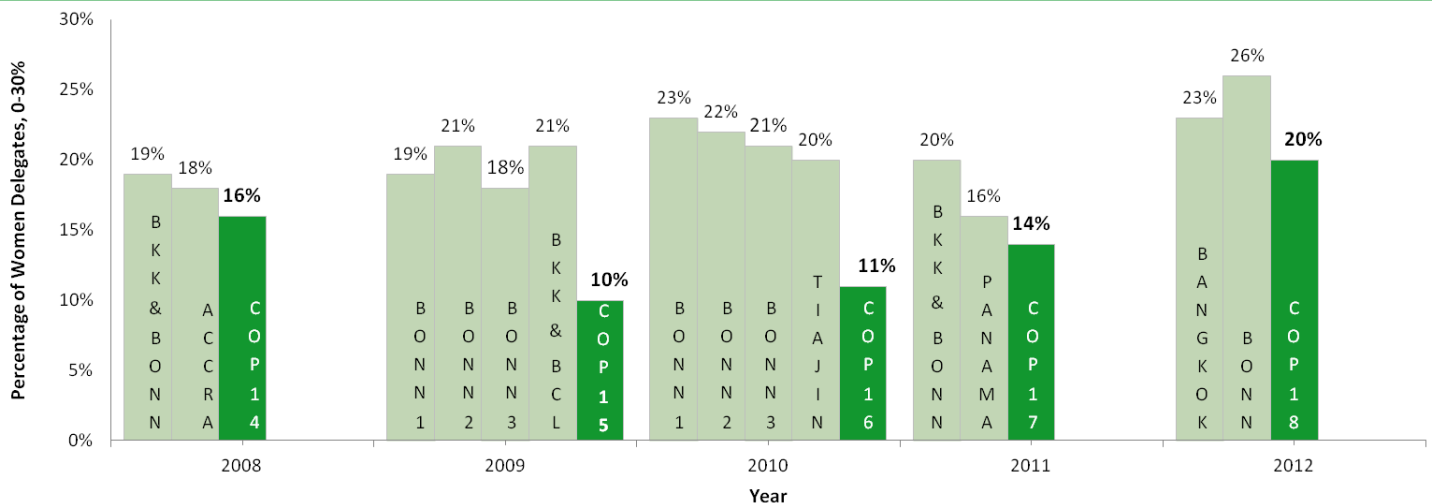
**FIGURE 5**

**Women as Heads of Delegations in UNFCCC (2008-2012)**  
*Average by Year*



**FIGURE 6**

**Women's Overall Participation as Heads of Delegations**  
*Percentage per meeting per year*

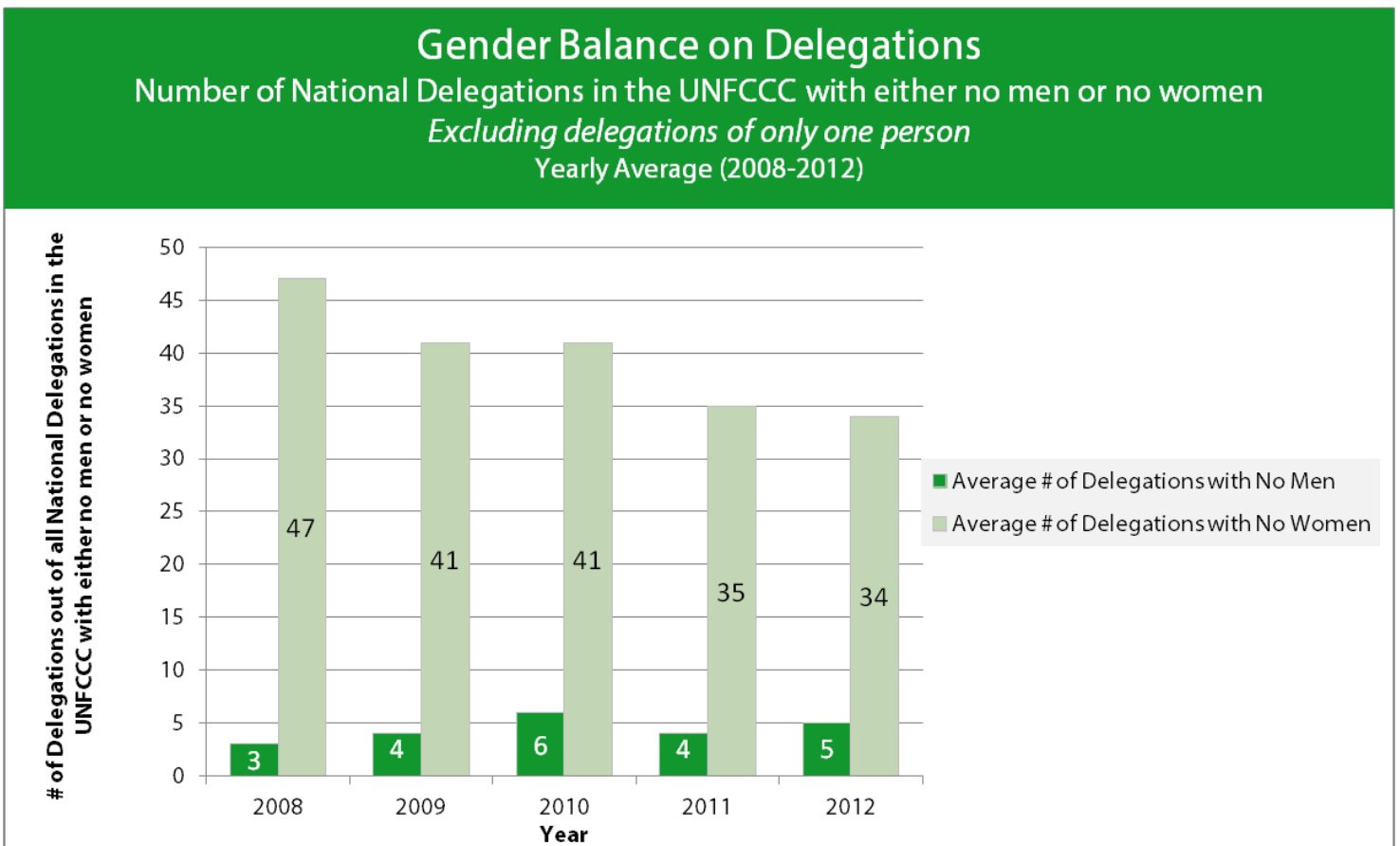


## Gender Balance on Delegations

The table below records the number of delegations to the UNFCCC each year, on average, that show a notable *imbalance* between women and men - in terms of the goal of gender balance - because the delegations either include all women or all men. A goal of gender balance refers to the goal of reaching an equal ratio between women and men, on delegations in this case. For example, at COP 18, there were nineteen delegations with no women and one delegation with no men. The overall trend shows all-male delegations are decreasing each year.



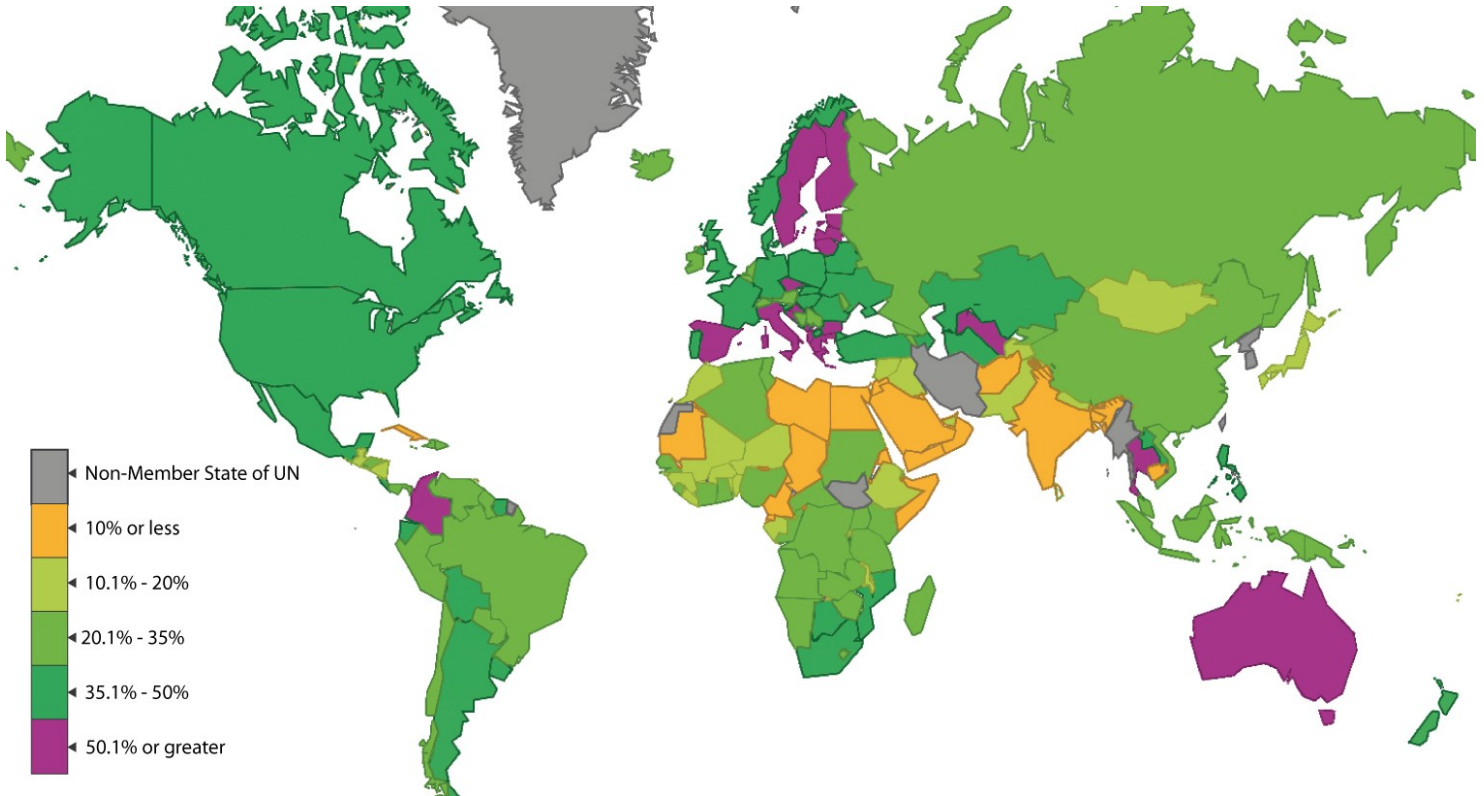
FIGURE 7



## Women's Participation by Country (2008-2012)

To understand better how women's participation on national delegations varies across countries, the below map illustrates the five-year averages of women's participation on their country delegations. From 10% or less to 50% or more, Figures 9 & 10 provide a table of the top 15 and the bottom 15 countries in this regard.

**FIGURE 8**



**FIGURE 9**

Rank	Country	Percentage
1	Saint Kitts and Nevis	81.1%
2	Antigua and Barbuda	75.6%
3	Latvia	74.6%
4	Cook Islands	73.7%
5	Burundi	70.9%
6	Saint Lucia	69.5%
7	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	69.1%
8	Spain	65.8%
9	Colombia	63.3%
10	Lithuania	63.2%
11	Croatia	59.9%
12	Italy	57.3%
13	Australia	57.2%
14	Greece	57.2%
15	Albania	56.6%

**FIGURE 10**

Rank	Country	Percentage
179	Qatar	6.2%
180	Cameroon	5.4%
181	Bangladesh	5.1%
182	Egypt	4.2%
183	Eritrea	3.3%
184	Oman	3.2%
185	Afghanistan	2.9%
186	Mauritania	2.9%
187	Jordan	2.9%
188	Equatorial Guinea	2.3%
189	Yemen	1.3%
190	Chad	1.2%
191	Mauritius	0.0%
192	Saudi Arabia	0.0%
193	Somalia	0.0%

## Women's Participation by Region (2008-2012)

The below data illustrates the average participation of women by official UN region. Figure 11 shows the 5-year average of women's participation from each region while Figure 12 highlights the average for each year.

Notably, as shown in Figure 12, in 2012 the participation of women in Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others, which includes the U.S., New Zealand and Australia, reached over 50%. (*List of breakdown of UN regions, can be accessed at <http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/List-of-Countries-by-UN-Region.docx>*)

FIGURE 11

### 5-Year Average of Women's Participation on National Delegations to the UNFCCC by official UN Region (2008-2012)

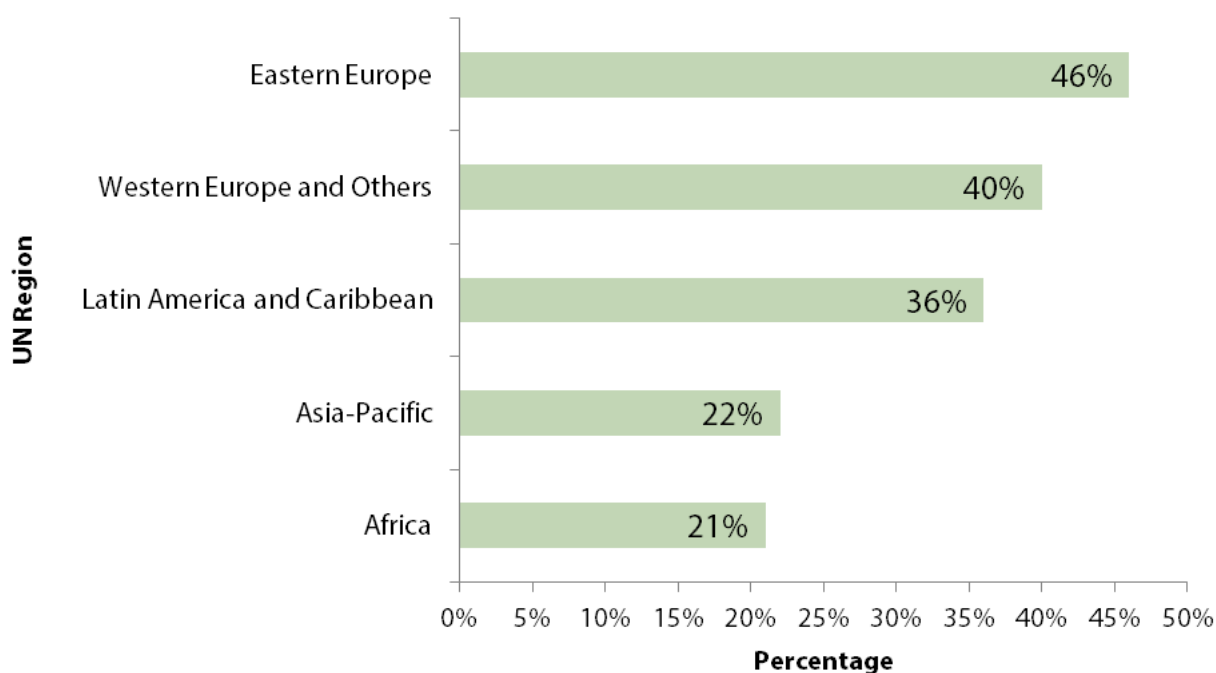


FIGURE 12

### Women's Participation by official UN Regions (2008-2012)

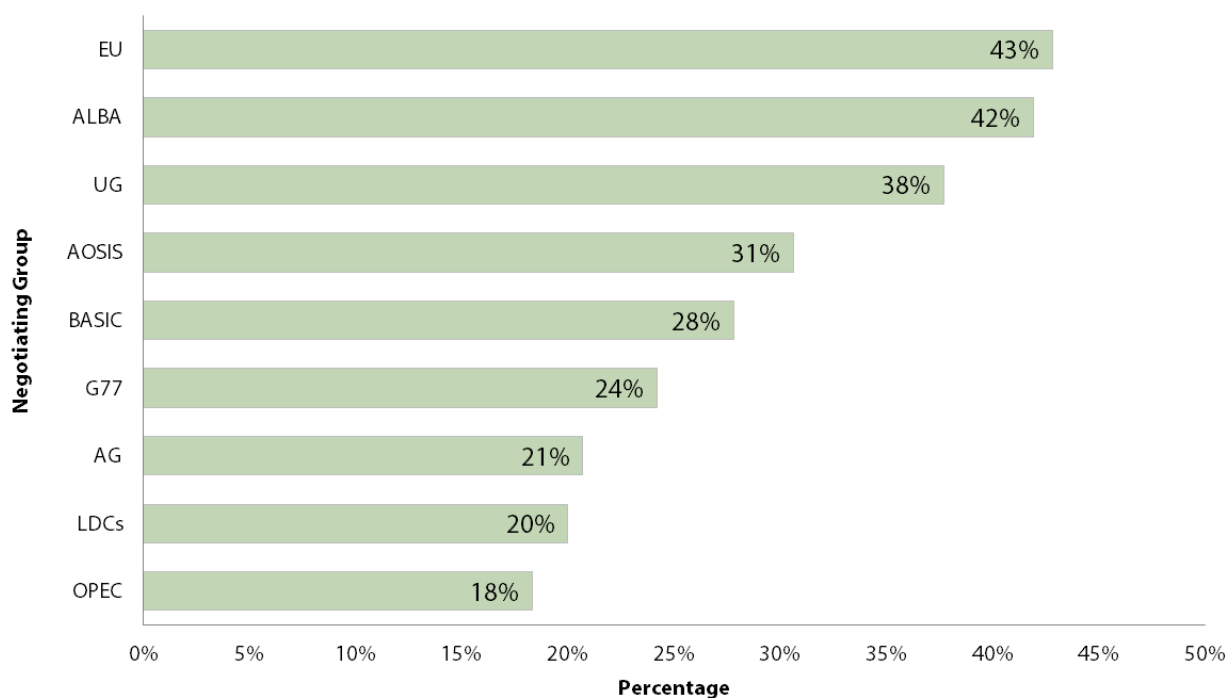
UN Region	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	5-year average
Eastern Europe	41%	41%	52%	49%	55%	<b>46%</b>
Western Europe and Others	40%	38%	41%	40%	51%	<b>40%</b>
Latin America and Caribbean	35%	35%	36%	38%	33%	<b>36%</b>
Asia-Pacific	20%	21%	22%	20%	21%	<b>22%</b>
Africa	18%	20%	21%	22%	21%	<b>21%</b>



## Women's Participation by Negotiating Block (2008-2012)

The below data illustrates the average participation of women by a number of key country negotiating blocks in the UNFCCC. Figure 13 shows the 5-year average of women's participation in each block, while Figure 14 highlights the average for each year. Notably, as shown in Figure 14, in 2012 the participation of women in the European Union negotiating group reached a high of 57%, jumping from 44% in 2011. (*List of breakdown of countries by negotiating blocks can be accessed at <http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/List-of-Countries-by-UNFCCC-Negotiating-Block.docx>*)

**FIGURE 13** 5- Year Average of Women's Participation by Negotiating Block in UNFCCC (2008 - 2012)



**FIGURE 14** Women's Participation by UNFCCC Negotiating Blocks (2008-2012)

Group	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	5-year average
EU	42%	40%	44%	44%	57%	<b>43%</b>
ALBA	38%	40%	44%	47%	43%	<b>42%</b>
UG	34%	36%	42%	37%	45%	<b>38%</b>
AOSIS	27%	32%	30%	32%	28%	<b>31%</b>
BASIC	29%	28%	28%	27%	28%	<b>28%</b>
G77	22%	24%	25%	24%	24%	<b>24%</b>
AG	17%	20%	21%	22%	21%	<b>21%</b>
LDCs	19%	19%	20%	22%	18%	<b>20%</b>
OPEC	17%	17%	20%	18%	21%	<b>18%</b>

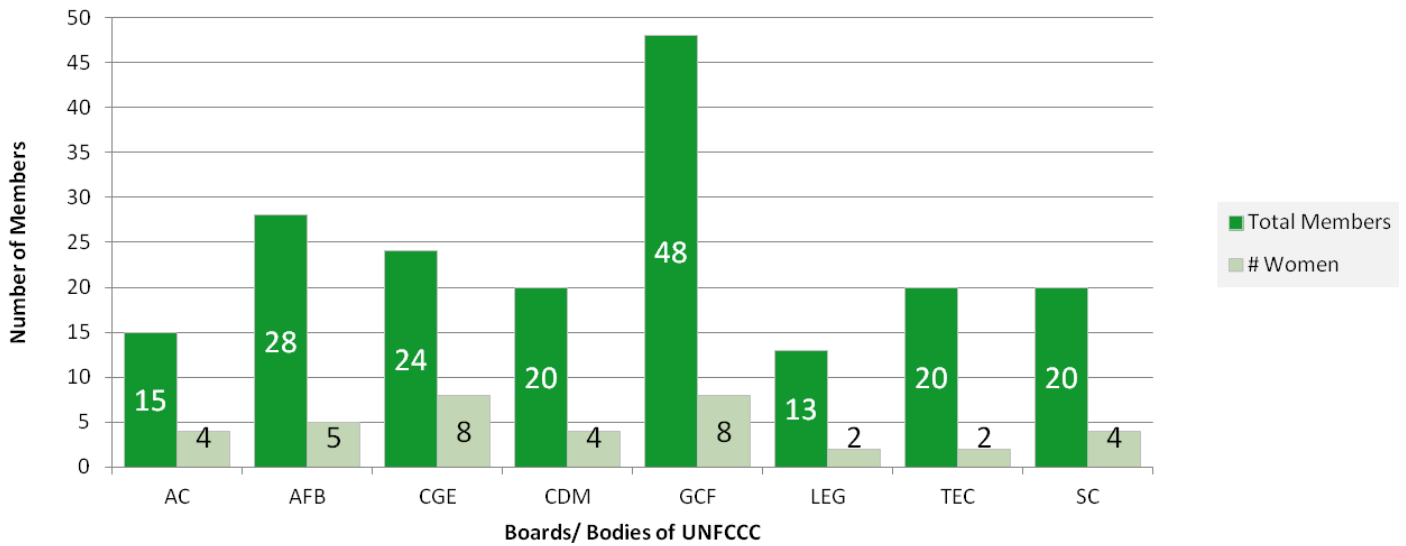
# Women's Participation on UNFCCC Boards & Bodies

This final figure depicts women's representation on a number of boards and bodies of the UNFCCC. The data below includes participation both as members and alternates, because differentiating showed no significance. In 2012, women's participation on each of the boards and bodies included in the report remains at or below 10%. Notably, as Figure 15 shows, the newly-elected Green Climate Fund board has only eight women out of forty-eight board members.



FIGURE 15

## Number of Women on Boards and Bodies of UNFCCC in 2012



## **AUTHOR**

Bridget Burns (WEDO)

## **RESEARCH SUPPORT**

Ronit Anspach (WEDO)

## **CONTRIBUTORS**

Eleanor Blomstrom (WEDO), Cate Owren (WEDO)

## **DESIGN**

Bridget Burns (WEDO), Colin Hughes (JuXapo.com)

## **PHOTOS**

Andrea Quesada Aguilar (WEDO), Nathalie Eddy (GGCA),  
Bridget Burns (WEDO)

## **ABOUT WEDO**

A women's global advocacy organization, WEDO envisions a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment. WEDO works on a range of cross-cutting issues—from climate change and natural resource management, to global governance and enhanced civil society participation—towards three interlinked goals: to ensure women are empowered as decision-makers and leaders, especially in environmental and sustainable development arenas; to ensure sustainable development policies, plans and practices are gender responsive; and, to ensure global governance is transparent, accountable and effective.

In partnership with the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), through the support and leadership of the Government of Finland and further support from the Governments of Denmark and Iceland, since 2007 WEDO has worked towards achieving these three goals through strategic advocacy and technical support to key stakeholders and decision-makers in the UNFCCC process, making the linkages between gender equality and climate change, in addition to administering the Women Delegates Fund to strengthen women's participation in the negotiations.

For news, updates and key resources on this work, visit WEDO's website at [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org).



Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)

355 Lexington Ave., New York, NY 10017

Tel: +1-212-973-0325 | Fax: +1-212-973-0335

Like us on [Facebook.com/WEDOWorldwide](https://www.facebook.com/WEDOWorldwide)

Follow us on Twitter [@WEDO\\_Worldwide](https://twitter.com/WEDO_Worldwide)