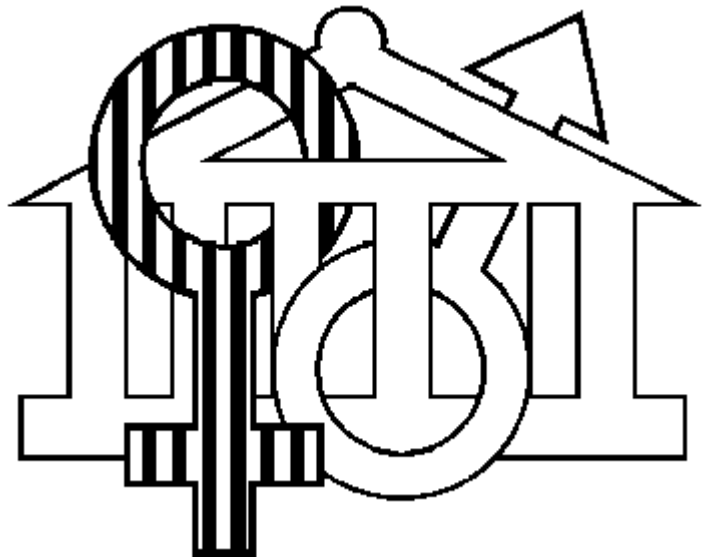


PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE

*An assessment of developments in national
parliaments, political parties, governments and
the Inter-Parliamentary Union, five years
after the Fourth World Conference on Women*

Based on IPU's world survey and analysed in August 1999 by Ms. Geneviève
Pascaud-Bécane, former official of the French Senate, and the IPU Secretariat



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FOREWORD

The possibility for all citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. In the majority of countries, however, the political arena remains largely dominated by men, and is even an exclusively male bastion in some countries. Yet this neglects a fundamental principle of democracy, which the Inter-Parliamentary Union incorporated in the *Universal Declaration on Democracy* using the following words*:

"The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences".

Against this "backdrop", when it came time to define the priorities for the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United Nations wished for special attention to be paid to the question of women's participation in political life. To assist them in this respect, the IPU solicited the ideas of the men and women politicians who compose it and drafted a *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life*. By passing on the sum total of several decades of inquiries and studies, debate and efforts to work out norms and strategies concerning women's participation in political life, the Union thus endeavoured to enrich the work of the United Nations.

Where do we stand today?

From 4 to 9 June 2000, the United Nations General Assembly will hold a special session to take stock of national, regional and international follow-up to the *Declaration* and *Platform for Action* adopted by the Beijing Conference. The IPU, which since 1995 has tirelessly encouraged Parliaments and political circles to take the recommendations of the *Beijing Platform for Action* and those of its own *Plan of Action* into consideration, has undertaken, in consultation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, to survey all national Parliaments and, through them, the political parties represented in them, in order to determine how they have been associated with the follow-up to the Beijing Conference and which steps they have taken to ensure that the recommendations contained in this document and in the Union's *Plan of Action* are given effect.

* Adopted in September 1997 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, this declaration was subsequently welcomed by the United Nations General Assembly.

The following pages sum up in a lively fashion the information gathered in the course of this survey. Mrs. Pascaud-Bécane, a former official of the French Senate, was responsible for conducting the analysis, in close cooperation with the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. She did so skilfully, making an uncompromising assessment while highlighting the positive points and identifying promising areas for the future. She deserves sincere thanks, together with all those men and women in national Parliaments and political parties who took time to answer the IPU's questions and contribute their thoughts, thereby providing some extremely rich and diversified "raw material".

The results of this study show, if need be, how very important it is that Parliaments be associated with the process of first preparing, then following up the international agreements which come out of the major world summits of governments, and which are State commitments. They also recall that Parliament, which often lacks the means to influence international negotiations when they are in process, is a *sine qua non* once these negotiations have been completed. This study reveals that wherever Parliament was involved in the Beijing process, the *Platform for Action* has given rise to duly budgeted laws, programmes and measures which represent a plus for democracy and for social balance and progress. Moreover, the study underscores once again the urgent need for change in the direction of partnership between men and women in political parties, and it highlights how, once such change occurs, it has a positive impact on society as a whole and the conduct of public affairs, above and beyond the party sphere.

During the special session of the General Assembly, the IPU intends to hold a tripartite brainstorming session on "*Democracy through partnership between men and women*" on 6 June 2000. Representatives of governments, Parliaments and the UN system as a whole will be invited to take part in this process of reflection, and the present study will be brought to the attention of the General Assembly. In this way, the IPU hopes to see to it that a simple yet strong message is heard: if international decisions are to be implemented at the national level, the process must involve the institutional actor with the legitimacy to represent the peoples, namely Parliament.

The overall implementation of the Beijing *Platform for Action* has begun, but is by no means over. The study shows that it is minds rather than concrete realities or laws that have evolved, and this is perhaps what matters most in the final analysis. Likewise, many obstacles still prevent women from participating in political life on an equal footing with men. Under pressure from women, however, a genuine cultural revolution affecting politics seems to be under way. Nevertheless, in order to be a true institutional miniature of society and meet its needs, both Parliament and its governing bodies will have to be composed more and more of a balanced number of men and women. Similarly, to be attuned to society, political parties and their governing bodies will also have to open up to women. The entire Beijing *Platform for Action*, with its twelve fields of action, can only take effect once men and women share in political debate and decision-making.

Anders B. Johnsson
Secretary General

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OVERVIEW OF THE GOALS AND FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

The Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Beijing process

The commitments made at world summits such as the Fourth World Conference on Women are State commitments. But parliaments, by virtue of their institutional authority and the fact that they represent the aspirations of the people within State structures, are key actors when it comes to addressing the challenges and issues facing society. Accordingly, it is the practice of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) to stimulate and promote the contribution of parliaments and their members to the process of preparing, holding and following up world summits, for example in the case of the Beijing Conference, which culminated with the adoption of the ***Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action***.

As a contribution to the preparation of those documents, the Inter-Parliamentary Union adopted, in March 1994, a ***Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life*** (Annex 1). It also encouraged substantial parliamentary involvement in the preparation and holding of the Beijing Conference and organised a meeting on 7 September 1995 at the headquarters of the National People's Congress of China, at the close of which some 500 MPs from 102 countries adopted a ***Declaration*** (Annex 2) pledging to ensure that the Beijing Platform for Action and the Union's Plan of Action would not remain a dead letter. Since then, the Union has spared no effort to follow up the Beijing commitments.

The need for a preliminary assessment

Now that almost five years have passed since the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, the time has come for a preliminary assessment. **The United Nations General Assembly will meet in Special Session from 4 to 9 June 2000** to examine the steps taken in different countries, at the institutional and non-institutional levels, to follow up the *Beijing Platform for Action* adopted in September 1995. The Session will be the culmination of a series of global and regional meetings and initiatives generally referred to as "Beijing + 5".

Viewing such an assessment as a prerequisite for further progress, the Inter-Parliamentary Union canvassed parliaments and the political parties represented within them on their response to and action on the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the Union's *Plan of Action*. The survey was launched in October 1998 as a complement to a UN survey of governments, and the questionnaires (Annexes 3 and 4) were prepared in close cooperation with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women and in consultation with the Union's Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The first questionnaire, addressed specifically to parliaments, seeks to measure the extent to which they have been involved in implementing the commitments undertaken. The second, which was transmitted to parliamentary political groups through the assemblies concerned, seeks to assist such groups in evaluating the changes set in motion and the obstacles still encountered by women.

In support of this written assessment and in keeping with its practice, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has, in addition, stimulated parliamentary involvement and a parliamentary input into the June 2000 Session and plans to hold a meeting at UN Headquarters during the Session on "*Democracy through Partnership between Men and Women*" with a view to promoting the necessary dialogue between representatives of three major categories of actors: parliaments,

governments and relevant organisations of the UN system. These initiatives are motivated by a desire to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the UN and to add a parliamentary dimension to the United Nations.

Informative survey findings despite tight deadlines

One-third of all national parliaments responded to the survey, as did some 12 per cent of the political parties represented within them. Data were received from a total of 67 countries, either from one source or generally from both.

These findings, however limited, reflect broad trends and indicate the interest felt by politicians in the issues addressed by the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the Union's *Plan of Action*. It may be assumed that the survey would have been even more instructive if it had covered more than the three-and-a-half-year period following the Beijing Conference; clearly, changes in institutions, customs and political practices take a longer time to mature.

It is also noteworthy that parliaments with a larger number of women members were more inclined to respond and that the civil society such parliaments represent is more concerned to ensure gender equality. One-third of all replies received came from parliaments with more than 15 per cent women members. Moreover, half of all parliaments with a higher than average proportion of women responded to the survey.

Parliaments and political parties are generally well informed and more aware

The replies show that many governments referred the *Beijing Platform for Action* to parliament in one form or another. Many parliaments were also informed of the Union's *Plan of Action*.

The extent to which parliaments are informed determines their scope for action. They clearly play a key role in social change, especially in the advancement of women, not only because of their responsibility for shaping and amending the legal framework that underlies and determines women's rights in all areas (particularly as regards participation in decision-making, discussion and voting of the funds required for administrative initiatives, and reorientation and oversight of government action), but also because they fuel public debate and inform public opinion and the media, which influence them in turn.

Each parliamentarian is also a male or female party member and can thus stimulate his or her party and vice versa. Individual parliamentarians also engage in a dialogue with their voters, registering their aspirations and perceiving the motivation for their choices. As interaction between civil society and parliamentary institutions is essential, parliaments must be truly representative of both halves of the population.

The fact that certain parliaments are not informed or involved, often for institutional reasons, should not prevent parliamentarians from taking into account, mentioning or using material from the international documents during legislative or budgetary debates. They are more inclined to do so in cases where public opinion or the media are a source of motivation or pressure. This again raises the question of the representation of women in parliament and the promotion of awareness throughout civil society of issues relating to the equality of men and women.

Most political parties that responded to the survey were also familiar with the two international documents and expressed a desire to open up their ranks to women and take practical steps to that end. These traditionally male bastions now seem concerned to revise their statutes and admit more women to their internal structures and lists of candidates, if only to satisfy public opinion, which is less and less reluctant to elect women and increasingly keen to change the present cast of players on the political stage.

The survey thus reveals that parliaments and parties have become more aware of the issues involved and the need for women to participate more fully in the decision-making process. However, difficulties in changing electoral customs and legislation and in establishing new practices contribute to the persistence of strong opposition in society and among women themselves.

It is significant that most obstacles to progress consist, as so often in the case of women, in deficiencies of various kinds: the complications of everyday life, lack of time because of the priority accorded to family or career, lack of training, lack of money, insufficient media influence and, above all, the survival everywhere of traditional prejudices and stereotypes regarding the putative roles of men and women in the family and public life. These most commonly mentioned obstacles are not reduced by the all too rare adjustments made by the public authorities and political parties in an attempt to take account of the constraints affecting women.

More committed governments

It emerges from the replies to the survey that Executives are, on the whole, committed to change even though their membership is predominantly male.

Many governments seem to have prepared a national plan of action to implement their Beijing commitments and to have involved parliament both in drafting and in implementing the plans, which are to be presented at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 2000 with an initial status report on their application.

A significant change within the Inter-Parliamentary Union

Since September 1995, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has constantly supported the Beijing process by means of substantive discussions, studies and specialised meetings. Major changes have also taken place within the Union, ranging from official recognition of the coordinating structure established by women to the rewording of its Statutes and Rules.

First steps towards implementation and a general sense of progress

The great majority of replies to the survey indicate that considerable progress has been made since 1995, usually in connection with action under national plans, except in countries where economic or war-related circumstances are so harsh that they rule out the possibility of giving priority to the enhancement of equality between men and women. Some parliaments, especially in Eastern Europe, even report a decline in the status of women, particularly as regards participation in public life.

According to the data received, although parliaments are not always the initiators of action at country level, they are never indifferent and are usually aware of developments. Activists in parliament do not hesitate to question the Executive, citing international instruments in support of their proposals and arguments in legislative and budgetary debates.

Parliaments that have given the most sustained attention to women's needs in their legislative proceedings seem to be those with the highest proportion of women MPs and in which the offices of speaker, deputy speaker or other leading positions are held by women.

The most frequently mentioned areas of parliamentary involvement include:

- Education and vocational training,
- Health
- Family law
- Maternity protection
- Professional equality;
- Action against domestic violence.

It is to be feared, however, that worldwide budgetary austerity policies may have adversely affected or delayed action on behalf of women.

In the specific areas of political decision-making and implementation of the Union's Plan of Action, a widespread increase in awareness is also discernible. Very few countries, however, have amended their electoral legislation along the lines recommended in the Plan of Action and it is still too soon to gauge whether there has been significant progress in increasing the proportion of women in parliaments and their internal structures, a remark which is equally applicable to governments.

Grounds for hope

Yet above and beyond the frequently cited difficulties and the complex endeavour to formulate and implement appropriate legal provisions and practices, mentalities are gradually evolving. **Even though progress can never be taken for granted** or viewed as inevitable, **it is an undeniable fact that sweeping changes are taking place in most countries, that awareness is growing**, and that the ideas sown in the public mind are germinating and giving rise to a lively debate. Arguments are taken up and the momentum generated is maintained by the movement's activists. The work accomplished in Beijing and at the Inter-Parliamentary Union serves as a frame of reference and a tool for further action. By means of new technology and all-party networks of women MPs, information is circulating, initiatives are "catching on" and opinions are changing. With ever stiffening resolve, women are beginning or continuing to lay siege to a former stronghold of male supremacy that is yielding to their pressure.

The idea of parity is gaining ground. However long the march from Beijing, the findings of the survey offer real grounds for hope.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE SURVEY

A twofold aim

An original feature of the IPU questionnaires was that they targeted both the parliamentary institution and the political parties represented within them. Two types of questionnaire were sent to presiding officers of parliaments:

- ▶ The first (Annex 3), concerning parliamentary involvement in the implementation of decisions taken in Beijing, was designed to ascertain whether parliaments had been informed, in one way or another, of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Union's Plan of Action and to assess legislative developments in the light of those documents and any changes that had occurred within the parliaments themselves.
- ▶ The second (Annex 4), to be transmitted to the leaders of the political groups represented in individual parliaments, was designed with the more specific aim of assessing action to facilitate women's participation in the political decision-making process, a subject to which the Union has devoted sustained attention for many years.

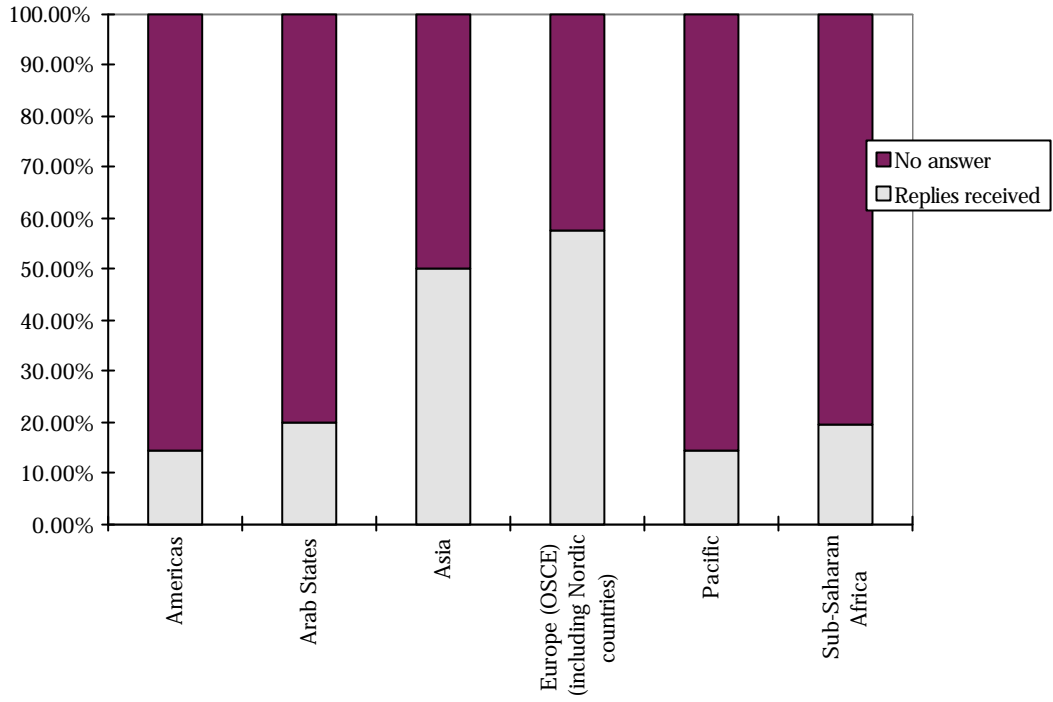
We shall take a closer look at the content of the questionnaires when we come to examine the replies received.

Significant results

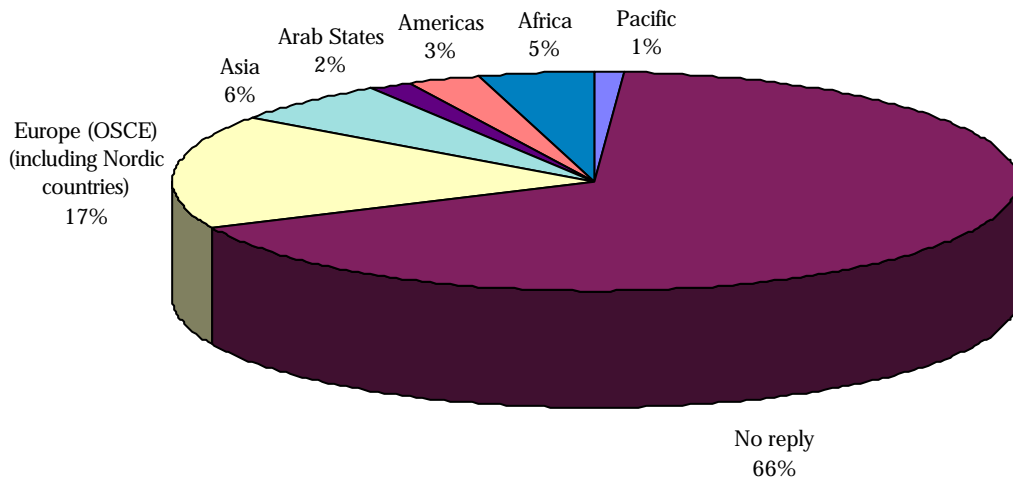
Replies to the Union's questionnaires were received from:

- ▶ 60 (33.5 %) of the 179 existing national parliaments (the data cover 62 chambers as 66 parliaments are bicameral):
 - Americas (5 countries): Canada, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Trinidad and Tobago
 - Arab States (3): Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia
 - Asia (11 countries): China, Israel, Japan, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Viet Nam
 - Europe (OSCE including the Nordic countries) (31): Albania, Andorra, Belarus, Belgium, Cyprus, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and United Kingdom
 - Pacific (2 countries): Australia and New Zealand
 - Sub-Saharan Africa (8 countries): Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa and Zambia
- ▶ 126 parties represented in 49 (27%) of the 179 national parliaments, i.e. some 12% of the just under 1,000 parties represented in parliamentary assemblies:
 - Americas (8 replies from parties in 5 countries): Canada, Cuba, Chile, Guatemala and Haiti
 - Arab States (3 replies from 3 countries): Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia

Breakdown of replies by region



Breakdown of replies by number of States in the world



- Asia (19 replies from parties in 6 countries): India, Israel, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand
- Europe (OSCE including the Nordic countries) (76 replies from parties in 28 countries): Andorra, Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Ukraine
- Pacific (1 reply): New Zealand
- Sub-Saharan Africa (16 replies from parties in 5 countries): Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire and Seychelles

It will be noted that replies from some countries were received only from parliament or only from political parties. As a result, a total of **67 countries, i.e. 37.4% of all countries with a parliament to which questionnaires were sent**, took part in the survey.

These figures call for a number of basic comments.

Their quantity - on the face of it relatively limited compared to the total number of States with a parliament in 1999 (179) or the number of political parties represented in parliament (almost 1,000) - may seem to limit the scope of the data provided. In practice, however, the replies received are extremely relevant and instructive in terms of both source and content.

There may be various reasons for the relatively limited number of replies. It may, for example, be a sign of fatigue at the prospect of responding to yet another questionnaire on the rights and status of women. Then again, it may be due to the short lapse of time between 1995 and 1998, the year in which the questionnaire was sent out. If this is indeed the case, the problem is not a lack of interest in the subject but the unduly short time span of some three or four years. It takes months or even years to draft and adopt a bill or regulation, to create new structures, to establish programmes of action or to amend the statutes of a political party, and it takes even longer to translate these changes into practical results. Parliaments themselves, and their internal structures, are only renewed every three, four or five years or at even longer intervals. Time is therefore of the essence when it comes to evaluating change.

It follows that the status of women cannot be transformed overnight, although history sometimes quickens its pace. In the absence of significant developments, some addressees may have seen little point in responding or concluded that a lack of progress should preferably pass unobserved.

The length of the questionnaire and the detailed nature of certain questions may also have discouraged addressees with a busy schedule. The questionnaire method is known to entail both advantages and drawbacks, permitting comparisons in time and space but tending to be relatively simplistic. The wording of questions may not be properly understood. Some questions may overlap or be too similar. Open or closed questions produce replies of varying usefulness in terms the information and explanations they contain. A simple yes or no answer is often inadequate when it comes to interpreting extremely complex circumstances.

The value judgment required by certain questions ("*do you feel that ...*") may have caused respondents to hesitate before revealing their personal preferences. This may account for the inconsistencies noted in replies from different individual respondents from the same parliament.

Another obviously inherent difficulty in any international inquiry is that of comprehension of questions by respondents belonging to different legal traditions. Some concepts or functions, particularly in the constitutional and institutional areas and in legislation on civil liberties, differ from country to country and can result in inaccuracies or, worse still, misinterpretations.

Genuine representativeness

But despite these traditional reservations, the replies received constitute a remarkable body of material, first because they supplement the findings of previous studies and bring them into sharper focus, often introducing a tangible note based on experience, and secondly because their source is significant.

It was a plausible assumption that respondents who took the time to answer, sometimes at length and with great sincerity, were interested in the content and generally aware of the issues. And that assumption was borne out: parliaments' inclination to respond increased in line with the number of women MPs among their members and the extent to which the corresponding civil society was concerned with the issue of gender equality.

The largest number of replies thus came from parliaments with the highest proportion of women: one-half of countries with 15% or more women MPs replied, one-third of countries with between 5% and 15%, and a quarter or less than a quarter of other countries. Moreover, parliaments with a large cohort of women were sometimes inclined to judge developments more severely because of their higher expectations (Australia, New Zealand). One-third of all replies came from parliaments whose membership was more than 15% female.

Over half of all European countries (European Union and Eastern European countries) are represented (29 out of 47). Contributions from Asia included major States such as China and India, those from North America included Canada and those from Oceania included Australia and New Zealand. The percentage of replies received must also be adjusted to take account of the population size of the countries concerned.

The most notable absentees are certain African and South American countries and many Arab countries. It should further be noted that the replies for Africa represent a sample of the continent's major blocs of countries: the Maghreb, central Africa and southern Africa.

PARLIAMENTS AND THE FOLLOW-UP TO BEIJING

► **Parliaments are relatively well briefed on the Beijing Platform for Action and the Union's Plan of Action**

The extent to which parliaments are informed determines their scope for action. They clearly play a key role in social change, especially in the advancement of women, not only because of their responsibility for shaping and amending the legal framework that underlies and determines women's rights in all areas (particularly as regards participation in decision-making, discussion and voting of the funds required for administrative initiatives, and reorientation and oversight of government action), but also because they fuel public debate and inform public opinion and the media, which influence them in turn.

Each parliamentarian is also a male or female party member and can thus stimulate his or her party and vice versa. Individual parliamentarians also engage in a dialogue with their voters, registering their aspirations and perceiving the motivation for their choices. As interaction between civil society and parliamentary institutions is essential, parliaments must be truly representative of both halves of the population.

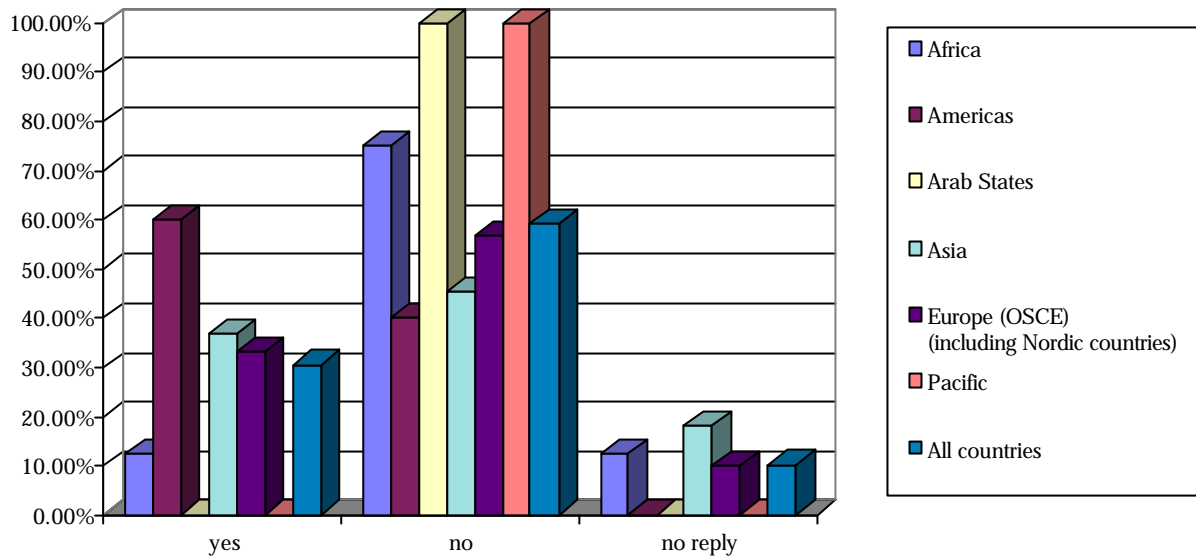
Familiarity with the Beijing Platform for Action

The opening questions in the questionnaire were designed to elicit information on government presentations, debates and votes on the Platform for Action in national parliaments.

The replies are extremely diverse and influenced as a matter of course by the institutional regime governing relations between the Executive and the Legislative in the constitution and specifying the powers enjoyed by parliament. They are nevertheless instructive and indicate a relatively satisfactory level of information and awareness.

According to the data received, about one-third of governments have formally referred the Platform for Action to parliament. The percentage is higher in Asian and European countries, and far lower in African and Arab countries.

The Government of countries taking part in the survey presented the "Beijing Platform for Action" to Parliament



In countries that have referred the Platform to parliament, the procedures followed have naturally been quite diverse. In Albania, Belarus, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Slovakia and Sweden, for example, the commitments were introduced, discussed and approved. In other countries, they were merely introduced (Canada, Chile, Israel), introduced and approved (Iceland), introduced and discussed without a vote (Kazakhstan, Latvia) or discussed without an introduction or a vote (Andorra, Cyprus, United Kingdom).

The apportionment of authority to the Executive and the Legislature in respect of international commitments may preclude or dispense with the requirement for a debate. This is the situation in Australia and Estonia.

In many countries, the Platform for Action was referred only to the relevant government departments. For example, the Parliament of Sri Lanka states that it was approved only by the Minister for Women's Rights, as issues relating to gender equality are discussed in a parliamentary advisory committee attached to that Ministry. Pakistan also states that government departments bear sole responsibility for implementation of the Platform for Action.

Even in the absence of a formal introduction and debate, many governments involved MPs by associating them with the consultations prior to the Fourth Conference, including them in their delegation or providing them with the final report.

In some cases where the government failed to launch a debate, highly motivated MPs took the initiative themselves, for example in Estonia, where they publicised the bills adopted, and in France, where oral questions were put to the Government. In Tunisia, women MPs who had attended the Conference reported on the proceedings to the Chamber of Deputies.

Non-referral of the conclusions of the Platform for Action to parliament or failure to involve parliament in its implementation has not prevented MPs from taking aspects of the commitments into account or referring to them frequently in legislative debates, in support of bills, during the budget debate or in exercising their oversight options (oral questions,

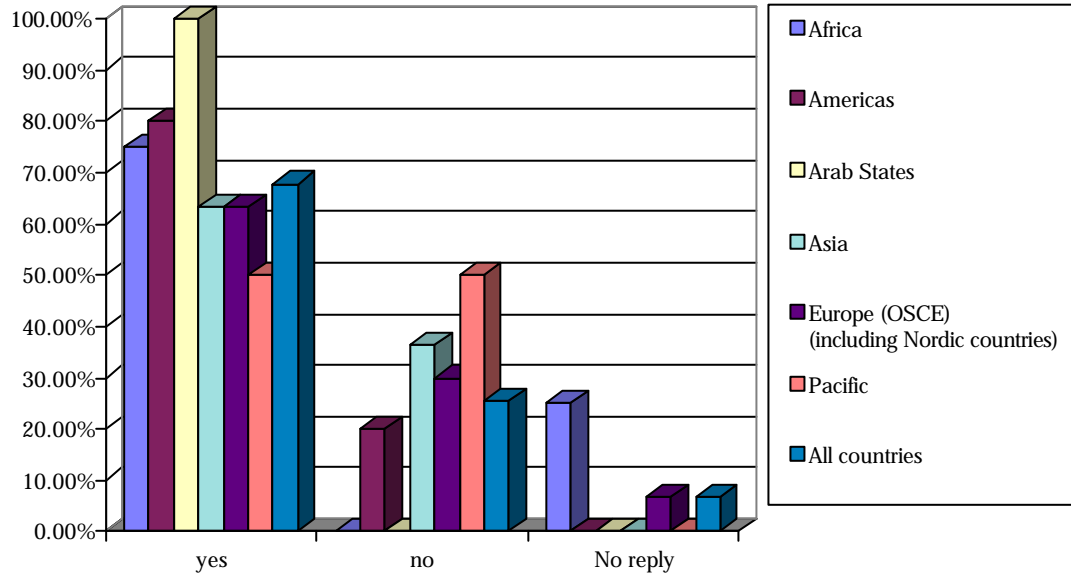
interpellations, studies). The Australian reply mentions some fifteen references to the 1995 Platform for Action in parliamentary initiatives; apparently one woman MP, who was a member of the national delegation to the Fourth Conference, frequently questions the Government about its follow-up action. In 1996, the French Senate, in its report on a *Joint information mission on the place and role of women in public life*, also made numerous references to the Beijing proceedings.

Coordinating action taken prior to the Fourth Conference has in some cases been continued. For example, the Parliament of Angola mentions regular contacts and meetings between the Ministry of the Family and the Advancement of Women, the group of women MPs and the specialised parliamentary committee on exchanges of information. Côte d'Ivoire reports that the Ministry for the Family and the Advancement of Women has organised nationwide consultations *for the harmonisation of views*. In Cuba a "national seminar" was held to disseminate the Beijing Platform for Action among public bodies, political and academic organisations and associations and to establish structures for its implementation.

National plans and parliamentary involvement

The great majority of governments in respondent countries have established or are in the process of establishing national action plans or programmes to implement the resolutions adopted in Beijing.

The Government of countries taking part in the survey prepared a national action plan to implement the "Beijing Platform for Action"



Some parliaments have been involved in preparing the plans and in evaluating follow-up, for example the parliaments of Belgium, Canada, Cyprus, Cuba, Czech Republic and Finland. Others have not, even though they had discussed the Platform for Action, as in Albania.

Most plans include a section concerning the place of women in political decision-making. The Parliament of the Republic of Angola mentions specific awareness-building targets designed to promote participation by women and encourage parties to field women candidates. Canada's 1995 Federal Plan for Gender Equality mentions that *"the active participation of women ... at all levels of decision-making is central to equality, human advancement and progress"*.

According to the reply from China, the goal is to have more and more women in positions of responsibility at all levels. Japan also gives top priority to increasing women's involvement in political decision-making.

Some countries, such as Egypt, Portugal and Tajikistan, have made no special arrangements under that heading.

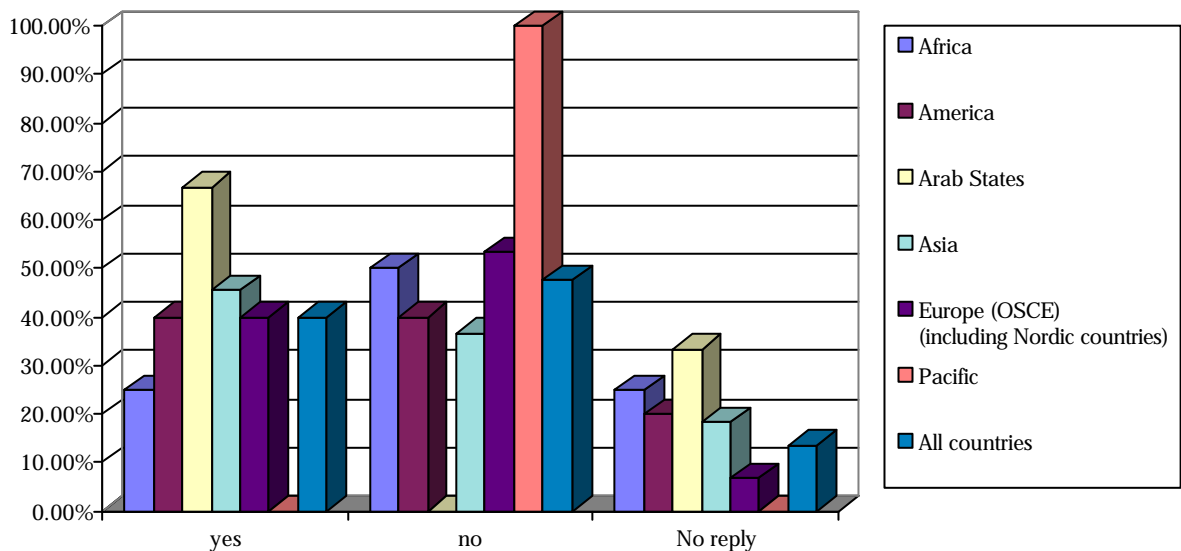
Very few governments have taken no specific action to implement the commitments made in Beijing: in the light of the replies received, only the governments of Andorra, Belarus, Estonia, Guatemala, Hungary, Israel, Slovenia and Thailand fall into that category.

Familiarity with the Inter-Parliamentary Union's 1994 Plan of Action

Most parliaments have transmitted the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action to their government. The few exceptions are due to a variety of material or formal factors, including language considerations.

In addition, the Plan has been laid before almost half of all parliaments by means of diverse legal procedures.

"The Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action to Correct Present Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life" was presented to the Parliament of countries taking part in the survey



Some parliaments, such as those of Belarus, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cuba, Cyprus, Egypt, Latvia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Mongolia, Republic of Korea, Romania, etc. actually brought it to the notice of their governments themselves. Some discussed it, such as the parliaments of Belarus and Latvia. In countries such as Turkey, the discussion took place in the Foreign Affairs Committee, and in Finland and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia it was held in the IPU delegation.

Lessons to be learned from the data

Clearly, the product of the Beijing and IPU endeavours has made its mark and enhanced awareness among governments, parliaments and administrations. In the majority of parliaments, the documents serve as a frame of reference for bills and proposals, and are used in debate to make points and support arguments.

In addition, they are constantly cited in regional bodies such as the Council of Europe and the European Parliament and in the numerous reports of the European Commissions, in EU programmes of action for equality of opportunity for men and women, and at the "summits" held in Rome in 1996 and in Paris in 1999 by the group of European experts on "Women and Political Decision-Making".

Yet their use clearly presupposes some element of motivation among politicians, and this in turn raises such issues as the representation of women in parliaments and the existence of public opinion and media pressure.

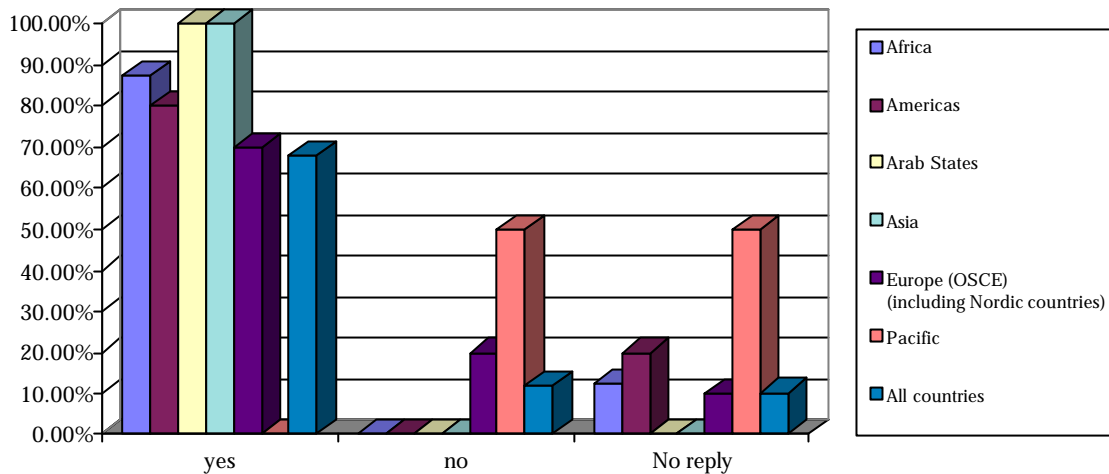
Given the virtually universal absence, save in the countries of Northern Europe, of the critical mass of women MPs which most specialists put at 30%, it is difficult to imagine MPs addressing issues that are not of direct personal relevance unless they are obliged to do so by public opinion. The survey shows, in fact, that the Scandinavian countries or countries with active women's movements lead the field when it comes to monitoring compliance with international promises or commitments.

► An overall sense of progress

One open question in the survey elicited opinions on progress made since 1995: "Since 1995, do you feel that progress has been made in your country to reduce the inequalities that may have existed between men and women?"

It is a highly significant fact that the majority of parliaments replied in the affirmative.

Do you feel that progress has been made in your country since 1995 in reducing the inequalities that may have existed between men and women?



The examples cited in support of this sense of progress were so many and varied and concerned so many different areas that they cannot all be mentioned. We shall therefore merely outline general trends.

Amendments to basic legal instruments or the recent ratification of major international treaties are often placed at the top of the list.

For example, the Portuguese Parliament mentions an amendment to the 1997 Constitution recognising "*as a fundamental task of the State the promotion of equality between men and women ... and the principle of non-discrimination on grounds of gender for access to political office.*" Latvia reports that a new chapter on human rights was added to the Constitution in 1998.

A new approach to future action, differing from country to country, is often mentioned in second place:

- Establishment of specific bodies to take action against inequality or to address women's issues (Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Czech Republic, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Japan, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, etc.);
- Greater interministerial coordination (Czech Republic); a more global approach to problems at the governmental level (Australia);
- Organisation of seminars on the topic attended by MPs and members of the Government (Angola);
- A more general concern to ensure gender mainstreaming (Canada, Sweden).

Greater determination to ensure more freedom of choice for men and women alike, regardless of social background, is also mentioned, for example by the Australian Parliament:

- Assistance to families in difficulties;
- Employment assistance;
- Day-care centres for working women;
- Financial assistance for women who choose to stay at home.

Many parliaments (the examples given are not exhaustive) emphasise initiatives taken in critical areas specified in Beijing:

- The war on poverty (Namibia, Philippines);
- Health and access to health care;
- Education for girls (Burkina Faso, Czech Republic, Philippines, Singapore);
- The elimination of all forms of discrimination (Burkina Faso, France, Malta, Republic of Korea);
- Social protection for mothers, particularly maternity leave (Israel);
- Sundry benefits and subsidies for families;
- Equality of opportunity in employment (Luxembourg).

Some countries also mention "the establishment of social funds for the economic empowerment of women" and the opening-up of competitive examinations hitherto reserved for men (Côte d'Ivoire), amendments to electoral legislation (Belgium, Cape Verde) and amendments to family law (Malta, Namibia, Singapore). Widespread action has also been taken against domestic violence (Belgium, Israel, Malta, Philippines, Portugal).

Some parliaments mention as signs of progress the larger number of women elected at the national or local level (Egypt, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Pakistan), appointed to positions of responsibility in the civil service (Côte d'Ivoire) or serving on advisory committees (Egypt, Japan). Others mention discussions in the media (Angola).

Yet the general optimism is tempered by reservations. Some parliaments, such as that of Australia, note that changes for the better have been accompanied by changes for the worse, due, for example, to budget cuts that have adversely affected action on behalf of women and resistance in Parliament to genuine equality legislation. It is to be feared that Australia is not alone in this respect and that the worldwide pursuit of budgetary austerity policies may have hindered or delayed action on behalf of women.

Guatemala states that, although the Constitution enshrines the principle of equality, women are not paid the same salaries for the same jobs and do not have the same educational opportunities, equal access to power, etc.

A sombre note is also struck by Hungary, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and New Zealand (which actually considers that the situation has deteriorated: "*fewer women ministers, just as many wage disparities*"), Poland, the Russian Federation, San Marino and Slovenia. In the former communist countries, women seem to have lost ground in many areas, particularly that of political participation.

Romania attributes the under-representation of women since 1989 to "*the emergence of the Eléna Céaucescu syndrome, [which] developed among people as a reaction to the excessive involvement of women in politics, imposed by the communist party; the aggravation of economic difficulties ... which makes women channel all their efforts into solving the problems related to daily existence and limited to the family sphere; the lack of a coherent programme of affirmation action aimed at supporting the access of women to power...*" This bears out the assumption that progress can never be taken for granted or viewed as inevitable.

Moreover, the general sense of progress should not cloud the fact that much remains to be done. The reply from Côte d'Ivoire is enlightening in this regard: "*The struggle for women's emancipation and participation began a long time ago, but it is still a daily struggle. Although progress has been made, it is still minimal because male domination continues to be pervasive.*"

► Implementation of legal commitments

The questionnaire addressed to parliaments (Annex 3) reproduces the key provisions of the Plan of Action and Platform for Action concerning the judicial basis for equality.

The questions deal successively with incorporation of the principle of equality in basic legislation, the establishment of a mechanism for monitoring compliance with the principle, the ratification of international legal instruments such as the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) or regional instruments, and, lastly, the adoption of legislation based specifically on the content of the two major reference instruments. One question also concerns the possible revision of existing legal terminology which is unduly slanted towards the male sex. The pre-1995 and post-1995 periods are considered separately in order to assess the impact of international commitments.

Well-nigh general recognition of the principle of equality

Virtually all States have, in many cases from the outset, incorporated the principle of equality in their basic legislation. This is noted in the first paragraph of the **Beijing Parliamentary Declaration** (Annex 2) and actually draws attention to the shortcomings of purely formal recognition of equality.

Some legal systems, especially those based on the common-law model, still rule out any solemn statement of principle - hence the difficulty of making inter-State comparisons. According to the Australian Parliament, for example, the federal constitutional and legislative system does not formally establish the principle of equality and there is no specific legislation in that area; some instruments, such as the 1984 Sex Discrimination Act (SDA), merely offer the possibility of filing a complaint in certain circumstances. Official reports had apparently recommended the inclusion of more substantial guarantees in the SDA, but no action was taken on the recommendation: *"it would seem that there is significant resistance within Parliament to seriously consider the introduction of general equality legislation"*.

While most States have also ratified major international instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, fewer have ratified the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women. This was borne out by the replies to the questionnaire: all respondent countries except San Marino had ratified the CEDAW, most of them prior to 1995 and some, such as Andorra, Kazakhstan, Pakistan and Singapore, after 1995. However, fewer States had withdrawn all reservations.

Moreover, some respondent countries, such as Andorra, Estonia, Portugal and San Marino, had not yet acceded to the 1952 Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

CONVENTION ON THE POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN (1952)

States having signed, ratified, acceded or succeeded to the Convention
Convention entered into force on 7 July 1954 - total of parties at August 1999 : 113

Country	Signature	Ratification Accession (a) Succession (d)	Country	Signature	Ratification Accession (a) Succession (d)
Afghanistan		16 Nov. 1966 a	Lesotho		04 Nov. 1974 a
Albania		12 May 1955 a	Liberia	09 Dec. 1953	
Angola		17 Sept. 1986 a	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		16 May 1989 a
Antigua-et-Barbuda		25 Oct. 1988 d	Luxembourg	04 June 1969	01 Nov. 1976
Argentina	31 March 1953	27 Feb. 1961	Madagascar		12 Feb. 1964 a
Australia		10 Dec. 1974 a	Malawi		29 June 1966 a
Austria	19 Oct. 1959	18 April 1969	Mali		16 July. 1974 a
Bahamas		16 Aug. 1977 d	Malta		09 July. 1968 a
Bangladesh		5 Oct. 1998 a	Mauritania		04 May 1976 a
Barbados		12 Jan. 1973 a	Mauritius		18 July. 1969 d
Belarus	31 March 1953	11 Aug. 1954	Mexico	31 March 1953	23 March 1981
Belgium		20 May 1964 a	Mongolia		18 Aug. 1965 a
Bolivia	09 April 1953	22 Sept. 1970	Morocco		22 Nov. 1976 a
Bosnia and Herzegovina		01 Sept. 1993 d	Myanmar	14 Sept. 1954	
Brazil	20 May 1953	13 Aug. 1963	Nepal		26 April 1966 a
Bulgaria		17 March 1954	Netherlands	08 Aug. 1968	30 July. 1971
a			New Zealand		22 May 1968 a
Burundi		18 Feb. 1993 a	Nicaragua		17 Jan. 1957 a
Canada		30 Jan. 1957 a	Niger		07 Dec. 1964 d
Central African Rep.		04 Sept. 1962 d	Nigeria	11 July. 1980	17 Nov. 1980
Chile	31 March 1953	18 Oct. 1967	Norway	18 Sept. 1953	24 Aug. 1956
Colombia		05 Aug. 1986 a	Pakistan	18 May 1954	07 Dec. 1954
Congo		15 Oct. 1962 d	Papua New Guinea		27 Jan. 1982 a
Costa Rica	31 March 1953	25 July. 1967	Paraguay	16 Nov. 1953	22 Feb. 1990
Côte d'Ivoire		18 Dec. 1995 a	Peru		01 July. 1975 a
Croatia		12 Oct. 1992 d	Philippines	23 Sept. 1953	12 Sept. 1957
Cuba	31 March 1953	08 April 1954	Poland	31 March 1953	11 Aug. 1954
Cyprus	10 Sept. 1968	12 Nov. 1968	Rep. of Korea		23 June 1959 a
Czech Rep.		22 Feb. 1993 d	Rep. of Moldova		26 Jan. 1993 a
Dem. Rep. of Congo		12 Oct. 1977 a	Rumania	27 April 1954	06 Aug. 1954
Denmark	29 Oct. 1953	07 July. 1954	Russian Federation	31 March 1953	03 May 1954
Dominican Rep.	31 March 1953	11 Dec. 1953	Saint Vincent-and the Grenadines		
Ecuador	31 March 1953	23 April 1954	Senegal		02 May 1963 d
Egypt		08 Sept. 1981 a	Sierra Leone		25 July. 1962 a
El Salvador	24 June 1953		Slovenia		06 July. 1992 d
Ethiopia	31 March 1953	21 Jan. 1969	Solomon Islands		03 Sept. 1981 a
Fiji		12 June 1972 d	South Africa	29 Jan. 1993	
Finland		06 Oct. 1958 a	Spain		14 Jan. 1974 a
France	31 March 1953	22 April 1957	Swaziland		20 July. 1970 a
Gabon	19 April 1967	19 April 1967	Sweden	06 Oct. 1953	31 March 1954
Germany		04 Nov. 1970	Tajikistan		7 June 1999 a
Ghana		28 Dec. 1965 a	Thailand	05 March 1954	30 Nov. 1954
Greece	01 April 1953	29 Dec. 1953	The former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia		18 Jan. 1994 d
Grenadines		27 April 1999 d	Trinidad and Tobago		24 June 1966 a
Guatemala	31 March 1953	07 Oct. 1959	Tunisia		24 Jan. 1968 a
Guinea	19 March 1975	24 Jan. 1978	Turkey	12 Jan. 1954	26 Jan. 1960
Haiti	23 July. 1957	12 Feb. 1958	Uganda		21 June 1995 a
Hungary	02 Sept. 1954	20 Jan. 1955	Ukraine	31 March 1953	15 Nov. 1954
Iceland	25 Nov. 1953	30 June 1954	United Kingdom		24 Feb. 1967 a
India	29 April 1953	01 Nov. 1961	United Republic of Tanzania		19 June 1975 a
Indonesia	31 March 1953	16 Dec. 1958	United States of America		08 April 1976 a
Ireland		14 Nov. 1968 a	Uruguay	26 May 1953	
Israel	14 April 1953	06 July. 1954	Uzbekistan		29 Sept. 1997 a
Italy		06 March 1968	Venezuela		31 May 1983
a			Yemen		09 Feb. 1987 a
Jamaica		14 Aug. 1966 a	Yugoslavia	31 March 1953	23 June 1954
Japan	01 April 1955	13 July. 1955	Zambia		04 Feb. 1972 a
Jordan		01 July. 1992 a	Zimbabwe		05 June 1995 a
Kyrgyzstan		10 Feb. 1997 a			
Lao People's Dem. Rep.		28 Jan. 1969 a			
Latvia		14 April 1992 a			
Lebanon	24 Feb. 1954	05 June 1956			

CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

States having signed, ratified, acceded or succeeded to the Convention
Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981 - total States parties at August 1999 : 163

States	Date of signature	Date de reception of the instrument of ratification, accession or succession	States	Date de signature	Date de reception of the instrument of ratification, accession or succession
Afghanistan	14 Aug. 1980		Guinea	17 July 1980	9 Aug. 1982
Albania		11 May 1994 <u>a/</u>	Guinea-Bissau	17 July 1980	23 Aug. 1985
Algeria		22 May 1996 <u>a/ b/</u>	Guyana	17 July 1980	17 July 1980
Andorra		15 Jan. 1997 <u>a</u>	Haiti	17 July 1980	20 July 1981
Angola		17 Sept. 1986 <u>a/</u>	Honduras	11 June 1980	3 March 1983
Antigua-et-Barbuda		1 Aug. 1989 <u>a/</u>	Hungary	6 June 1980	22 Dec. 1980 <u>c/</u>
Argentina	17 July 1980	15 July 1985 <u>b/</u>	Iceland	24 July 1980	18 June 1985
Armenia		13 Sept. 1993 <u>a/</u>	India	30 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	9 July 1993 <u>b/</u>
Australia	17 July 1980	28 July 1983 <u>b/</u>	Indonesia	29 July 1980	13 Sept. 1984 <u>b/</u>
Austria	17 July 1980	31 March 1982 <u>b/</u>	Iraq		13 Aug. 1986 <u>a/ b/</u>
Azerbaijan		10 July 1995 <u>a/</u>	Ireland		23 Dec. 1985 <u>a/ b/ c/</u>
Bahamas		6 October 1993 <u>a/ b/</u>	Israel	17 July 1980	3 Oct. 1991 <u>b/</u>
Bangladesh		6 Nov. 1984 <u>a/ b/</u>	Italy	17 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	10 June 1985
Barbados	24 July 1980	16 Oct. 1980	Jamaica	17 July 1980	19 Oct. 1984 <u>b/</u>
Bélarus	17 July 1980	4 Feb. 1981 <u>c/</u>	Japan	17 July 1980	25 June 1985
Belgium	17 July 1980	10 July 1985 <u>b/</u>	Jordan	3 Dec. 1980 <u>b/</u>	1 July 1992 <u>b/</u>
Belize	7 March 1990	16 May 1990	Kazakhstan		26 Aug. 1998 <u>a/</u>
Benin	11 Nov. 1981	12 March 1992	Kenya		9 March 1984 <u>a/</u>
Bhutan	17 July 1980	31 Aug. 1981	Kuwait		2 Sept. 1994 <u>a/ b/</u>
Bolivia	30 May 1980	8 June 1990	Kyrgyzstan		10 Feb. 1997 <u>a/</u>
Bosnia and Herzegovina		1 Sept. 1993 <u>d/</u>	Laos People's Dem. Rep.		17 July 1980
Botswana		13 Aug. 1996 <u>a/</u>	Latvia		14 April 1992 <u>a/</u>
Brazil	31 March 1981 <u>b/</u>	1 Feb. 1984 <u>b/</u>	Lebanon		21 April 1997 <u>a/ b/</u>
Bulgaria	17 July 1980	8 Feb. 1982 <u>c/</u>	Lesotho	17 July 1980	22 Aug. 1995 <u>a/ b/</u>
Burkina Faso		14 Oct. 1987 <u>a/</u>	Liberia		17 July 1984 <u>a/</u>
Burundi	17 July 1980	8 Jan. 1992	Libyan Arab Jamahiriya		16 May 1989 <u>a/ b/</u>
Cambodia	17 Oct. 1980	15 Oct. 1992 <u>a/</u>	Liechtenstein		22 Dec. 1995 <u>a/ b/</u>
Cameroon	6 June 1983	23 Aug. 1994 <u>a/</u>	Lithuania		18 Jan. 1994 <u>a/</u>
Canada	17 July 1980	10 Dec. 1981 <u>c/</u>	Luxembourg	17 July 1980	2 Feb. 1989 <u>b/</u>
Cape Verde		5 Dec. 1980 <u>a/</u>	Madagascar	17 July 1980	17 March 1989
Central African Rep.		21 June 1991 <u>a/</u>	Malawi		12 March 1987 <u>a/ c/</u>
Chad		9 June 1995 <u>a/</u>	Malaysia		5 July 1995 <u>a/ b/</u>
Chile	17 July 1980	7 Dec. 1989 <u>b/</u>	Maldives		1 July 1993 <u>a/ b/</u>
Chine	17 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	4 Nov. 1980 <u>b/</u>	Mali	5 Feb. 1985	10 Sept. 1985
Colombia	17 July 1980	19 Jan. 1982	Malta		8 March 1991 <u>a/ b/</u>
Comoros		31 Oct. 1994 <u>a/</u>	Maurice		9 July 1984 <u>a/ b/</u>
Congo	29 July 1980	26 July 1982	Mexico	17 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	23 March 1981
Costa Rica	17 July 1980	4 April 1986	Mongolia	17 July 1980	20 July 1981 <u>c/</u>
Côte d'Ivoire	17 July 1980	18 Dec. 1995 <u>a/</u>	Morocco		21 June 1993 <u>a/ b/</u>
Croatia		9 Sept. 1992 <u>d/</u>	Mozambique		16 April 1997 <u>a/</u>
Cuba	6 March 1980	17 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	Myanmar		22 July 1997 <u>a/ b/</u>
Cyprus		23 July 1985 <u>a/ b/</u>	Namibia		23 Nov. 1992 <u>a/</u>
Czech Rep.		22 Feb. 1993 <u>c/ d/</u>	Nepal	5 Feb. 1991	22 April 1991
Dem. Rep. of Congo	17 Oct. 1986	16 Nov. 1986	Netherlands	17 July 1980	23 July 1991 <u>b/</u>
Denmark	17 July 1980	21 April 1983	New Zealand	17 July 1980	10 Jan. 1985 <u>b/ c/</u>
Djibouti		2 Dec. 1998 <u>a/</u>	Nicaragua	17 July 1980	27 Oct. 1985
Dominica	15 Sept. 1980	15 Sept. 1980	Nigeria	23 April 1984	13 June 1985
Dominican Republic	17 July 1980	2 Sept. 1982	Norway	17 July 1980	21 May 1981
Ecuador	17 July 1980	9 Nov. 1981	Pakistan		12 March 1996 <u>a/ b/</u>
Egypt	16 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	18 Sept. 1981 <u>b/</u>	Panama	26 June 1980	29 Oct. 1981
El Salvador	14 Nov. 1980 <u>b/</u>	19 Aug. 1981 <u>b/</u>	Papua New Guinea		12 Jan. 1995 <u>a/</u>
Equatorial Guinea		23 Oct. 1984 <u>a/</u>	Paraguay		6 April 1987 <u>a/</u>
Eritrea		5 Sept. 1995 <u>a/</u>	Peru	23 July 1981	13 Sept. 1982
Estonia		21 Oct. 1991 <u>a/</u>	Philippines	15 July 1980	5 Aug. 1981
Ethiopia	8 July 1980	10 Dec. 1981 <u>b/</u>	Poland	29 May 1980	30 July 1980 <u>b/</u>
Fiji		28 Aug. 1995 <u>a/ b/</u>	Portugal	24 April 1980	30 July 1980
Finland	17 July 1980	4 Sept. 1986	Rep. of Korea	25 May 1983 <u>b/</u>	27 Dec. 1984 <u>b/ c/</u>
France	17 July 1980 <u>b/</u>	14 Dec. 1983 <u>b/ c/</u>	Rep. of Moldova		1 July 1994 <u>a/</u>
Gabon	17 July 1980	21 Jan. 1983	Rumania	4 Sept. 1980 <u>b/</u>	7 Jan. 1982 <u>b/</u>
Gambia	29 July 1980	16 April 1993	Russian Federation	17 July 1980	23 Jan. 1981 <u>c/</u>
Georgia		26 Oct. 1994 <u>a/</u>	Rwanda	1 May 1980	2 March 1981
Germany /	17 July 1980	10 July 1985 <u>b/</u>	Saint Kitts and Nevis		25 April 1985 <u>a/</u>
Ghana	17 July 1980	2 Jan. 1986	Saint Lucia		8 Oct. 1982 <u>a/</u>
Greece	2 March 1982	7 June 1983			
Grenade	17 July 1980	30 Aug. 1990	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines		4 Aug. 1981 <u>a/</u>
Guatemala	8 June 1981	12 Aug. 1982			

Switzerland	23 Jan. 1987	27 March 1997 <u>a/</u> <u>b/</u>	Tobago	27 June 1985 <u>b/</u>	12 Jan. 1990 <u>b/</u>
Samoa		25 Sept. 1992 <u>a/</u>	Tunisia	24 July 1980	20 Sept. 1985 <u>b/</u>
Sao-Tomé and Príncipe	31 Oct. 1995		Turkey		20 Dec. 1985 <u>a/</u> <u>b/</u>
Senegal	29 July 1980	5 Feb. 1985	Turkmenistan		1 May 1997 <u>a/</u>
Seychelles		5 May 1992 <u>a/</u>	Uganda	30 July 1980	22 July 1985
Sierra Leone	21 Sept. 1988	11 Nov. 1988	Ukraine	17 July 1980	12 March 1981 <u>c/</u>
Singapore		5 Oct. 1995 <u>a/</u> <u>b/</u>	United Kingdom	22 July 1981	7 April 1986 <u>b/</u>
Slovakia		28 May 1993 <u>d/</u>	United Republic of Tanzania	17 July 1980	20 Aug. 1985
Slovenia		6 July 1992 <u>d/</u>	United States of America	17 July 1980	
South Africa	29 Jan. 1993	15 Dec. 1995 <u>a/</u>	Uruguay	30 March 1981	9 Oct. 1981
Spain	17 July 1980	5 Jan. 1984 <u>b/</u>	Uzbekistan		19 July 1995 <u>a/</u>
Sri Lanka	17 July 1980	5 Oct. 1981	Vanuatu		8 Sept. 1995 <u>a/</u>
Suriname		1 March 1993 <u>a/</u>	Venezuela	17 July 1980	2 May 1983 <u>b/</u>
Sweden	7 March 1980	2 July 1980	Viet Nam	29 July 1980	17 Feb. 1982 <u>b/</u>
Tajikistan		26 Oct. 1993 <u>a/</u>	Yemen /		30 May 1984 <u>a/</u> <u>b/</u>
Thailand		9 Aug. 1985 <u>a/</u> <u>b/</u> <u>c/</u>	Yugoslavia	17 July 1980	26 Feb. 1982
The former Yugoslav Rep. of Macedonia		18 Jan. 1994 <u>d/</u>	Zambia	17 July 1980	21 June 1985
Togo		26 Sept. 1983 <u>a/</u>	Zimbabwe		13 May 1991 <u>a/</u>
Trinidad and					

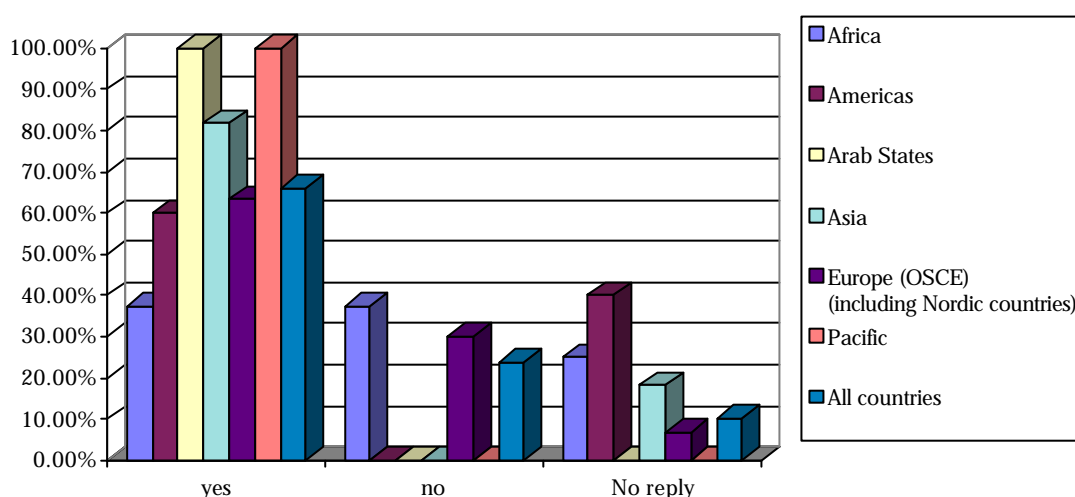
- a/ Accession
b/ Declarations or reservations
c/ Reservations entered subsequently
d/ Succession

But ratification of these instruments does not necessarily entail amendments to national legislation. Again, Australia notes that international norms have not yet been fully integrated into domestic legislation.

The establishment of monitoring mechanisms

The Union's Plan of Action proposed the establishment of a mechanism (mediator or ombudsman) to monitor compliance with the principle of equality. The replies received were largely positive. Less than one quarter were negative. But few details of the type of monitoring undertaken were provided. Some parliaments (Namibia) noted, however, that "the ombudsperson[†] is a woman".

Existence of a control mechanism, established prior to or since 1995, to ensure compliance with the principle of equality (ombudsman or other mechanism)



The adoption of legislation based on the content of the Plan of Action and the Platform for Action

It will be recalled that the Beijing Platform for Action identified twelve "critical areas of concern": poverty, education and training, health care, violence, armed conflict, economic structures and policies, decision-making, institutional mechanisms, fundamental rights, the media, environment and the girl child. The Union's Plan of Action focused in turn on participation in political decision-making.

The extent of the Legislature's authority in these different areas is varied. It also differs from country to country. Moreover, the examples mentioned in the replies were often similar to those cited in support of claims of progress, giving an impression of repetition or wordiness.

According to several parliaments, their country had already taken legislative action in the key areas prior to 1995 (Australia, France, Japan). But many countries have changed their legislation

[†] A gender-neutral version of the Nordic term "Ombudsman".

in the meantime or plan to do so. Some parliaments (Canada, Cyprus, Egypt, South Africa, Sweden) forwarded very substantive official documents testifying to their government's determination to take action on the Beijing commitments in all the areas concerned. The scope of these documents is such that their content cannot be reflected in full.

Essentially, however, the provisions adopted focused primarily on identifying and, if possible, eliminating all forms of discrimination (Iceland), giving priority to health care, education and vocational training, access to employment, maternity protection (Cyprus, Israel, Japan), social protection, occupational equality (Cyprus, Japan), family law and the status of spouses (Japan, Namibia, Philippines), and violence against women (Côte d'Ivoire: the 1998 Act prohibiting sexual harassment and female genital mutilation) or within the family (Belgium, Israel, Namibia, New Zealand, Philippines).

The target area is vast, spanning all sectors of economic, social and cultural activity, and there is still a great deal of work to be done.

Revision of terminology

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has set a good example. Its 1994 Plan of Action stipulated that the Union's Statutes and Rules were to be revised "to ensure that the vocabulary and the terms used can in no way be construed as suggesting the superiority of one of one sex over another". The revision was completed in April 1996.

Some States have also begun to revise their terminology. The Chilean Parliament mentions a 1999 revision of the Constitution.

Other examples include Australia (though it notes a tendency to revert to previous habits), Canada, Chile, Cuba, France (a 1998 circular advocated the use of feminine titles for certain offices, such as *députée*, *rapporteuse*), Latvia, New Zealand, etc.

But some countries claim that there no call for a revision exercise: because the basic legislation is new and hence non-discriminatory (Czech Republic); because of the characteristics of the language (e.g. literary Arabic in which, according to the Tunisian reply, *all attributes may be feminised*, or Finnish, whose structures are gender-neutral); or because the masculine term is considered to encompass both genders.

► Few amendments to legislation aimed at promoting participation in political activity

To promote political participation by women at the national level, thereby consolidating democracy, both the IPU Plan of Action and the Beijing Platform for Action advocated, to begin with, coordinated awareness-building action (civic and political education, information, training, etc.) by governments, parliaments, parties, trade unions, NGOs and the media. It was also suggested that internal party structures and rules of procedure should be amended, and the possibility of quotas and other forms of affirmative action was not ruled out. Needless to say, changes in electoral legislation were advocated and an examination of the impact of the voting system was advised.

Electoral legislation virtually unchanged

Legislation guaranteeing women's right to vote and stand for election exists in virtually all countries and was adopted in the majority of cases prior to 1995. Most replies to the questionnaire drew attention to the fact that formal equality and hence a (theoretical) absence of discrimination had existed for some time. But the limited number of women MPs demonstrates that these rules fall far short of what is required and that there are serious obstacles to their practical implementation. As Côte d'Ivoire points out, "*practical implementation presents problems owing to the weight of tradition*".

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT: 1995-1999

- **1995**
176 Parliaments
11.6 % women MPs **Average: 11.3 %**
9.4 % women Senators
- **1999 (August)**
179 Parliaments
13.3 % women MPs **Average: 12.9%**
10.7 % women Senators

The record world average was reached in 1988, with 14.8% of women MPs

Despite relatively broad agreement on the possibility of affirmation action since the adoption of the CEDAW in 1979, few countries have amended their electoral legislation since 1995 to encourage the election of women.

In some cases, although details were not always provided, the legislation was amended prior to 1995 to ensure a better gender balance. Albania falls into this category.

Some parliaments report an increase in women MPs following a change in the electoral system and a shift to proportional representation (New Zealand).

Under the Act of 24 May 1994, no more than two-thirds of the candidates on electoral lists in Belgium may be of the same sex. The Act has applied to all elections since 1 January 1999.

In the Philippines, an Act passed in March 1995 makes it compulsory to include women in party lists; in Slovenia, a law requires political parties to adopt measures (which are not specified in the reply) to encourage women candidacies.

Elsewhere, a limited number of amendments have been introduced since 1995:

- In Cape Verde, an Act passed in 1999 encourages parties to introduce quotas of at least 25% for women.
- In France, following the repeal by the Constitutional Council of a law imposing quotas in municipal elections on the grounds that it breached the principle of equality among citizens, a constitutional amendment was adopted in June 1999 with a view to eliminating the constitutional barriers which, in the view of the Constitutional Council, prohibited affirmative action and in order to encourage parties to give women more scope. But the amendment will only be fully effective if electoral legislation for each category of election and party funding procedures are amended.

Amendment plans exist in some countries, such as Guatemala (*"but men in the Congress are unwilling to discuss it"*) and Sri Lanka, where a proposed amendment to the Constitution would reserve 25% of all seats in Parliament for women.

GLOBAL SITUATION WITH RESPECT TO THE PROPORTION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN PARLIAMENTS IN AUGUST 1999			
All Chambers			
Total number of MPs	41.784		
Gender breakdown available for	39.150		
Men	34.100		
Women	5.050		
% of women	12.9%		
Single House or Lower Chamber		Upper Chamber or Senate	
Total number of MPs	35.190	Total number of MPs	6.594
Gender breakdown available for	32.884	Gender breakdown known for	6.306
Men	28.469	Men	5.631
Women	4.375	Women	675
% of women	13.3 %	% of women	10.7 %

An interesting initiative has been devised in Nunavut, a small province in Canada's North-West Territories: two candidates would stand for each constituency, so that the nomination and election of a woman would not automatically entail the ousting of a man. The initiative has not yet been put into practice.

Other countries, such as Georgia, simply report that women's movements are lobbying for a change in electoral legislation to increase the number of women MPs. In Namibia, discussions are under way with party leaders to persuade them to include women in lists of candidates, *"but this is not working very well, except at the local level"*.

PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT IN DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD IN AUGUST 1999			
Ranking of the region (in descending order of % in the Single or Lower Chamber)	Single House or Lower House	Upper House or Senate	Data on both Houses combined
Nordic countries	38.9%	n.a.	38.9%
Americas	15.4%	13.9%	15.1%
Europe - OSCE member countries, including Nordic countries	15.4%	10.0%	14.1%
Asia	14.4%	10.8%	14.0%
Europe - OSCE member countries, excluding Nordic countries	13.1%	10.0%	12.3%
Pacific	12.2%	22.1%	13.7%
Sub-Saharan Africa	11.5%	14.0%	11.7%
Arab States	3.6%	2.5%	3.4%

Lastly, there are some countries in which proposed amendments have failed. In Portugal,

for example, Parliament recently (February 1999) rejected two proposals advocating the nomination by parties of a fixed number of candidates of each sex.

Sustained action aimed at political socialisation of women

All campaigns to build the kind of awareness that every study has shown to be a prerequisite for genuine participation set themselves the following goals: to inform women of their rights, to encourage them to take an interest in political life and political issues, to educate themselves, to register as a voter, to vote, to stand for election, or even to vote for other women.

Here again, the questionnaire distinguishes between the pre-1995 and post-1995 periods, and between general and more focused campaigns during recent elections.

In many countries, such campaigns, at least of a general nature, had been conducted well before Beijing: Albania, Belarus, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chile, China, Cuba, Iceland, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Viet Nam, etc.

They are a more recent development in Côte d'Ivoire, Estonia, Israel, Luxembourg, Malta, Mongolia, Slovakia and Trinidad and Tobago, and often involve networks of women MPs, NGOs and the media.

According to Côte d'Ivoire, "*since 1995, the government, women's NGOs and the Ivorian network of African women ministers and MPs have encouraged women to participate in political activities*". In Georgia, a club of women MPs organises workshops and training courses. Similar activities are undertaken in Namibia (which states that "*women should avoid fighting among themselves*" and that "*women often prefer to vote for men*") and New Zealand. Croatia also stresses the role of NGOs and the women's press. In South Africa, a group of about a hundred national associations organised a campaign that led to the adoption of the Women's Charter for Effective Equality in February 1994 designed, *inter alia*, to encourage women to become more involved in decision-making. It was NGOs that encouraged women to vote in the first democratic elections in 1995 but there was no nationwide campaign. In the 1999 elections, the Committee on Gender Equality and Womensnet, an electronic Web site, coordinated different programmes and sought, in particular, to encourage women to stand for election.

In Israel, a joint forum bringing together the Union of Local Authorities and a majority of women's organisations was established with a view to encouraging women to run for local office and to request that at least one-third of the candidates on electoral lists should be women.

Without being more specific, Cape Verde notes that "*Women participate in great numbers in electio, as voters and play an enthusiastic part in electoral campaigns, as promoters and organisers*".

Other countries have not organised specific campaigns because (as in Australia) long-established voting rights for women and practical progress have rendered them unnecessary. Elsewhere, no reason is mentioned but it may be assumed that existing campaigns are not specifically targeted at women voters: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Egypt, Guatemala, Hungary, Japan, Portugal, Romania, San Marino and Thailand.

► **Increasing the proportion of women in parliaments:** **Little change**

The Beijing Platform for Action and the IPU Plan proposed a sharing of responsibilities at all levels: government, parliaments, local authorities and even within the governing bodies of parliaments. The questionnaire takes up these points, again distinguishing between the pre-1995 and post-1995 periods. It asks general questions about greater awareness in legislative and budgetary debates of the specific problems of women and of the need for gender mainstreaming. It is therefore interesting to cross-check the replies in order to determine whether an increase in the proportion of women, especially as leading parliamentary office-holders, leads to greater awareness of women's issues.

Women still poorly represented in parliamentary governing bodies

We should not be deluded by the fact that a woman (Nicole Fontaine) was elected in July 1999 to head the European Parliament: women presiding officers of parliament are few and far between. The same is true of committee chairpersons. Neither the Beijing Platform for Action nor the IPU Plan of Action has produced any tangible improvement.

"Men and Women in Politics: Democracy still in the Making"[‡], a wide-ranging IPU survey conducted in advance of the 1997 New Delhi Conference[§], provided statistics which are still largely relevant. The box shows the most recently available data.

The overall percentage thus remains more or less unchanged. The situation is much the same for women deputy speakers, whose number seems to have increased slightly, although complete and accurate data are not available. A modest increase in the number of women members of business committees is discernible from the replies, but no specific figures are provided.

There has also been little change in the situation with respect to committee chairpersons and vice-chairpersons.

However, some countries report greater diversity in the committees chaired by women and a few additional women chairs of such prestigious committees as foreign affairs, defence and justice, which have traditionally been reserved for men (Australia, Belarus, Canada, Czech Republic, Egypt, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Viet Nam).

FIVE YEARS LATER, A LOOK AT THE « BEIJING EFFECT » ON POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS	
This table has been prepared from a numerical standpoint. It should be borne in mind, however, that, as far as politics is concerned, the « Beijing effect » should not be viewed from that angle alone	
Women in the Executive	Women in parliament
09.1995 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 187 States ▶ 12 (6.4 %) women Heads of State or Government <p><i>No data available on the proportion of women in Cabinets in 1995</i></p>	09.1995 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 176 parliaments ▶ 228 houses (bicameral parliaments) ▶ 24 (10.5 %) women presiding officers of a house of parliament ▶ 11.3% women parliamentarians (both houses)
08.1999 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 190 States ▶ 10 (5.3 %) women Heads of State or Government ▶ 11.7 % women in the Executive at large (ministers, State ministers, ministers delegate, deputy ministers, secretaries of State, deputy secretaries of State and parliamentary secretaries) 	08.1999 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ 179 parliaments ▶ 245 houses (bicameral parliaments) ▶ 25 (10.2 %) women presiding officers of a house of parliament ▶ 12.9 % women parliamentarians (both houses)

[‡] Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Reports and Documents" series, N° 28, 1997, ISBN 92-9142-024-7

[§] *Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics*, 14-18 February 1997: see "Studies and Documents" Series N° 29, 1997, ISBN 92-9142-034-4.

Some specialised parliamentary committees

In 18 of the 59 countries, parliamentary committees on equality or the status of women have been established, often prior to 1995. It is interesting to note that in certain pioneering countries

WOMEN PRESIDING OFFICERS OF PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES IN AUGUST 1999

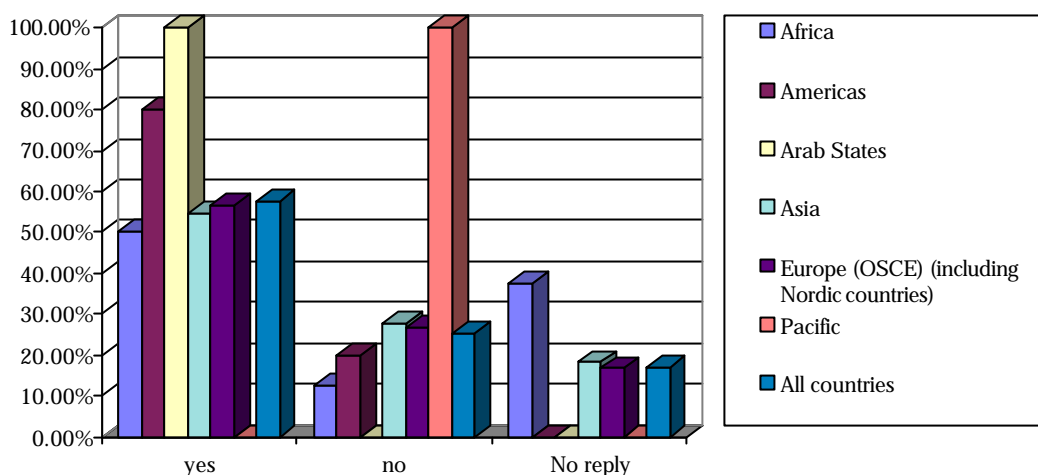
- ◆ **25 women** preside one of the Chambers of the 179 existing parliaments, of which 66 are bicameral. The countries in question are: **Antigua and Barbuda** (House of Representatives and Senate), **Australia** (Senate), **Bahamas** (Assembly), **Belize** (House of Representatives and Senate), **Croatia** (Chamber of the *Zupanije*), **Czech Republic** (Senate), **Ethiopia** (Federal Council), **Finland** (*Eduskunta*), **India** (Council of States), **Jamaica** (House of Representatives and Senate), **Mexico** (*Cámara de Senadores*), **Netherlands** (Second Chamber), **Norway** (*Stortinget*), **Peru** (*Congreso*), **Poland** (Senate), **South Africa** (National Assembly and National Council of Provinces), **Spain** (*Senado*), **Suriname** (National Assembly), **Sweden** (*Riksdagen*), **Switzerland** (National Council) and **United Kingdom** (House of Commons)
- ◆ **Women hold only 10,2% of the 245 offices of speaker of parliamentary assemblies;** four bicameral parliaments have a woman presiding officer for each of the two Chambers.

(Finland, Iceland, Sweden) women's affairs are addressed not by a specialised committee but by the labour or social affairs committee. But it is difficult to make comparisons because the terminology used and the jurisdiction of committees differ from parliament to parliament. Mention may be made of the recent establishment, in both houses of the French Parliament, of a "Parliamentary Delegation for Women's Rights and Equality of Opportunity", which brings to seven the number of EU parliaments that have set up specialised bodies.

Increasing parliamentary awareness of women's issues

A number of very open questions were formulated with a view to obtaining an idea of the order of priority accorded since 1995 to women's problems and needs in legislative and budgetary debates and in appropriations to existing mechanisms. The replies are naturally somewhat subjective or even based on political criteria: hence the need for a measure of caution in commenting on the outcome.

Since 1995, greater attention is given by parliament, when considering bills and proposals, to ensuring that legislation takes more account of women's specific needs than in the past



As already mentioned, the vast majority of respondents to the questionnaire considered that progress had been made in reducing inequalities between the sexes.

Two-thirds of these respondents claimed that certain amendments to domestic legislation had been inspired by the Beijing Platform for Action and the IPU Plan of Action. In replying to a previous question, they even cited legislation adopted specifically in response to the content of the Platform and Plan.

It may be assumed that they perceived a relationship between the progress made and the amendments to legislation inspired by the two instruments. Eight of these respondents belong to the group of 17 countries in which women MPs account for more than 15% of the total (3 of the 17 countries made no assessment). Furthermore, the respondents who considered that there had been no improvement were also those who felt that parliament failed to pay special attention to women's specific needs, either in its legislative work or in budgetary oversight (Hungary, Russian Federation, Slovenia).

The relationship between awareness and the proportion of women in parliament

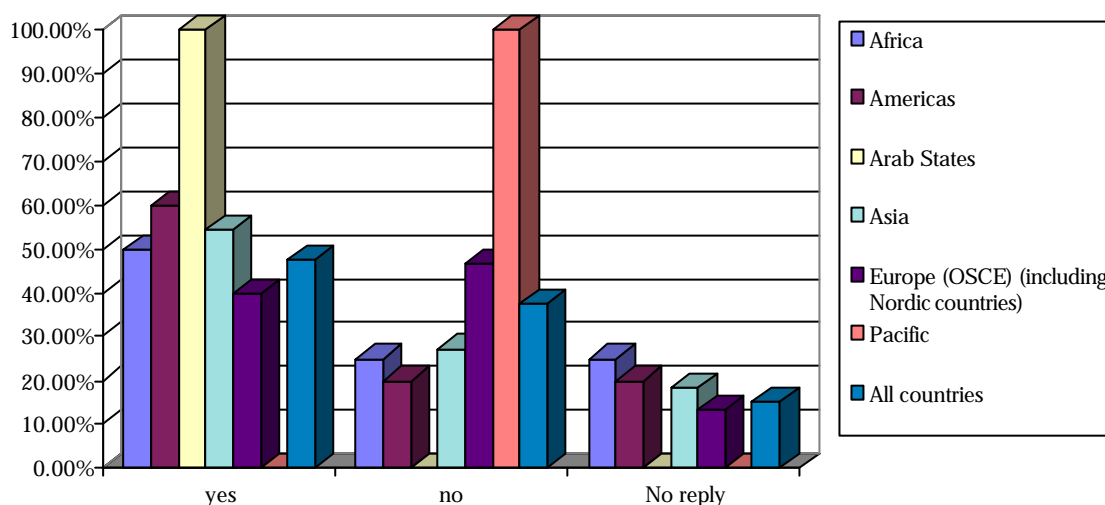
A strong showing of women in parliament has an impact on the priority attached to women's issues and, more generally, on gender mainstreaming.

Two-thirds of respondent parliaments felt that more attention was paid to women's needs when bills were debated. Using our customary regional classification, we find that, of the 34 parliaments deemed to be more attentive, 17 are European (Andorra, Belarus, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Kazakhstan, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden), 6 are Asian (Israel, Pakistan, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Thailand and Viet Nam), 4 are African (Angola, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde and South Africa), 4 are American (Canada, Chile, Cuba and Trinidad and Tobago) and 3 are Arab (Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia). Ten of the 34 assemblies belong to the group with the highest proportion

of women MPs: Canada, Cuba, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, South Africa, Sweden and Viet Nam.

Similar conclusions may be drawn from the responses to the subsequent question concerning attention to women's issues in budgetary debates, but fewer parliaments - only 28 compared to 34 - responded favourably. However, the 11 above-mentioned assemblies with over 15% women MPs are among them - bearing out the theory that there is a clear link between a high proportion of women in parliament and awareness of women's issues.

Since 1995, greater attention is given by parliament, when considering the national budget, to ensuring that legislation takes more account of women's specific needs than in the past



At the same time, many parliaments regret the fact that the funds appropriated are inadequate because of the country's overall difficulties. The Parliament of Angola states that *"the funds allocated were insufficient to address the problems of displaced women because of the extremely difficult situation created by the war"*. The Parliament of New Zealand comments that *"the women's affairs budget has barely increased in ten years!"*

The presence of women in the governing bodies of parliaments is undoubtedly too weak to have a major impact. Nevertheless, half of the parliaments that focused more particularly on women's needs in their legislative debates are those with women presiding officers, deputy presiding officers or members of the business committee.

HAS THERE BEEN A "BEIJING EFFECT" IN POLITICAL PARTIES?

A useful feature of the dual survey was that replies to the questionnaire (Annex 4) came from over a hundred political parties represented in parliament. Many of the respondents were clearly women MPs who told a story of continuing resistance to change.

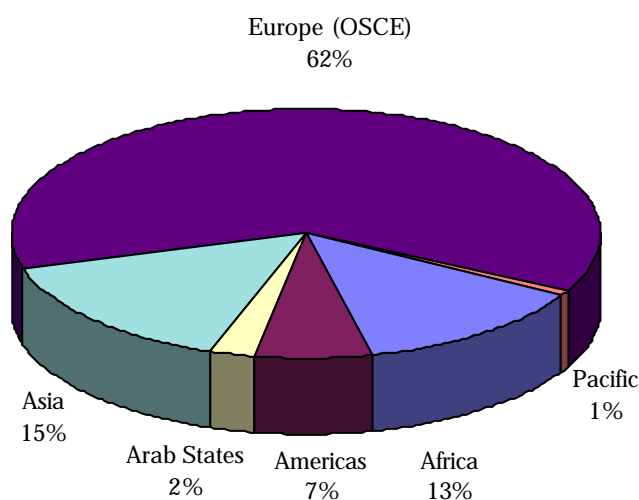
The IPU study entitled "*Men and Women in Politics: Democracy Still in the Making*"**, which we have already mentioned, attached a great deal of importance to the role of parties, particularly with regard to women's involvement in political and social life. It is parties that hold the key to change, in the drafting of programmes, in taking account of women's needs and of the impact of all kinds of action on their situation, in nominating candidates, in providing logistic support for election campaigns and in many other areas. It is also at the party level that the almost unanimously endorsed principle of equality must be put into practice.

The study referred to the two main thrusts of the Union's Plan of Action: first, the possible amendment of basic legislation, structures and internal rules of procedure and, secondly, the promotion of women's candidatures. Reviewing progress to date, it concluded that parties were still male bastions run by, with and for men.

The basic purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the extent to which political parties had changed since 1995 and the extent to which that change had been inspired or facilitated by the Beijing Platform for Action or the IPU Plan of Action.

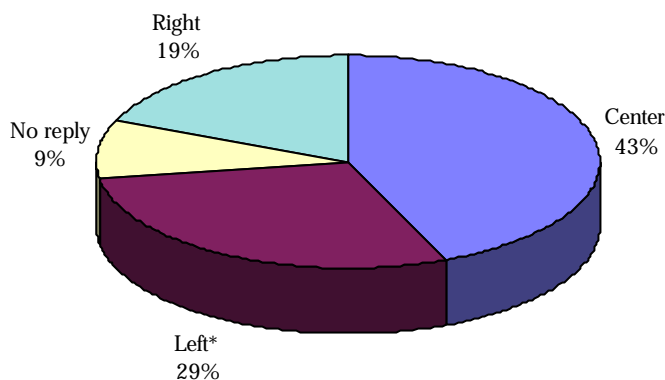
Replies were received from 50 countries and 123 parties. The countries represented were not exactly the same as those that responded to the questionnaire addressed to parliaments. As a result, the scope of the survey was broadened to include Germany, Greece, Haiti, Ireland, India and Norway.

Breakdown of replies from political parties by region



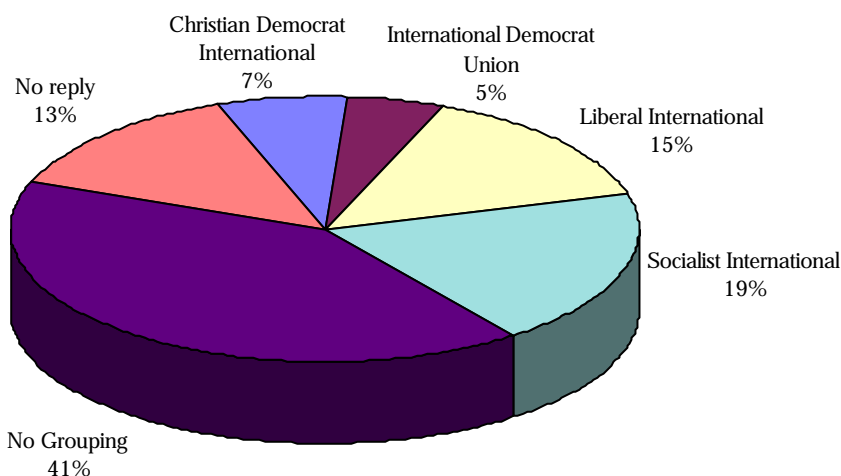
** Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Reports and Documents" Series, N° 28, 1997, ISBN 92-9142-024-7

Breakdown of replies from political parties in terms of the traditional political spectrum



B. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the

Breakdown of political parties by affiliation to an "international political grouping"



*NB. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the traditional political spectrum

All groups represented in parliament seem to have replied in some cases, so that it was possible to identify a domino effect from one party to another or the overall influence of a cultural model and a particular pattern of social relations between men and women.

In other cases, several replies were received from a single party and the somewhat different approaches may obviously be ascribed to subjective assessments of the situation.

Some replies failed to specify the party concerned and were therefore unusable. Others failed to mention the international movement to which the party belonged or its political persuasion, so that comparisons proved difficult.

As many questions were asked, we shall combine the answers under general headings. And as a purely quantitative approach serves little purpose, we shall focus on trends and cite a number of comments.

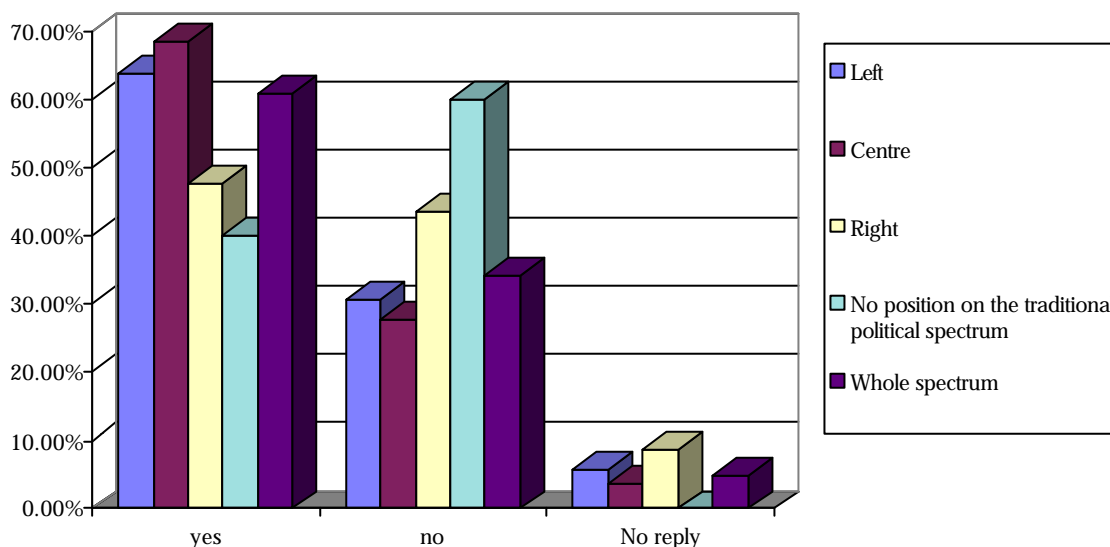
► Considerable familiarity with the international action plans

The purpose of the first few questions was to establish whether parties had obtained copies of the two international instruments and made use of them in support of their policy of equality.

The replies indicated that most parties were familiar with the Beijing Platform for Action and, to a lesser extent, the IPU's Plan of Action. In some cases the instruments had not been transmitted to them through official channels. Only a few had not been informed of their existence. They included the Pro-Patria Union in Estonia, the Citizens' Union in Georgia, the Frente Republicano in Guatemala, the Irish Workers' Party and the French Parti Liberal.

Over half said that they had used them in support of action to promote equality.

The party used the IPU "Plan of Action" and/or the "Beijing Platform for Action" to reinforce its policy of equality between men and women



4. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the

► What steps have been taken in the meantime?

Another question sought to establish what specific measures suggested in the international Plans had been implemented by parties since 1995.

The replies were not always easy to interpret.

Some completely negative replies could have meant that nothing had been done or, on the contrary, that no action had been necessary because the rules and structures had long been "up to standard". This was a claim made by many parties, particularly in Northern Europe (the Social Democratic Party, the Green League and the National Coalition in Finland, the Kvennalistinn in Iceland, the Christian Democratic Appeal in the Netherlands, the Labour Party in New Zealand), in Canada (the Liberal Party), in Cyprus (the Democratic Party), in the Czech Republic (the Civil Democratic Alliance and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia), and in Japan, where two groups, the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party, said they had implemented most of the provisions prior to 1995 and claimed in both cases to have the largest number of women MPs...

Others simply reiterated that the principle of equality was formally recognised, that women faced no legal obstacles and that reform was therefore unnecessary (Pro-Patria in Estonia, the People's Action Party in Singapore, etc.).

Many other replies stated, without going into detail, that the party's overall policy had been revised in the light of the recommendations. Lastly, some replies from new parties reported that their recently adopted statutes incorporated the reforms proposed in the Beijing and IPU Plans.

► A manifest will to reform but little action

A positive attitude to greater participation by women

There is a perceptible willingness to encourage greater participation by women, an attitude that has been enhanced and encouraged by the international instruments.

Although some parties have failed for various reasons to revise their statutes and internal structures, all or virtually all claim to have:

- Taken steps to enhance women's awareness of the importance of voting;
- Urged women to become involved in internal leadership structures;
- Encouraged women to stand for internal and parliamentary elections.

All parties also claim to analyse voting results with a view to assessing the respective chances of success of men and women.

The intentions expressed may differ in nature. They may consist of a "commitment" by the party leadership (Flemish Social Christian Party in Belgium) or "recommendations" by party leaders to the grassroots (Czech Community Party of Bohemia and Moravia), but there is no way of determining whether local bodies act on the instructions from on high (Democratic Constitutional Rally in Tunisia).

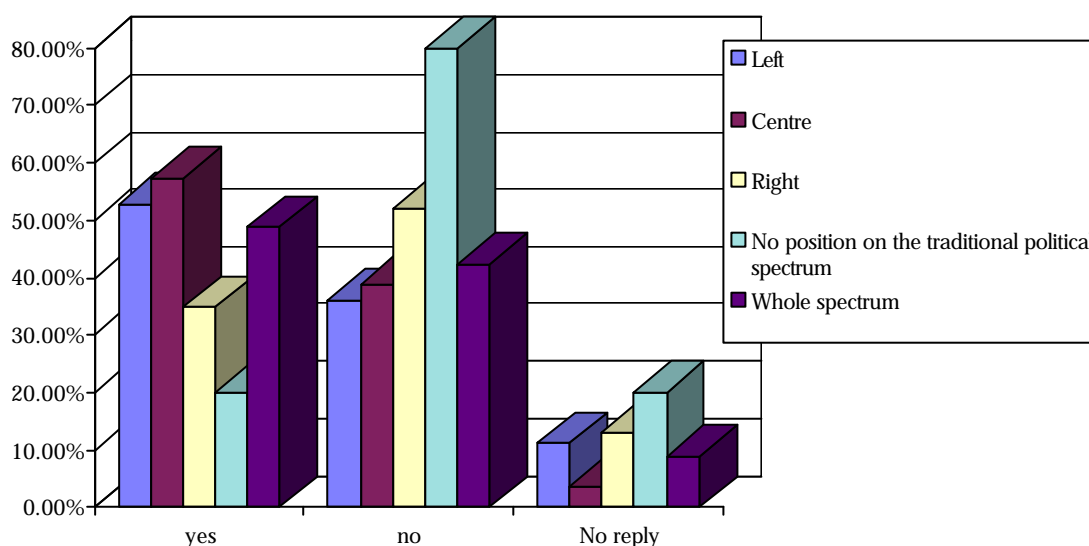
Statutes may have been amended or, in the case of new parties, the new requirements may have been included from the outset - a promising development.

For example, the preamble to the Statute of Synaspismos in Greece states that: "*Synaspismos aspires to represent women who fight against androcratic structures, pursuing the redefinition and redistribution of social roles between the genders*". The Statute further stipulates that the representation of women in leading party bodies should be proportionate to the percentage of women party members.

Much the same approach is adopted by the new Japanese Democratic Party and Democratic Alternative in The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. In such instances, the new statutes usually include quotas.

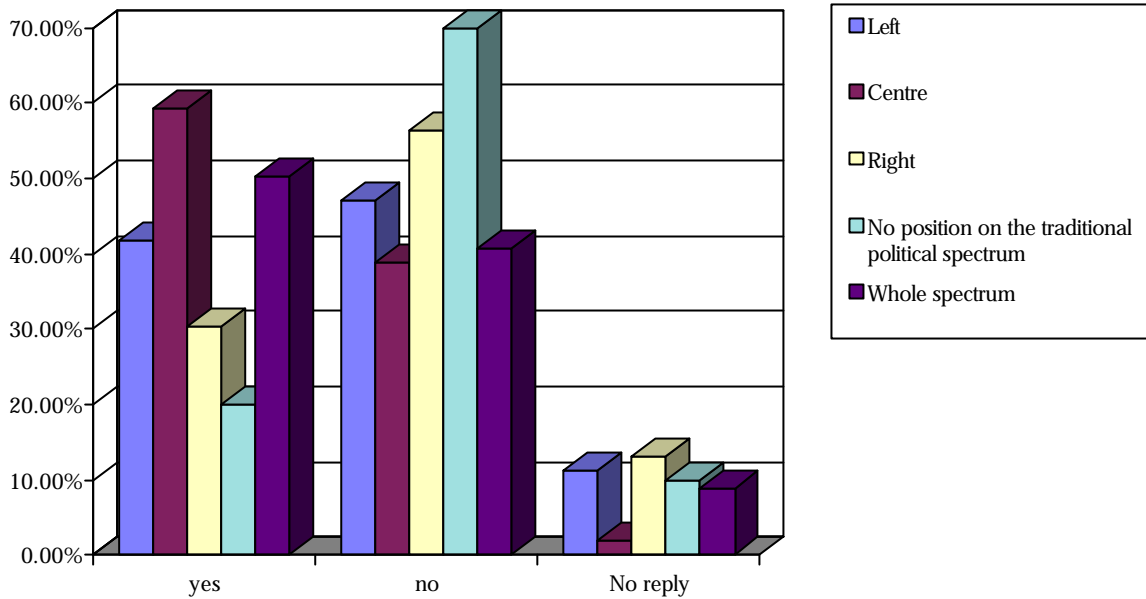
The questionnaire, which was based on the content of the Union's Plan of Action, provided a number of leads: adoption of a quota system, adoption of a system for alternating women's and men's names on lists, requirement that women be placed in positions of eligibility on voting lists, measures to ensure a fair distribution of women and men in constituencies in which the party was most likely to win seats, logistic and financial backing, etc. Clearly, the applicability of these measures varies in terms of the voting system. They are easier to implement, for example, under a list system.

Revision of basic party texts to take into account the principle of equality between men and women



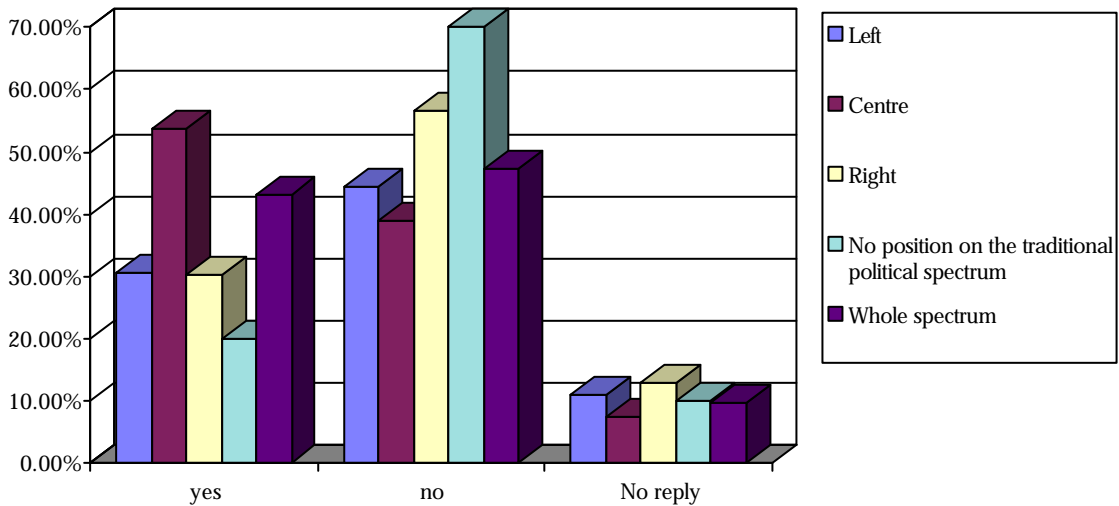
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Modification of the party's internal structures to enable it to promote a policy of equality



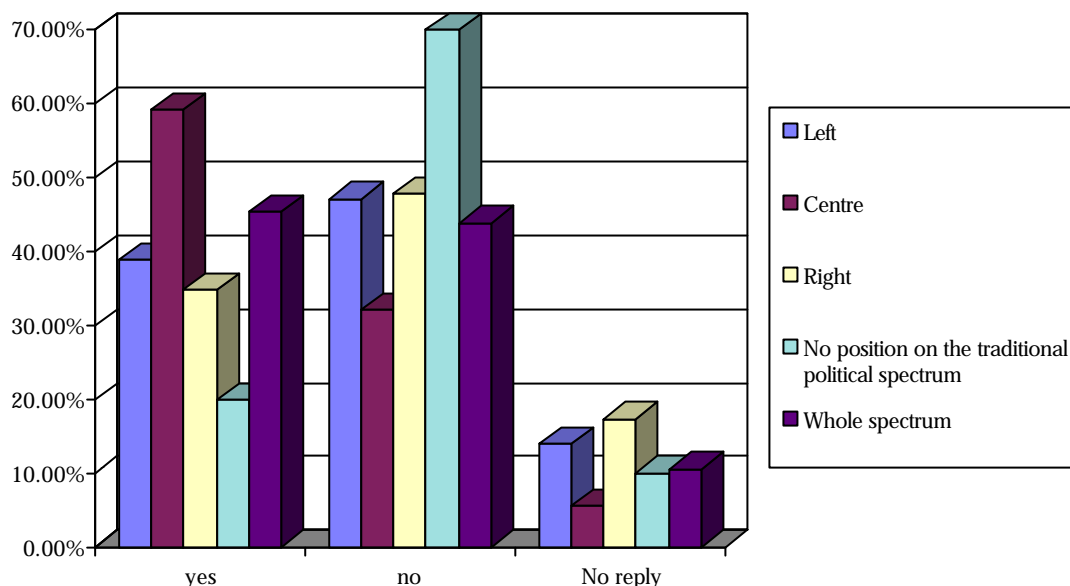
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Internal leadership structures of political parties: Revision of rules and procedures to ensure that women have the same chance of being elected as men



*NB. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the traditional political spectrum

Elections to public office such as parliament: Revision of voting policy and electoral rules and procedures to ensure that women have the same chance of being elected as men



NB. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the traditional political spectrum

The electoral system issue

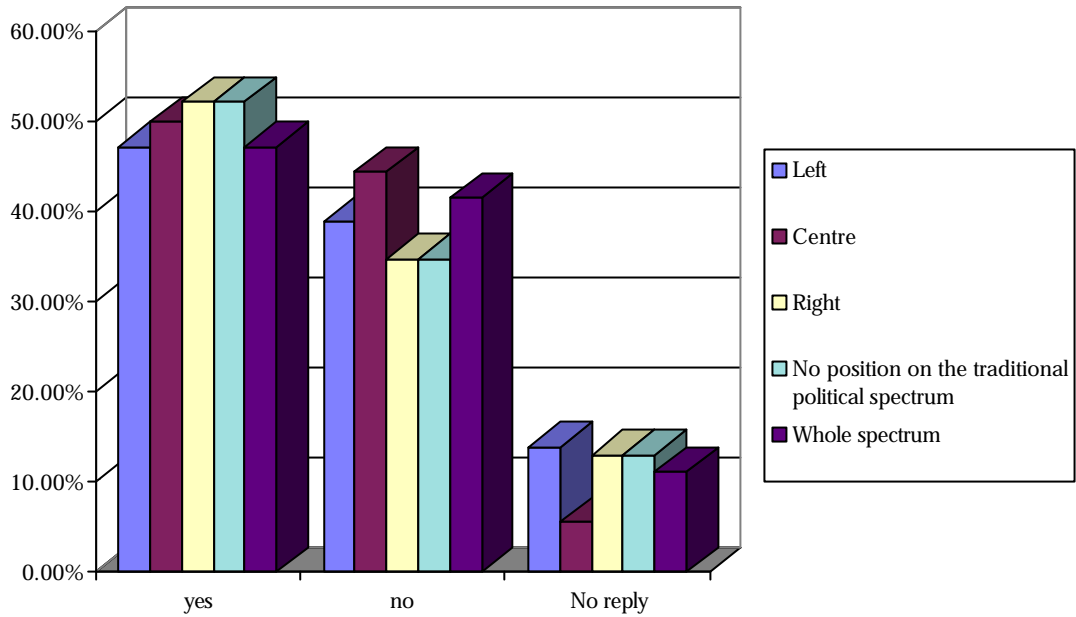
The Beijing Conference and the IPU advocated closer scrutiny of the impact of voting systems on the election of women and consideration of the possibility, where appropriate, of adjustments or changes.

Studies of the subject have been broadly unanimous in finding that national parliaments in which over a quarter of the seats are held by women are those elected by proportional representation or a mixed system^{††}. Conversely, in countries where there is a majority system, women's representation in the lower chamber remains low despite recent progress and a few exceptions to the rule. Hence the linkage between voting systems and women's access to elected office. Several replies make this point. According to the Party for Democracy in Chile, "*The two-seat constituency majority electoral system is a major obstacle for women. It is very difficult for them to obtain nominations*". The French Communist Party also mentions as a difficulty "*the non-proportional election system which discriminates against women in general and departmental elections*", a point also made by the Japanese Communist Party.

However, according to the documents published by the Union, proportional representation only furthers the participation of women when certain conditions are met. For instance, women should be placed in positions of eligibility on voting lists and constituencies should be sufficiently large to defeat cronyism and offset the advantages of fame. This is manifestly not always the case. Indeed, few of these conditions seem to have been identified and put into practice.

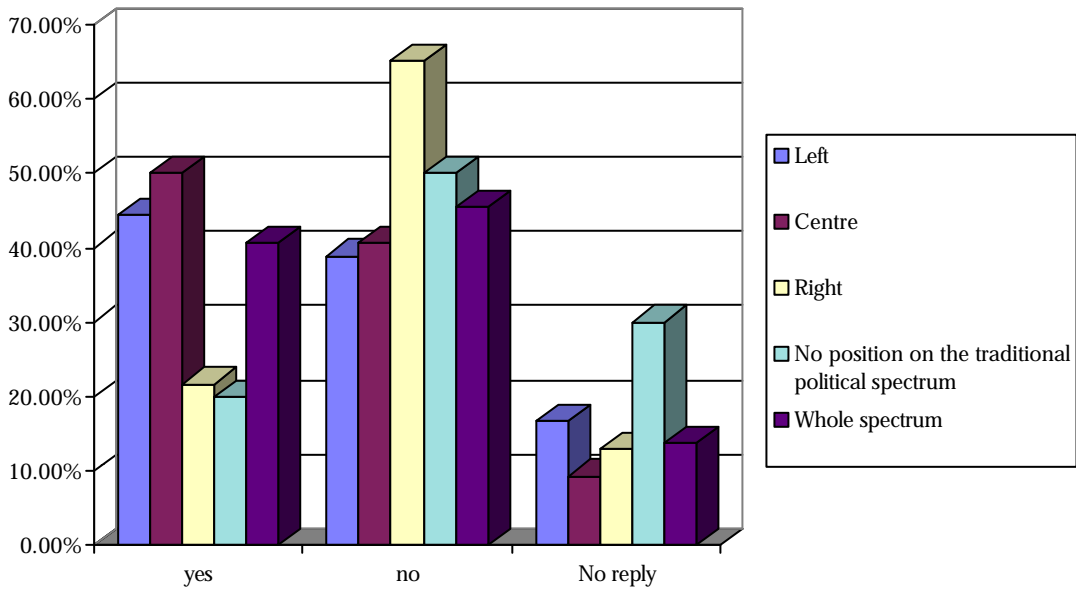
^{††} See "*Men and Women in Politics: Democracy Still in the Making*", "Reports and Documents" Series, N° 28, 1997, ISBN 92-9142-024-7, p. 52.

Parliamentary elections: nomination by political parties of at least one woman candidate per constituency



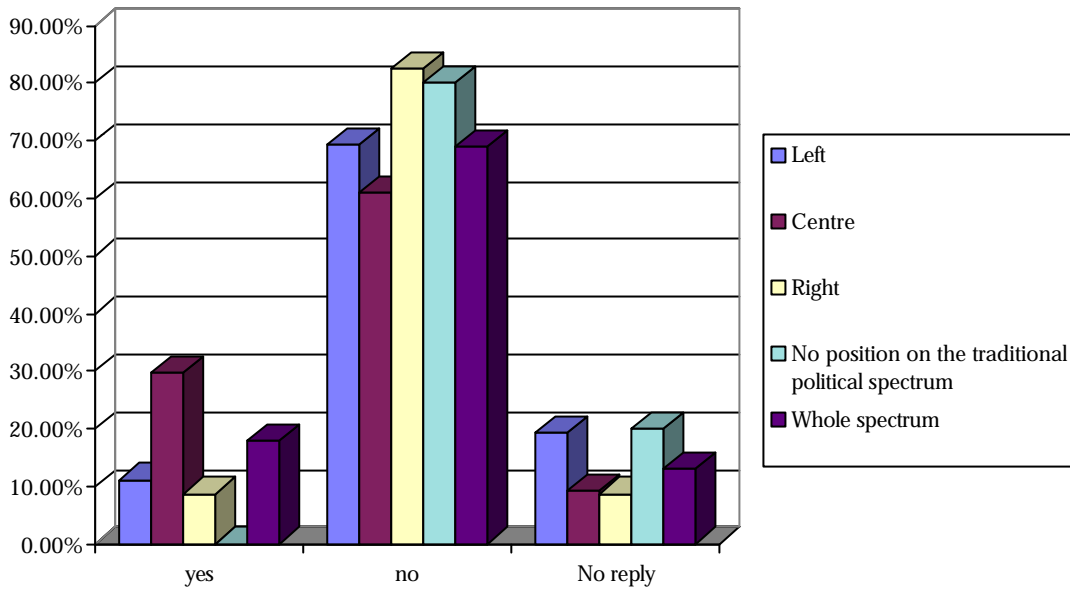
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Parliamentary elections: Requirement to place women on voting lists in positions of eligibility



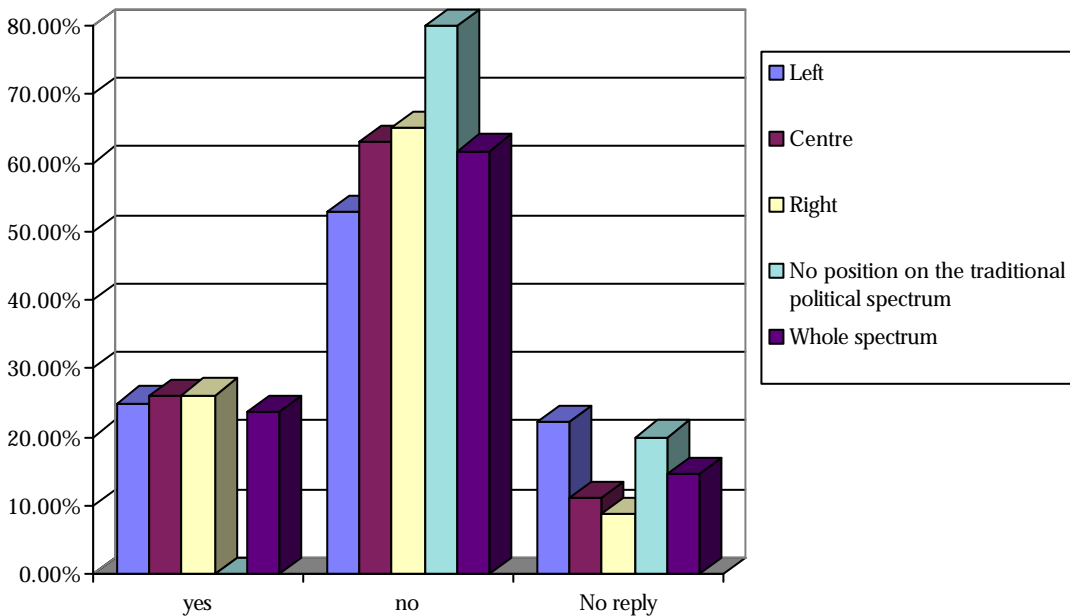
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Parliamentary elections: Adoption of an alternation system for names of women and men candidates on voting lists



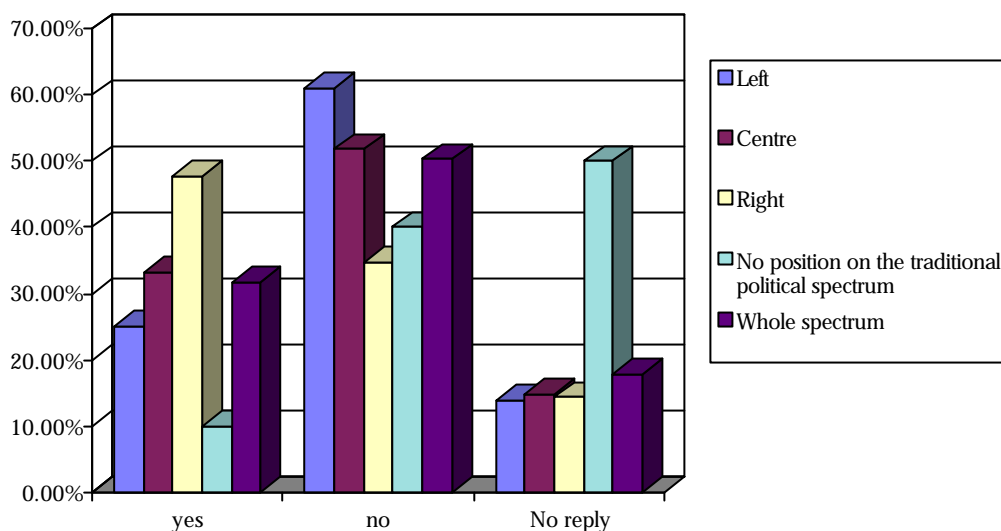
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Parliamentary elections: Allocation of a percentage of top positions on voting lists to women



NB. NB. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the traditional political spectrum

Measures to ensure a fair distribution of women and men candidates between constituencies in which the party has the best chance of winning



NB. NB. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the traditional political spectrum

Quotas

The quota issue is significant in this respect. It was described in 1997 in *"Men and Women in Politics: Democracy Still in the Making"*^{††} and remains broadly unchanged.

Parties in Northern Europe, impelled by highly active women's branches or powerful feminist movements, have introduced quotas into their statutes or practices since the 1970s, periodically raising them until they have almost reached parity. The Socialist Left and Liberal Parties in Norway drew attention to this point.

But not all feminist movements throughout the world have given priority to political action. In France, for example, although women have traditionally been excluded from the higher echelons of politics and the civil service, feminist demands initially focused on other areas such as civil and social rights, equality in employment, contraception and abortion. Only recently has a more offensive approach been adopted on the political front.

In other European countries, new parties such as the "Greens" or far left parties have from the outset striven for parity, as a symbolic political act, both in their leadership structures and in terms of candidates for election.

The social democratic parties followed suit, in Germany and then in Spain, Portugal and the United Kingdom. Even the French Socialist Party, which was initially reluctant, caved in and amended the provisions of its statutes concerning internal structures and candidatures, beginning with the European elections, for which the voting system is more favourable and doubtless also because there was less resistance in the case of an assembly that still wields little clout.

^{††} Ibid., pp. 61 to 78.

Parties in the centre and on the right have mostly gone with the stream. Indeed, practical action is often contagious, especially since public opinion is less and less averse to the idea of increasing the proportion of women politicians.

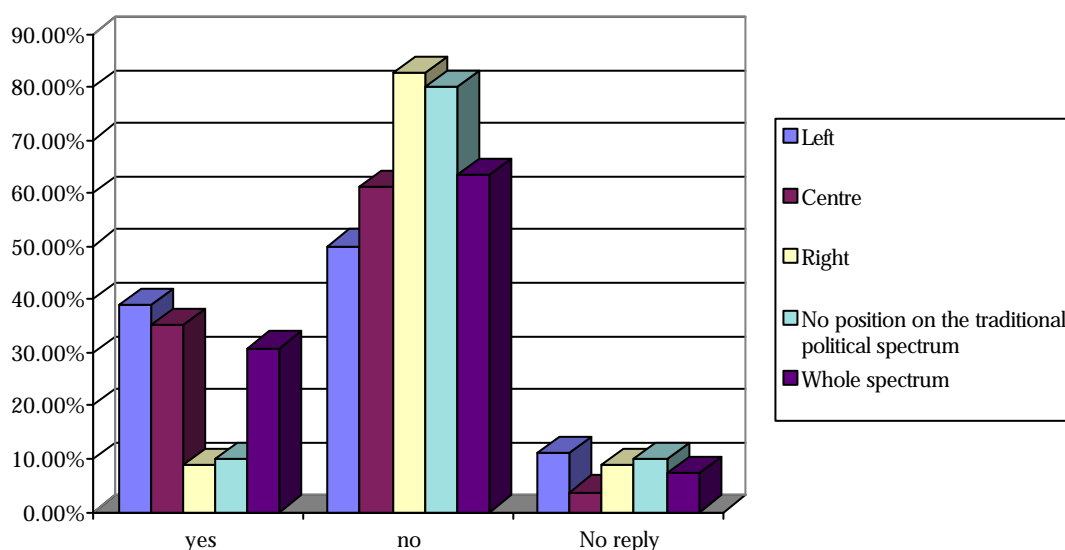
In Eastern Europe, too, the trends are broadly similar, with left-wing parties being apparently less averse to change than those on the right. For example, in Croatia the left-wing Social Democratic Party and the centre-left Social Liberal Party claim to apply quotas, while the Democratic Union does not. No party from the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia mentions quotas. In Estonia, the only reference to quotas is made by the (right-wing) Pro Patria Union. In Slovenia, the centrist Liberal Democratic Party, the left-wing Social Democratic Union and the centrist Democratic Pensioners' Party apply quotas, while the centre-right Slovene People's Party, the Christian Democratic Party (SKD), and the Slovene National Party (NP) have not done so to date.

In Asia the situation is more varied. In India the left-wing social democratic Samata Party is favourable to quotas, while in the Republic of Korea quotas are supported by the right-wing Grand National Party.

In the African countries that replied, quotas tend to be applied by left-wing parties: the MPLA in Angola, the African Democratic Rally in Burkina Faso, the Movement for Democracy in Cape Verde, the Popular Front in Côte d'Ivoire, the social democratic SWAPO party in Namibia and the Democratic Constitutional Rally in Tunisia.

In the Americas, Chile's Party for Democracy, which is also on the left, applies quotas: "*our party has taken steps to ensure that neither women nor men can have more than 60% of all candidatures...*".

Adoption of a quota system (fixed or incentive percentage) for women candidates



NB. This table was prepared on the basis of parties' self-classification on the traditional political spectrum

But many parties reject the quota method as a breach of the principle of equality. In Poland, for example, the right-wing Solidarity Election Action (AWS) states in its 1997 manifesto that the family is the basis of society and therefore campaigns for increased assistance to mothers. While it also defends women's equal right to participation in politics, it disapproves of the quota system because it *"leads to discrimination and is incompatible with equality between men and women"*. Likewise, in the Czech Republic the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia says: *"The issue has already been discussed. But a proposal to adopt a quota system for women candidates for elections to representative organs at all levels was rejected. The question will probably be reconsidered"*. The Japanese Communist Party is not in favour either.

On the other hand, the Democratic Party in Romania proposed introducing quotas for all parties, but the Chamber of Deputies rejected the initiative. According to the United List of Social Democrats in Slovenia, *"The Slovenian Parliament did not accept our political party's proposal for a quota system in 1996. The party itself adopted a quota of one-third of candidates for parliamentary elections, but no women were elected"*. A similar proposal by the Portuguese Socialist Party also failed in March 1999. In some countries with ethnic minorities or a stratified social hierarchy, the proposal has run up against "competing" demands. Following the failure of a proposal to amend the legislation, the Samata Party expresses the view that India belongs in this category: *"India not only has a feudal and patriarchal society but also a caste-divided one, in which women suffer from double oppression. They are encouraged to join professions but are not considered worthy of being part of the power structure. The fight for a 33% reservation for women in legislatures is under way and is still not finding smooth passage because of demands for caste-based reservations"*.

It should further be noted that the principle of quotas is still contested in some quarters.

It has been challenged in supreme courts (France, Italy) which view it, in the absence of a specific constitutional provision, as a breach of the principle of universality and equality of citizenship. It has also been challenged in the ordinary courts, for example when an action is brought by activists prevented from submitting their candidacy, as in the United Kingdom, where a court in Leeds ruled against the Labour Party in 1996. It has been challenged by its beneficiaries, who have seen something defined as a lower limit turn into a ceiling and feel humiliated by their confinement to one-third of all seats although they account for over half of the electorate. Lastly, it is challenged in practice because it is not self-executing. Under the list system, quotas only work if women candidates are placed in a favourable position (alternating men and women candidates or alphabetical order); under a single-member constituency system, they work only if the constituencies in which women stand are for relatively sure seats in political terms.

It will be seen that, while attitudes to increased participation by women are favourable, action to achieve that aim is seldom taken and in any case difficult to specify. Moreover, the implementation of such action, especially at the local level, needs to be monitored more closely. This doubtless accounts for the fact that good intentions, even where clearly expressed, have hitherto failed to overcome existing obstacles, which are still pervasive and will be described below. The Social Democratic Party of Angola puts it as follows: *"The provisions set forth in the statutes are taken into consideration by political parties, and the will exists to support women in their daily endeavour, but the financial situation, lack of experience and relations among them or between parties tends to undermine progress"*.

► The persistence of psychological and material obstacles

Respondents were asked at the end of the questionnaire to list the obstacles to candidacy for political office that were cited by women.

It was the question that elicited the most detailed replies and the largest number of comments.

Certain themes recur, regardless of the region, country and position on the spectrum of the parties concerned, conveying the impression that the barriers to access to politics are general and universal.

In Finland, a country known for its achievements in terms of gender equality, the National Coalition Party notes that "*Problems are no longer in the law but in people's heads - attitudes*".

It is significant that **most obstacles to progress consist, as so often in the case of women, in deficiencies of various kinds:** the complications of everyday life, lack of time because of the priority accorded to family or career, lack of training, lack of money, insufficient media influence and, above all, the survival everywhere of traditional prejudices and stereotypes regarding the putative roles of men and women in the family and public life. All of these factors reflect the persistence of traditional stereotypes of male and female social roles and a somewhat negative image of politics. They are compounded by the persistent inferiority complex and sense of inadequacy that make women reluctant to become involved in public life. Moreover, some parties in countries in transition report a kind of post-communist malaise stemming from a previous caricature of equality or artificial involvement of women in politics (Pro Patria in Estonia).

Prejudices and stereotypes

Even in countries where a culture of equality seems to be firmly established (Canada, Finland, Norway, New Zealand, etc.), customary gender role patterns persist, having been internalised and transmitted by women themselves. Most respondents refer to this phenomenon, especially in countries with more traditional and often predominantly rural social structures. Every single African party referred to this perpetuation of cultural patterns. So did all the Eastern European countries. The Civic Democratic Alliance in the Czech Republic graphically summarises traditional attitudes as follows: "*Women should not take part in political life - women belong in the kitchen*".

Difficulties encountered in everyday life

In some countries, women's everyday life is sometimes so harsh and mere survival in a precarious economic situation or a situation of armed conflict is such a challenge that the question of participation in politics hardly arises. Almost all African parties make that point. For example, the MPLA in Angola mentions as an obstacle "*difficult social conditions and concerns relating to family needs*". The Eastern European parties stress the same difficulty. According to the Social Democratic Party in the Czech Republic, "*deteriorating social conditions make women lose interest in political life*".

Lack of time and family responsibilities

Lack of time for public life (activism and mandates) because of the need to juggle family and career responsibilities is the obstacle most frequently cited all over the world. Not a single party fails to mention it.

The issue of time is clearly linked to family duties, which remain an accepted or imposed priority for many women, taking precedence over responsibilities to the polity or towards themselves. The situation is aggravated by:

- Inadequate day-care facilities (Croatian Democratic Union, Progressive Party of the Working People in Cyprus, Communist Party in Japan);
- Lack of family support (Democratic Party in Cyprus, Samata Party in India, Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, Grand National Party in the Republic of Korea, Social Action Party in Thailand, Croatia);
- Failure of parties to adjust their timetables and meeting schedules (French Socialist Party, Social Democratic Party of Angola) and the general constraints of public life (People's Action Party in Singapore, Party of Civic Understanding in Slovakia), which prompt a Czech woman MP, from the Christian Democratic Union, to confide: *"Having experienced the work in top party and political posts, I consider executing such functions a demanding, exhausting and thankless task. Wise are the women who do not seek political posts"*.

Lack of motivation and the bad image of politics

Lack of interest, which may be related to inadequate training but also to lack of faith in political activity, goes hand in hand with a critical image of politics.

The Liberal Democratic Party in France refers to *"uneasiness with the whole political environment"*. Many parties describe a male-dominated macho milieu that discourages women (Party for Democracy in Chile, Christian Democratic Rally in Haiti, Socialist Party in Portugal, etc.). The Panhellenic Socialist Movement in Greece speaks of a *"lack of interest due to the hostile climate and strong competition from men"*. The New Democratic Party of Canada also refers to the "conflictual style" of politics. The Hungarian Socialist Party and the Party of Civic Understanding in Slovakia make the same point. The Bloc québécois in Canada refers to *"politicians' lack of credibility"*. According to the Civic Democratic Alliance in the Czech Republic, *"politics is generally considered a malpractice of rough competition"*. And the Latvian People's Party refers to *"the perception that politics is dirty"*. The National Congress for New Politics in the Republic of Korea speaks of *"society's disillusionment with politics"*.

A negative image in the media and everyday conversation: *"Election campaign, electoral combat, wrangle, battle, arena, confrontation, win, lose, victory, defeat"* - a series of warlike words that recur in the replies and are more frequently associated with male culture and upbringing. Hence the feeling among many women that they can make a more effective contribution outside the political arena, for example through voluntary organisations (Bloc québécois in Canada) or by pursuing a successful career (Green League in Finland, Socialist Left Party and Christian Democratic Party in Norway).

Lack of resources

Virtually all respondents mention lack of resources, above all financial resources but also training and various kinds of support.

Most parties in Africa mention illiteracy and inadequate education, training and political awareness (the MPLA in Angola, the African Democratic Rally in Burkina Faso, the People's Front in Côte d'Ivoire, etc.). But similar factors are also mentioned by many European parties (the Flemish Christian Social Party in Belgium, the Democratic Party in Cyprus, the Socialist Party in Hungary) and by the Social Democratic Party in Japan.

The issue of funding is a recurring theme in replies from all over the world: the African Democratic Rally of Burkina Faso, the Liberal Party, New Democratic Party and Bloc québécois in Canada, the Party for Democracy in Chile, the People's Front in Côte d'Ivoire, the Croatian Democratic Union, the French Socialist Party, the Panhellenic Socialist Movement in Greece, the Frente Republicano in Guatemala, the Independence Party in Iceland, the Samata Party in India, the Liberal Democratic Party in Japan, the Democratic Party in the Seychelles, the Social Action Party in Thailand, etc.

Lack of self-confidence

Other frequently mentioned factors are:

- Lack of self-confidence (the Democratic Party in Cyprus, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech Republic, Synaspismos in Greece, the Samata Party in India, the Christian Democratic Party in Norway, the Chart Thai Party in Thailand and many others);
- Lack of fighting spirit (the CDU in Germany);
- Fear of incompetence (the Social Democratic Party in Croatia, the French Socialist Party);
- Lack of family encouragement (Synaspismos in Greece);
- Fear of conflict with family members (the Social Democratic Party in Angola, the Frente Republicano in Guatemala, the Janata Party in India, etc.);
- Fear of slander and verbal or physical violence (the Frente Republicano in Guatemala, the Samata Party in India).

All these factors reinforce or are reinforced by existing prejudices in all cultures.

Obstacles within parties

Virtually all respondents mention difficulties within parties, especially when it comes to nominating candidates. According to the Canadian Liberal Party *"the party takes less vigorous action in support of women candidates"*. Similar comments are made by the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech Republic, the Swedish People's Party in Finland, the Socialist Party in Portugal, the Democratic Constitutional Rally in Tunisia, etc. According to some respondents, parties still fear that the electorate is reluctant to vote for women candidates (Socialist Party in Hungary).

Lack of solidarity among women

Some respondents (the CDU and the Liberal Democratic Party in Germany, the Democratic Constitutional Rally in Tunisia, etc.) draw attention to the lack of solidarity among women, reflected in a reluctance to vote for each other, jealousy and fear of competition by women who have risen to positions of authority (Social Democratic Party in the Czech Republic: "*Women already established in politics sometimes intervene to eliminate prospective competitors*") and failure to encourage newcomers.

The "universality" of the obstacles still encountered by women of all political persuasions in every country is a surprising phenomenon, given all the good intentions expressed and the plans of action proposed and partially implemented. There is a strong temptation to yield to despondency, but that would mean ignoring the tangible seeds of change, above all the new mentality that has begun to change the course of events all over the world.

► Factors conducive to change

The replies bring to light certain favourable developments, often stemming from follow-up to the proposals contained in the Plan of Action and Platform for Action, which may bring about an appreciable improvement in the situation.

Prior local experience an asset for prospective women candidates

Virtually all replies to the question about prior local experience of prospective women candidates recognised the importance of such experience. Most surveys and studies bear out this conclusion: prior local mandates facilitate or even ensure nomination for a regional or national mandate. They create a network of contacts and a local support base and accustom women to constituency work. They are also more readily accepted by women and less inclined to arouse prejudice, if only because they seem more compatible with women's other responsibilities. According to the Agrupament Nacional Democràtic in Andorra, "*women agree more readily to stand for election on municipal lists*", a view broadly shared by the Andorran Parti Nova Democràcia. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia in the Czech Republic also notes that women encounter fewer internal party difficulties at the local level.

Assistance required for training and campaign funding

Not a single reply fails to include lack of funding among the obstacles encountered by women standing for election. The Party for Democracy in Chile, for instance, having first mentioned the problem of the voting system, adds: "*The other obstacle is election campaign financing, because there is no State contribution*".

One question specifically addressed the issue of financial assistance for women candidates during their election campaign. There were few positive answers despite the fact that this is one of the most frequently mentioned handicaps. Another related question is whether the assistance offered is specific or intended for all candidates.

Specific provision for such assistance seems to have been made in Cyprus by the Progressive Party of the Working People, in the Czech Republic by the Christian Democratic Union and in Estonia by the People's Party.

The New Democratic Party in Japan has established an "Emily's List", i.e. a fund to finance and support women's campaigns.

Other respondents refer to the need to limit campaign spending and ensure transparency of funding.

Can feminist parties serve as a spur to action?

By applying pressure or threatening to establish a separate list, a strong feminist movement may force a party to include women among its candidates who stand a good chance of being elected.

A small number of women's parties also exist. Two of them sent in replies: the Icelandic "Kvennalistinn Women's Alliance" and the "Women in Russia" movement. A comment from the former party may reflect a new approach to politics: *"Kvennalistinn upholds the principles of power-sharing and active democracy, and therefore does not elect a chairwoman or have leaders in the conventional sense. In accordance with the movement's grassroots structure, most decisions are made collectively and without a vote. All major decisions concerning both the public and the internal work of Kvennalistinn are made at the national convention. ... Kvennalistinn, as a feminist movement, is fighting for increased influence on the political arena, because it is vital that women can make decisions about the social conditions in which they live.... Women must be able to view themselves as independent individuals with their own needs, will and rights, as well as being part of a family and a community. Women possess important skills and experience, which society cannot do without."*

The origins and development of inter-party networks of women MPs

A frequently mentioned phenomenon is the establishment and development of inter-party groups of women MPs, who meet to tackle their problems together and to mobilise women voters, as mentioned in connection with the question on political awareness-building among women. But these networks may also provide logistic support for women candidates and act as a pressure group in parliament.

In Japan, for example, a "Network of Women in Politics", which urges women to become involved in all branches of society, has launched training courses to enhance their expertise and scrutinises legislation from women's standpoint with a view to proposing amendments where appropriate.

In Greece, an Inter-Party Cooperation Committee was set up in 1993 to promote equal participation by women. In 1998 it became the "Women's Political Association" and it is now fighting for a one-third quota of women in all electoral lists.

According to the Pro Patria Union in Estonia, *"by creating a women's group which works together with those of other parties in a women's round table, Pro Patria Union has embarked on a process of consciousness-raising among its women members and the population at large to overcome traditional stereotypes and apathy"*.

In Georgia, a Club of Women MPs attends to women's interests in the spirit of the Beijing Platform for Action; it has permanent points of contact, gathers information and lobbies the

media. In collaboration with an American institute, it also runs training courses on election campaigns.

The key role of the media

Frequent mention is made of the role of the media in general and of women's publications in particular in encouraging or discouraging women's participation by giving a positive or negative image of public life and women politicians.

According to the Social Liberal Party in Croatia, "*certain media are unresponsive to difficulties of time adjustment and unaware of problems in obtaining support from the local environment*".

The Swedish People's Party in Finland and the New Peace Party in Japan also deplore the media's failure to highlight the potential role of women in politics. According to the Frente Republicano in Guatemala, women fear criticism by the media, which traditionally condemn any action they take.

Many respondents mention the lack or inadequacy of role models. Hence the importance of the influence exerted by the few fortunate women MPs and of the type of coverage they get in the press and the audio-visual media. Hence also the desirability of a strong contingent of women political journalists, who can treat male and female MPs equally and refrain from focusing on their physical appearance and private life.

THE FALTERING PACE OF GOVERNMENT CHANGE SINCE 1995

A few exceptions here and there cannot obscure the fact that there has been no significant increase in the number of women heads of government and above all ministers throughout the world. The latest figures are shown in the table overleaf.

This is true even in the countries with the highest proportion of women MPs.

Parliaments were asked about women members of the cabinet and any increase in their numbers since 1995. Of the 17 replies from parliaments in which women accounted for more than 15% of members, 10 were negative, only 5 were positive (Canada, Latvia - which has just elected a woman presiding officer, Namibia, South Africa and Viet Nam) and two failed to comment (Cuba and China).

A total of 33 respondents considered that there had been no improvement and only 16 felt that there had (the latter group included the parliaments of Andorra, Belarus, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, Egypt, Guatemala, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Mongolia, Namibia, Philippines, South Africa and Sri Lanka).

Only two of the respondents with women cabinet members had not had any women members prior to 1995 (Czech Republic and Mongolia) but five without women cabinet members had had women ministers prior to 1995 (Burkina Faso, Cyprus, Romania, Singapore, Slovenia). According to one Slovenian party (the United List of Social Democratic) *"we criticised the Government because after 1996 no woman was included. The participation of women in Slovenian politics was higher ten years ago than it is today"*.

In all countries save in Northern Europe, the proportion of women is small: one or two according to some respondents. Pakistan states that *"There are two women members of the cabinet at present. The proportion of women and the number of women parliamentarians are two factors which can lead to an increase in women cabinet members. As the present cabinet is smaller in size compared to previous cabinets and there has been no increase in the number of women parliamentarians, so also there has been no increase in the number of women cabinet members"*.

No attempt was made in the questionnaire to establish which ministerial portfolio had been allocated to the few existing women cabinet members or whether a diversification of assignments to include portfolios other than social, family and cultural affairs was discernible. No attempt was made either to establish whether ministers were selected from among members of parliament or whether the choice was left to the discretion of the leader of the Executive. In the latter case, a few exceptional appointments may have an impact on the media. But in practice appointments made without parliamentary support are clearly hazardous and more prey than others to the vicissitudes of political life.

Have the few women cabinet members any impact on the content of political decisions? Is a critical mass still necessary to influence policy? Perhaps.

We tried to cross-check the replies concerning women cabinet members with the adoption of a national plan to implement the Beijing Platform for Action. Although the value of such a comparison should not be overrated, it emerges that the number of countries with both women cabinet members and a national plan is not only quite high (31) but also broadly coincides with the number of countries that have adopted a plan (35). Among the latter countries, some parliaments report an uninterrupted contingent of women members before and since 1995: Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde, Cyprus, Egypt, Finland, Georgia, Mongolia, Netherlands, Russian

Federation, Sri Lanka, Trinidad and Tobago and Tunisia. Only two countries with a national plan had no women ministers prior to 1995, but they have remedied that shortcoming in the meantime (Czech Republic and Mongolia, where the woman Minister for Foreign Affairs has been serving as acting Prime Minister since June 1999).

This correlation tends to indicate that, where women form part of the Executive, it is easier to secure support for the adoption of a national plan. It may also be assumed, albeit with considerable circumspection, that countries with women cabinet members tend to be countries that are already aware of women's issues and will therefore act on the commitments made at the Beijing Conference.

WOMEN IN THE EXECUTIVE IN AUGUST 1999

Despite efforts to obtain full and accurate information on women in the Executive, the following table may contain errors or omissions.

For classification purposes it was decided to classify each minister with a complex portfolio under each of the items mentioned; for example a minister for labour and social affairs is classified both under the category labour and under the category social affairs. To enable the reader to identify a complex ministry, a star has been placed next to the name of the country concerned whenever portfolio encompasses more than one of the various areas listed. Yet for **calculation purposes** only one person is taken into account.

It should be noted that, while the research covered all cabinet posts, the data presented in the table serves to illustrate a trend and therefore only a number of key ministries have been mentioned.

(Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union - data from a survey of all governments)

Heads of State: Guyana, Ireland, Latvia, Panama, San Marino, Sri Lanka and Switzerland	7 States	(3.7 %)
Deputy Heads of State: Costa Rica, Gambia, Honduras, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Philippines*, The FYR of Macedonia, Uganda, Viet Nam	8 States	(4.2 %)
Heads of Government: Bangladesh, New Zealand and Sri Lanka	3 States	(1.6 %)
Deputy Prime Minister and junior positions in the Prime Minister's Office: Australia, Barbados (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Belgium* (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Croatia (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Fiji (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Grenada, Ireland* (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Jordan* (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Luxembourg* (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Malaysia, Netherlands (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Norway, Russian Federation (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Sweden (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Tajikistan (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Thailand*, Togo, Turkmenistan* (<i>Deputy PM</i>), Uganda, Uzbekistan (<i>Deputy PM</i>); in addition, China has a woman State Councillor.	21 States	(11.1 %)
Number of countries whose Government includes a woman Women members of the Executive as ministers, State ministers, ministers delegate, deputy ministers, secretaries of State, deputy secretaries of State or parliamentary secretaries	145 States	(76.3 %)
World average of women in Government	190 States	(11.7 %)
World highest percentage of women in a Cabinet: 55 % in Sweden (11/20)		
Minister of Foreign Affairs: Bahamas, Barbados*, Bulgaria, El Salvador, Equatorial Guinea, Finland, Liechtenstein*, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mexico, Mongolia, Niger, South Africa, Sweden, United States of America	15 States	(7.9 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Australia, Austria, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Kenya, Luxembourg, Morocco, United Kingdom	8 States	(4.2 %)
Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs: Bangladesh (also Head of State), Cambodia*, Norway and Sri Lanka	4 States	(2.1 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Cambodia*, Nigeria, South Africa	3 States	(1.6 %)
Minister of Home Affairs: Italy	1 State	(0.5 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Kenya*, Slovakia, South Africa, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zimbabwe	6 States	(3.2 %)
Minister of Public Administration / Civil Status: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Canada, Congo (Republic of)*, Dominican Republic*, Italy, Luxembourg, Madagascar*, Norway*, Seychelles, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe*	13 States	(6.8 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Argentina, Cape	4 States	(2.1 %)

Verde, Mauritania, Uganda		
Minister of the Economy / Development: Albania*, Burkina Faso (<i>Regional Integration</i>), Canada, (<i>International Co-operation</i>), China, Denmark, Germany, Liberia, Netherlands, Norway (<i>International Development</i>), Sao Tomé and Príncipe, Slovakia, Slovenia, Suriname, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	14 States	(7.4 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Cape Verde, Dominican Republic, El Salvador*, Gabon*, Greece, Poland, Senegal, Slovenia, Uganda*, United Kingdom	10 States	(5.3 %)
Minister of Trade and Industry: Albania*, Angola, Benin*, China, Colombia, Cuba, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Georgia, Ireland*, Malaysia, Mali, Nepal, Uganda	14 States	(7.4 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Belarus, China, Dominican Republic, El Salvador*, France, Gabon, Japan, Kenya, Norway, Poland, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkmenistan, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America	17 States	(8.9 %)
Minister of Finance/Budget: Andorra, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Finland, Guatemala, Honduras, Latvia, Slovakia, Venezuela	9 States	(4.7 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Gabon*, Norway, Senegal, United Kingdom	4 States	(2.1 %)
Minister of Labour / Employment / Vocational Training: Austria*, Bahamas*, Belgium, Canada, Cape Verde*, Finland, France*, Haiti*, Honduras, Ireland*, Jamaica*, Kazakhstan*, Lithuania*, Luxembourg*, Madagascar*, Norway*, Saint Lucia*, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda*, United States of America*, Uruguay*, Vietnam*, Zambia, Zimbabwe*	25 States	(13.2 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Cambodia*, China*, Dominican Republic, Gabon*, Morocco*, Poland*, Slovakia, Uganda*, United Kingdom*, Zimbabwe*	10 States	(5.3 %)
Minister of Public Works / Territorial Planning: Albania*, Andorra, Angola, Canada, France*, Jordan*, Luxembourg*, Netherlands*, Seychelles*, South Africa and Tunisia*	11 States	(5.8 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Dominican Republic*, Malaysia, Netherlands*, Panama, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania	6 States	(3.2 %)
Minister of Transport and Communications: Albania*, Belgium, Cape Verde*, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Fiji*, Luxembourg, Netherlands*, Nigeria	9 States	(4.7 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Dominican Republic*, Netherlands*, United Kingdom*, United Republic of Tanzania	4 States	(2.1 %)
Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs: Barbados, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Jamaica*, Mali, Seychelles*, South Africa, Swaziland	8 States	(4.2 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Grenada* Panama, Zambia	3 States	(1.6 %)
Minister of Tourism: Australia*, Benin*, Cape Verde*, Congo* (Republic of), Ecuador, Fiji*, Gambia*, Mali*, Philippines, Seychelles*, United Republic of Tanzania*	11 States	(5.8 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Dominican Republic, France, Haiti, Malaysia*, South Africa*	5 States	(2.6 %)
Minister of the Environment: Andorra*, Angola*, Bangladesh*, Belgium*, Bulgaria*, Canada, Costa Rica*, Cuba*, Ecuador, El Salvador*, Finland, France*, Georgia*, Grenada*, Honduras*, Iceland, Iran (Islamic Rep. of), Israel, Japan, Lesotho*, Malawi*, Mexico*, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Solomon Islands, Spain, Tunisia*	28 States	(14.7 %)
Deputy Minister or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Argentina, Egypt, Jamaica*, Slovakia, South Africa*, United Kingdom*	6 States	(3.2 %)
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources: Bangladesh, Botswana, Bulgaria*, Costa Rica*, Côte d'Ivoire, El Salvador, Georgia*, Honduras*, Mexico*, Netherlands*, Nigeria, Norway, South Africa, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania*, Zimbabwe*	16 States	(8.4 %)

<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Ethiopia, Malawi*, South Africa	3 States	(1.6 %)
Ministry of Agriculture / Food / Forestry / Fishing: Andorra*, Angola*, Bangladesh*, Mexico*, Solomon Islands*, South Africa, Sweden	7 States	(3.7 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Australia, Fiji, Malawi, Sri Lanka*, Zimbabwe	5 States	(2.6 %)
Minister of Justice: Australia, Azerbaijan, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, France, Gambia, Germany, Hungary, Iceland*, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, New Zealand, Poland, Samoa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland*, Trinidad and Tobago, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America	23 States	(12.1 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Belarus, Ireland, South Africa, Sweden	4 States	(2.1 %)
Minister of Social Affairs: Algeria*, Austria*, Belarus, Benin*, Burkina Faso*, Burundi*, Cameroon, Cape Verde*, Central African Republic*, Chad*, Denmark, Dominica*, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea*, Fiji*, Finland*, Gambia, Guinea*, Guyana, Haiti*, Iceland*, Indonesia, Italy, Kazakhstan*, Lithuania*, Luxembourg*, Malawi*, Malaysia*, Maldives*, Mauritania*, Mauritius*, Mozambique, Namibia*, Niger*, Norway, Philippines, Saint Lucia*, Senegal*, Switzerland, Togo*, United States of America*, Uruguay*, Vietnam*, Zambia*	44 States	(23.2 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Belarus, Cambodia*, Central African Republic*, China*, Dominican Republic*, Gabon*, Grenada*, India, Kenya*, Kyrgyzstan, Japan*, Morocco*, Netherlands, Pakistan*, Poland*, Sweden, Uganda*, United Kingdom, Zambia	19 States	(10.0 %)
Minister of Health: Austria*, Barbados, Belgium*, Benin, Dominica*, Dominican Republic*, Finland*, Germany, Gambia*, Ghana, Grenada*, Haiti*, Iceland*, Italy, Madagascar, Malawi*, Mali*, Mauritania*, Namibia*, Netherlands, Panama, Poland, Portugal, Saint Lucia*, Seychelles, South Africa, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America*, Zambia	30 States	(15.8 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Belarus, China, Dominican Republic*, France, Germany, Jamaica, Japan*, New Zealand*, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Syrian Arab Republic, Uganda, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania	14 States	(7.4 %)
Minister of Family / Children / Youth / Elderly / Handicapped: Algeria*, Angola*, Australia, Barbados*, Belize*, Burkina Faso*, Central African Republic*, Chad*, Côte d'Ivoire*, France*, Germany*, Guinea*, Guyana*, Lesotho*, Luxembourg, Madagascar*, Malawi*, Mali*, Mauritius*, Niger*, Norway, Panama*, Saint Lucia*, Senegal*, Tunisia*, United Republic of Tanzania*	26 States	(13.7 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Australia*, Barbados*, Cambodia*, Canada, China, Gabon*, Germany*, Malaysia*, Panama, Uganda, Viet Nam*	11 States	(5.8 %)
Minister of Women's Affairs/Gender Equality: Algeria*, Angola*, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria*, Bangladesh, Belize*, Benin*, Burkina Faso, Burundi*, Cambodia*, Cameroon, Congo (Republic of)*, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire*, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominica*, Dominican Republic, Equatorial Guinea*, Ethiopia, Fiji*, Gambia*, Germany*, Guinea*, Haiti, Italy, Lesotho*, Luxembourg, Madagascar*, Malawi*, Maldives*, Mali*, Mauritius*, New Zealand, Niger*, Panama*, Peru*, Rwanda, Samoa, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Togo*, Trinidad and Tobago*, Tunisia*, Tuvalu*, United Kingdom, United Republic of Tanzania*	47 States	(24.7 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Cambodia*, Canada*, Gabon*, Grenada*, Indonesia, Mauritania, Namibia, Panama, Pakistan*, Republic of Korea, Thailand	11 States	(5.8 %)
Minister of Education: Austria*, Barbados*, China, Denmark*, Dominican Republic*, Ecuador*, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Finland, Gambia, Germany*, Ghana, Guatemala, Latvia, Liberia, Luxembourg*, Nepal, Panama, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Tuvalu*	23 States	(12.1 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Angola*, Australia*, Barbados*, China, Ethiopia, France, Gabon*, Morocco*, Namibia, Netherlands, Norway*, Pakistan*, Poland, Sweden, Thailand, Uganda, United Kingdom*	17 States	(8.9 %)
Minister of Culture/Arts and Heritage Austria*, Barbados*, Bulgaria,	32 States	(16.8 %)

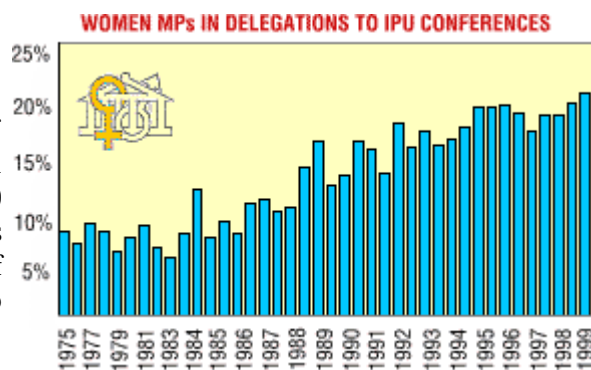
Cambodia, Canada, Colombia, Congo (Republic of), Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Dominican Republic*, Ecuador*, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji*, Finland, France*, Gambia*, Greece, Guinea*, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein*, Luxembourg*, Mali*, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Trinidad and Tobago* Tuvalu, Uganda		
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Algeria, Angola*, Barbados*, Canada*, Dominican Republic*, Ethiopia, Malaysia*, Namibia, South Africa*, Sweden, Thailand, United Kingdom*	12 States	(6.3 %)
Minister of Science, Technology and Research: China, Croatia, Cuba*, Denmark, Germany*, Luxembourg*, South Africa*, Switzerland*, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	9 States	(4.7 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Nigeria, Norway*, Togo*	3 States	(1.6 %)
Minister of Posts / Telecommunications: Belarus, Colombia, France*, Japan, Mali, Nepal*, Senegal, South Africa	8 States	(4.2 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Angola, Dominican Republic*, United Kingdom*	3 States	(1.6 %)
Minister of Information: Côte d'Ivoire, Nepal*	2 States	(1.1 %)
<u>Deputy Minister</u> or occupying a junior post in the Ministry: Ethiopia*	1 State	(0.5 %)
Minister of Sports: Australia*, France*, Guinea*, Guyana*, Liechtenstein*, Luxembourg*, Mauritius*	7 States	(3.7 %)
	0 States	0%

WITHIN THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION: ENCOURAGING CHANGE

The Union has long endeavoured to promote a balanced partnership based on parity between men and women. The scope of this endeavour has expanded since 1995, embracing not only studies and surveys such as *"Men and Women in Politics: Democracy Still in the Making"*, the world map showing progress to date in parliaments, the present study and a status report on women cabinet members (see previous chapter), but also the incorporation in the IPU Statutes of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, launched in 1978 and convened at each of the twice-yearly statutory conferences. We have also mentioned other measures such as the revision in 1996 of the terminology used in the Union's Statutes and Rules.

This resolve to put the ideas it championed into practice led to the convening, in New Delhi in February 1997, of a world conference entitled *"Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics"*, which brought together an equal number of men and women MPs to discuss various aspects of politics, including financing and the relationship between politicians and the media. The entirely new atmosphere created by this meeting led to a change in attitudes and the establishment in the IPU Executive Committee in 1997 of a gender partnership group composed of equal numbers of men and women with the mandate of ensuring that the Union's overall policy reflects this principle. The issue of whether delegations to the Union's meetings that do not include women should enjoy the same voting rights as those with at least one woman member has already been considered. This approach is based on the aspiration, expressed since 1987 in Article 11 of the Union's Statutes, that delegations should include at least one woman. Statistically speaking, the number of women delegation members has been rising for the past twenty years, as shown by the following chart.

Admittedly, however, women's participation in the Union's conferences has not increased significantly since Beijing. The replies to the questionnaire indicate that the proportion of women in delegations to the Union is not, on the whole, increasing: 14 positive and 30 negative replies. However, five countries (Croatia, Cyprus, Mongolia, Republic of Korea and San Marino) have begun to include women since 1995 and the number of all-male delegations is declining.



Yet the problem is more complex. Two countries, Iceland and Cape Verde, note that the male-female mix in delegations is determined by political considerations rather than gender. Iceland comments: *"Women members take part in international delegations according to party affiliation, not on the basis of gender. They participate fully in the international work of the Parliament and currently chair half of the Parliament's international committees (Icelandic delegations to the North Atlantic Assembly, the Western European Union, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and the Nordic Council)"*.

It must therefore be concluded, in the light of our previous findings concerning political parties, that there is still a long road to travel. However, the Inter-Parliamentary Union has not lost heart. In the wake of the New Delhi Conference, a Forum on *"Perspectives on Democracy: How Women Make a Difference"*, organised jointly by the IPU and UNESCO in association with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, is to be held in Paris from 1 to 3 December 1999. The Forum's conclusions, to be presented at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in June 2000, will draw on the findings of a series of wide-ranging written

interviews by IPU with women politicians from all over the world. The survey focuses on their political itinerary, their experience with political parties, parliaments and governments, their relations with non-governmental organisations and the media, and above all their political priorities and the changes they feel they have brought about, for the common good, in political practices and in the atmosphere, language and outcome of politics.



THE IDEA OF PARITY GAINS GROUND

Although the questionnaire did not explicitly raise the issue of parity, it is mentioned by several respondents, particularly from France.

The notion of parity has been an underlying theme in the IPU's proposals for many years and has been taken up and forcefully expressed by the Council of Europe and the Group of Experts of the European Communities "Women in the Decision-making Process", which has organised symposiums, debates and networks. It inspired the proceedings of the Beijing Conference.

The June 1999 constitutional reform in France gave rise to a wide-ranging discussion of the topic. Although the term itself is not specifically mentioned in the amended text, it was the issue at stake in a difficult and heated debate that pitted advocates of practical efficiency against defenders of a theoretical universalism.

Other initiatives included the "parity parliament" proposal discussed for two days in Portugal in 1994 and, more recently, the 1997 New Delhi Inter-Parliamentary Conference⁸⁸. Attended by almost equal numbers of men and women, it discussed at length the subject of parity partnership in politics, focusing on its scope and the issues involved.

The notion is admittedly subversive. Hence the reservations of some jurists and both male and female intellectuals based on the principle of universal citizenship and the fear that women may again be viewed solely in terms of their gender.

The debate is fierce and exciting but unsatisfactory because the issues are both theoretical and practical. Some feminists view the demand for parity in decision-making forums as a step towards the rebuilding of a dividing wall between the sexes, a development conducive to hierarchy-building and discrimination. Parity for them is a notion fraught with dire connotations of essentialism. Others, on the contrary, view it as a means to eliminate barriers and as an alternative to strategies that have failed to work: party entryism (in which women regularly fail), partial redistribution by means of quotas (a humiliating ploy) or pious hopes for a change in mentalities.

In both *de facto* and *de jure* terms, the notion goes well beyond equality. It introduces into the way societies are run the idea that the citizenry is gender-based, that every component of society (young people, pensioners, executives, immigrants, the elderly, the disabled, etc.) is made up of two sexes and that an individual is necessarily a man or a woman - one of the only characteristics mentioned on birth certificates and identity documents apart from a person's name. One is born male or female and remains so throughout one's life, a fact that education and social mores tend to reinforce.

This does not mean that being a man or a woman entails specific attributes, a special role, a separate destiny or a particular way of thinking and living. Parity provides an opportunity to devise a new approach on all fronts: personal life, family life and public life.

⁸⁸ "Towards Partnership between Men and Women in Politics", Inter-Parliamentary Union, "Reports and Documents" Series, No. 29, 1997, ISBN 92-914-034-4

Annex 1

PLAN OF ACTION To Correct Present Imbalances in the Participation of Men and Women in Political Life

Adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council, the plenary policy-making body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, at its 154th session (Paris, 26 March 1994)

The Plan of Action is the outcome of reflection within the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of national parliaments. The Inter-Parliamentary Council developed it by means of a working group made up of an equal number of male and female parliamentarians^{***}, on the basis of proposals presented by the member parliaments, and adopted it at its session held in Paris on 26 March 1994.

The Plan of Action is based on the affirmation that *"forty years after the adoption of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women and despite undeniable progress, political and parliamentary life remains dominated by men in all countries"*^{†††}.

It is also inspired by the following vision of democracy : ***"The concept of democracy will only assume true and dynamic significance when political policies and national legislation are decided upon jointly by men and women with equitable regard for the interests and aptitudes of both halves of the population"***^{†††}.

It is divided into five main sections:

- Section A covers all that must precede political participation, i.e., the conditions needed for women to participate actively in political life; this section briefly looks into the question of the cultural and religious values of civilization, education, employment, health and participation in economic life;
- Section B concerns the legal basis for equality of men and women;
- Section C deals with participation in politics at the national level; it covers such issues as action to promote women's "political awareness", respect for the principle of equality in political parties, measures for affirmative action, participation of women in elections, and the sharing of political responsibilities by men and women;
- Section D covers the various aspects of women's participation in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's activities; and
- Section E concerns the mechanism for follow-up and assessment of the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Plan.

In this Plan of Action, emphasis is placed essentially on political participation as such. It is, however, impossible to refer to political participation in isolation, and other indicators relating to the achievement of civil, economic, social and cultural rights must also be taken into account.

Drawn up with a worldwide approach and prepared in the spirit of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies (1985) and of the Vienna Declaration and Plan of Action of the World Conference on Human Rights (Vienna, 1993), the Plan of Action is conceived as guidelines to inspire and stimulate national action. It takes account of the variety of cultural, religious, political and institutional contexts and aims to offer solutions adapted accordingly. It also contains provisions that directly concern the Inter-Parliamentary Union itself.

^{***} MPs from the following countries: Bolivia, Bulgaria, Finland, Indonesia, Philippines, Poland, Senegal, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Uruguay and Zimbabwe

^{†††} Inter-Parliamentary Council, April 1992, resolution on "Women and Political Power"

^{†††} Ibidem

The Inter-Parliamentary Council,

Having before it the Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life, which was prepared by a Parity Working Group of balanced membership,

Considering that the document was drawn up after an extensive process of consultation of the members of the Inter-Parliamentary Union conducted over a period of two years, and in which they took a very active part,

Considering that the document resulting from this process proposes concrete solutions to situations common to all countries while offering a wide range of options responding to individual national and regional situations, and that it represents a common denominator acceptable to all countries,

1. Decides to adopt the Plan of Action;
2. Requests National Groups to bring this Plan of Action to the attention of their Parliaments and Governments, particularly in anticipation of the IVth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995, and to publicize it to the utmost at the national level;
3. Requests the Secretary General also to ensure the widest possible international circulation of this document, particularly in preparation for and during the Beijing Conference, in order that it may be taken duly into account when the Action Platform to be adopted by that intergovernmental Conference is drawn up.

A. CONDITIONS FOR ACTIVE PARTICIPATION BY WOMEN IN POLITICAL LIFE

An analysis of the available information on the various national realities highlights the fact that, in all parts of the world a certain number of conditions favour or on the contrary hinder women's active involvement in political life.

Wider community awareness of issues associated with women's participation in political life is an important aspect of correcting the current imbalance.

I. THE VALUES OF CIVILIZATION AND THEIR TRANSMISSION

To differing degrees, the cultural and religious values of civilization tend to assign - more or less rigidly - specific roles and tasks to men and to women. Thus, they tend to limit women's participation in political life or even to exclude women from politics, and action in this area remains the most delicate and long-term of all.

Nonetheless, it should be possible, without destabilizing cultures or imposing values foreign to the national culture, to enhance or re-enhance women's dignity at the social level and allow the emergence of a more balanced image of the capacity of men and women to participate in the management of both private and

public affairs. The following proposals are aimed at that objective.

1. Developing the concepts of parity and partnership

The combination of efforts on the part of all of society's components is indispensable to tackle and resolve the problems facing society. Emphasis should thus be placed on two complementary concepts: the concept of **PARITY** which reflects the fact that persons of one or the other sex are different but nonetheless equal; and the concept of **PARTNERSHIP**, which shows that a creative synergy can be created between men and women so as to tackle the community's problems effectively.

2. Refraining from presenting activities outside and inside the home as conflicting

It is proposed to refrain from presenting the traditional roles and tasks assumed by women at home and her activities outside the home, whether social, professional, political, or other, as conflicting activities.

In this connection, it can be important to recognize and enhance the historical role played by women in society: For example, women's participation in national liberation

struggles, in rebuilding the nation after a war, their past and present role in development.

Governments should organize public information campaigns for this purpose. To respect the principle of equality, they should also ensure that the portrait of women given in textbooks corresponds to historical fact and is presented with all their potential and achievements. The media could also do much in that respect by disseminating information based on reliable and verified documentation.

Men should support women's participation in social activities and share with them obligations and responsibilities, as well as authority, with regard to housework and the rearing and education of children. This is particularly so when women combine domestic tasks with professional and/or political activities.

It is equally important to recognize and enhance the role and activities of women inside the home. Governments, Parliaments and non-governmental organizations could organize campaigns focusing on the importance of this role and these activities for society.

This recognition could even extend to the institution of a method which would place an economic value on work at home and even a system to remunerate such work. The economic value of women's work at home could also be considered as part of the gross national product.

Social security protection should be provided for either men or women, including for work at home.

3. Changing the images and models

The images and models of men and women are transmitted through education in the family, formal education, the media and by advertising messages. Action needs to be taken at all these different levels in order to eliminate any suggestion that one sex is superior to the other and, on the contrary, to promote the image of equality and complementarity between the sexes. It is important that the difference should be seen as an advantage and not a limitation.

Regarding participation in politics, some women such as women parliamentarians and those exercising responsibilities in the government - whether at the local, provincial or national levels - can act positively as models. They can show that, without abandoning their traditional roles, women can participate responsibly in political activities and have no need to adopt male behaviour patterns to do so.

4. Harmonizing customary and positive law

In all countries where positive law establishes equality between the sexes while customary law tends to

disadvantage women, customary law should be adjusted so as to eliminate any kind of discrimination.

It is also important for men and women to receive sufficient information on their rights and responsibilities. Governments could organize public information campaigns for this purpose, for example, through the media.

II. EDUCATION

In a rapidly changing and unstable world, education and training should be broad-based and launched as a system of lifelong learning so as to strike a new balance between practical and academic skills. Furthermore, education should be linked with sustainable development now requiring, among other things, fresh impetus to close the gap between male and female involvement.

1. Equality of access to schooling for boys and girls

In all countries where this is not yet the case, it is recommended that measures be taken to facilitate access to schooling for girls, under legal and practical conditions identical to those for boys.

In countries where the rate of school attendance for girls is lower than that for boys, the government as well as community and grass-root organizations could organize campaigns to overcome prejudices and to encourage families to send their girls to school in the same way as boys. In some cases, special provisions such as the awarding of grants or special allowances for girls' schooling, or the supply of educational material free of charge, could be adopted to overcome the material obstacles.

2. Establishment of an identical duration of schooling for boys and girls

Boys and girls should be subject to the same minimum obligatory period of school attendance.

3. Adult literacy programmes

Governments should draw up and implement adult literacy programmes since this would facilitate women's participation in political life.

4. Educational content

It is recommended that all education material should be scrutinized so as to eliminate any messages which give or suggest an image of men's superiority over women; educational material should be the same for boys and girls.

In teacher training, special attention should be paid to promoting the principle of equality between men and women and the concepts of parity and partnership.

It is recommended that, at appropriate levels of education, the rights of the person be established as a discipline, which would greatly contribute to the further emancipation of women in all respects.

III. HEALTH

Every year, women die from after-effects linked to pregnancy, delivery or abortion, and nearly 99 per cent of these deaths occur in developing countries. This state of affairs not only has an adverse effect on women's availability for participation in political life but also represents a major handicap diverting them from any activity in civilian life.

It is recommended that governments create and reinforce health systems so that such systems may be capable of preventing maternal and child mortality, thus ensuring that mothers do not have this major concern and so can envisage competing in politics.

National Parliaments should promote family planning so as to allow women to organize their domestic lives accordingly, as well as their professional and political careers.

In the same spirit, national legislation must guarantee the moral and physical integrity of women through stringent legislation and with harsh penalties for conjugal violence and through total prohibition of practices which physically mutilate women.

IV. EMPLOYMENT AND PARTICIPATION IN ECONOMIC LIFE

Surveys carried out in this field show that in every country where an increase in the number of women in paid employment has been noted, such an increase has led to a change in the economic and social structure. Equal pay for equal work and, for women, direct and independent access to credit are powerful tools for obtaining recognition of the equality of sexes and women's economic independence. In general, women who achieve independent economic and social power show greater interest and become more active in politics.

Accordingly, it is recommended that measures be taken to promote the access of women to professional training and employment on equal conditions with men.

It is further recommended that measures be taken:

- ◆ To facilitate access to bank credits for those women capable of meeting the conditions laid down by the banks;
- ◆ To help women without wages and with low incomes to increase their purchasing power by

teaching them entrepreneurial principles and rules and by facilitating contact with national and international private aid organizations that help small-scale enterprises.

B. THE LEGAL BASES FOR EQUALITY

Reference to the relevant international standards will be found attached (Annexes I, II and III ^{§§§}).

All States which have not done so should ratify without delay the Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), together with, where applicable, regional instruments concerning the status of women.

All States should ensure that their national legislation complies with the norms featuring in those instruments. They should further periodically verify the soundness of any reservation expressed at the time of ratification and envisage its prompt lifting.

In all these respects, parliamentarians are strongly recommended to use their right of initiative.

I. ENSHRINING THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY IN BASIC LAW

Women's rights come under the category of rights of the person and should be specifically recognized as such in the national Constitution or in any other basic text of constitutional rank.

In particular, the principle of equality between men and women should be explicitly spelled out in the national Constitution or in any other basic text of constitutional rank.

It is recommended that, in all countries where this is not yet the case, measures be taken to revise these texts in order to include the appropriate provisions. Legislators can play a decisive role in this regard by using their parliamentary right of initiative.

II. ADOPTION OF A SPECIAL LAW PROVIDING FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY

Since the principle of equality applies to all spheres of activity, it is recommended that a special law define the various practical applications, as is already the case in a number of countries. It is possible to incorporate into this law references to pre-existing laws dealing with the principle of equality in such areas as equal pay.

It is recommended that this law be drafted in consultation with women's organizations and other

^{§§§} Not reproduced here

associations as well as other organizations which seek to ensure that the principles of equality and justice prevail and that all citizens participate fully in political, economic, cultural and social life.

III. INSTITUTION OF A MECHANISM TO ENSURE RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY LAID DOWN IN THE LAW

It is recommended that a mechanism to ensure respect for the principle of equality be created by law.

In this context, it is suggested that an ombudsman (man or woman) **** may be appointed with responsibility for acting on equality complaints, as is already the case in a number of countries. The ombudsman should be given the legal means and the human and material resources necessary to fulfil his or her responsibilities.

IV. CAREFUL CHOICE OF TERMS USED IN THE CONSTITUTION AND THE LAW

Without denying the difference between men and women, the language used in legislation should aim to put men and women on an equal footing, eschewing any discrimination based on the idea of male superiority over the female sex. It is accordingly recommended that basic texts such as the Constitution should be reviewed in order to eliminate any terms or wording which tend to suggest sexual stereotypes. In this connection, legislators can play a decisive role by using their right of parliamentary initiative. In some languages it is necessary to have laws drafted using both the masculine and feminine forms.

C. PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

I. ACTION TO PROMOTE POLITICAL AWARENESS

Women's participation in politics and in the exercise of political responsibilities should be encouraged and facilitated by action to promote awareness, comprising civic and political education, which helps women to know their rights and to become conscious of their capacity to have a direct hand in political life. The Government, Parliament, political parties and organizations, trade unions, non-governmental organizations and the media can all contribute to this process.

**** The word "ombudsman", which is of Nordic origin and has been widely accepted in the Anglo-Saxon world without translation, does not imply that this institution should be entrusted to a man rather than a woman.

1. Government

However specific they may be, women's issues are questions that concern society as a whole. All governments should thus take the necessary steps to ensure that the interests and specific problems of women are explicitly taken into account and dealt with, in a permanent and thorough manner and in all areas pertaining to governmental jurisdiction.

It is absolutely essential that the necessary material and human resources are earmarked for this purpose.

Part of these resources should be devoted to promoting women's participation in civic life as an integral part of the process of strengthening democracy and the Ministry of Education should specially see to it that proper civic, political and legal education is dispensed from early childhood.

Government action in this respect could include educating women to participate in and manage public affairs (see also the section on non-governmental organizations below).

One of the priorities of the Government should be to inform the public of all the legal provisions which establish the principle of equality between men and women and to ensure that these are respected. It should also regularly disseminate figures and other data on women in public life and in politics.

The governmental policy promoting participation in civic life should be designed and implemented in close consultation with the political parties and professional as well as social community based organizations. The Government should further rely on the media to inform the public of its objectives, its activities and its achievements.

The Government should offer to administrative personnel (men and women) a different type of training so as to promote a positive change in the image that governmental institutions have of equality between men and women.

2. Political parties and organizations and trade unions

Political parties and organizations should carry out public information campaigns on the need for and importance of women's participation in political life as an integral part of the process of strengthening democracy. In this connection, wherever women's branches exist (see section C.II.4), they could play an effective role.

By analysing election results, the parties could assess the advantage of choosing women candidates as well as men candidates who are active in promoting women's participation.

Women should be encouraged to become involved in trade unions as these organizations are powerful informal levers for the control of political power.

3. Non-governmental organizations

Non-governmental organizations should also carry out public information campaigns on the need for and importance of women's participation in political life as an integral part of the process of strengthening democracy.

They should undertake campaigns to encourage the population, especially women, to vote. In doing so, they could draw special attention to those candidates (female or male) who are active in promoting women's participation.

Like the government body mentioned above and political parties, they could organize training courses for women in public speaking, communication and elocution, negotiating techniques and strategy, leadership, techniques of moderating groups, management of public affairs, contacts with the press, etc.

Women should be encouraged to set up organizations to defend their status or multisectoral associations where they could discover the force of feminine solidarity.

4. Media

The contribution which the media can make towards the promotion of awareness is undoubtedly crucial. They can help to instil among the public the idea that women's participation in political life is an essential part of democracy. They can also take care to avoid giving negative or minimizing images of women and their determination and capacity to participate in politics, stressing the importance of women's role in economic and social life and in the development process in general. Any stereotyped presentation of the image of women by any media should be prohibited by law.

The media can play an important role in such endeavours as removing discrimination and prejudice against women and encouraging them to improve their personal qualities and actively participate in management and decision-making. They should widely publicize the contributions that women have made to the development process of human civilizations and history, introduce to the public positive images of women's characters, encourage women to build confidence, raise women's participation awareness and deplore discrimination and any other conduct detrimental to women's interests.

II. RESPECT FOR THE PRINCIPLE OF EQUALITY WITHIN POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Basic texts

It is proposed that the basic texts, for example, those which define the party's basic policy, its hierarchy and the rules of procedure, should be reviewed in order to eliminate any provision which explicitly condones or could justify discrimination against women.

2. Political parties' programmes

It is suggested that, when drawing up their programmes, parties should pay special attention to the principle of equality between men and women. The programmes should focus on the advantages of active partnership between men and women based on recognition of their difference and complementarity.

In this spirit, it is also recommended that parties should aim to eliminate from their programmes any terms or wording which could directly or indirectly imply the notion of superiority of men over women.

3. Decision-making bodies

It is proposed that measures be taken to give equally qualified men and women equal opportunities to belong to decision-making bodies at all levels in the party's structure: local, provincial and national.

On a strictly interim basis, these measures may include affirmative action measures. Wherever the measure chosen is a quota system, it is proposed that the quota should not target women but that, in a spirit of equity, it may be established that neither sex may occupy a proportion of seats inferior to a given percentage.

4. Women's branches in the parties

Where they exist, women's branches in the parties should have the following as their objectives and functions *inter alia*:

- (i) To constitute a forum for discussing the special problems encountered by women in carrying out their party activities;
- (ii) To organize grassroots activities to make women - especially those with a low level of education - aware of their civil and political rights and of the importance and effect of their active participation in political life;
- (iii) To prepare women - including those with scant education - to take part in elections by informing them of the issues and explaining how the elections are held in practice;
- (iv) To train women to become candidates in local, provincial and national elections; this training could include courses on various aspects of electoral campaigns and preparation for contacts with the media;

- (v) To establish networks for support for women candidates at elections and for women elected.

5. Measures to ensure participation in the activities of political parties

It is suggested that, at all levels of their structure (local, provincial and national), political parties should hold a democratic debate on the expediency of adopting special arrangements to facilitate women's participation in meetings and other party activities, as well as to facilitate men's participation in activities in the domestic sphere.

The following are some of the arrangements which could be envisaged and which have already been implemented by some parties:

- (i) Arranging times of meetings so that they do not coincide with the time when priority is usually given to children and the family;
- (ii) Setting up day-care centres or kindergartens for children, available free of charge;
- (iii) Fixing and respecting the time for beginning and ending a meeting, which would be stated in advance in the convocation.

6. Creation of an equality committee within parties

It is suggested that parties set up a committee to ensure respect for the principle of equality, including within the party itself. Such a committee must be composed of men and women and not just seen as a women's branch of the party.

III. PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS

1. Recognition of women's right to vote and be elected

The rare countries where women do not yet have the right to vote and be elected should take measures to rectify the situation as rapidly as possible.

It is recommended that the right to vote and the right to be elected should be given to women at the same time.

It is also recommended that, respecting the principle of equality between men and women, the right of women to vote and be elected should not be subject to any restrictions or conditions other than those which may also apply to men.

In some countries, the level of education is one of the criteria for inclusion on the electoral roll. In countries where a sizeable proportion of the population is illiterate, especially women, it might be advisable to remove this condition while at the same time making an

effort to educate the population on the exercise of electoral rights (see sections C I and III 2).

2. Exercise of the right to vote

(i) Registration on the electoral roll

Information campaigns should be undertaken by the government, political parties and non-governmental organizations to encourage voters to register on the electoral roll. These campaigns should focus on women because, more frequently than men, they do not know that voting requires prior registration on the electoral roll or, due to lack of information, they are reluctant to take this step.

Special action should be undertaken in rural or deprived areas, by the government, political parties and non-governmental organizations. The campaigns should be given widespread publicity by the media.

A clear presentation of the election issues can act as a determinant in deciding voters to register on the electoral roll and to vote.

(ii) Education in order to progress from a passive to an enlightened vote

Campaigns should also be undertaken by the government, political parties and non-governmental organizations to make voters aware of the importance of voting and to enable them to carry out their electoral responsibilities in a conscious rather than passive manner. These campaigns should focus on women.

(iii) Voting by proxy

Voting by proxy is not to be encouraged. Where the electoral law allows for voting by proxy, it is recommended that it should include provisions which ensure that the voter's choice is not ignored through the practice of the proxy. Accordingly, it is recommended that the electoral law should:

- (i) Specifically provide that the voter must be physically unable to vote; and
- (ii) Specify precisely how in practice voting by proxy functions so that, in particular, the elector's intention to vote by proxy is clearly established. For example: obligation for the holder of the proxy to present a legal authorization.

3. Effects of the method of voting and of the distribution of seats in Parliament

According to studies on the subject carried out by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, there is no firm and final indication that one particular electoral system ^{****} is more

^{****} **Majority system:** "The election must above all make it possible to designate a cohesive government responsible for conducting a national policy". **Proportional representation system:** "The election must primarily guarantee representation, at the national level, of the country's political forces and reproduce in

favourable to women than another. According to many sources, the electoral system or method of voting significantly determines the share of women elected to Parliament. Although there is no unanimity on this, election results tend to show that in the proportional electoral system, the share of women elected is indeed higher than with the majority system. Whatever system is used, it is recommended that measures be taken to ensure that an equitable number of women are elected to Parliament.

(i) Balance between candidatures from men and women

Whether the system used is the single-member system or that of a list, parties should ensure that there is the greatest possible balance between the number of men and women candidates, on criteria of competence.

(ii) Uninomial voting and voting for a list

When voting is for a list, it is important to ensure that - contrary to a practice that is far too widespread - women are well situated on the list so that they may have a chance of being elected. This is particularly important if the voting method is that of a closed party list, since the voter has then no possibility of indicating his or her preference among the candidates appearing on the list.

The position on the list remains an important criterion even in the case of preferential voting, where the voter can decide to place the candidates in a different order to that attributed by the party, and in voting where the voters can "split" their vote among candidates appearing on competing lists so as to make up their own list. Experience tends to prove that in this electoral system the position on the list often influences the voter's choice and those higher up on the list have a greater chance of being elected.

Provisions should be introduced so as enable the community to assess the merits of candidates and convey their views to the parties prior to the elections.

(iii) Putting forward candidatures

Since experience shows that women's candidatures meet with increasing success among voters, it would appear to be in the interests of parties to include women among their candidates at elections. In order to assess better the expediency of women's candidatures, the parties should be asked to analyse election results in the light of this criterion.

When putting forward candidates, it is recommended that parties choose the constituencies carefully to ensure that they are not disadvantageous to women. This recommendation is not only addressed to parties with a wide electoral base but also to minority parties.

The importance of women candidates in local and municipal elections should be stressed as this is a very effective way for women to enter and acquire experience in political life.

(iv) Support for candidates

Parties and non-governmental organizations, especially women's organizations, should ensure that candidates for election are given the support indispensable for the success of their campaign.

In the case of parties, equal support - including financial support - should be given to men and women candidates for election. Women's branches of the parties can further provide women with a very effective network of support (see section C II.4).

4. Adoption of measures for affirmative action

On a strictly interim basis, affirmative action measures may be taken. Wherever the measure chosen is a quota system, it is proposed that the quota should not target women but that, in a spirit of equity, it may be established that neither sex may occupy a proportion of seats inferior to a given percentage.

IV. SHARING OF POLITICAL RESPONSIBILITY

1. In Government - at the local, provincial and national levels

The participation of a proportion of women in government should be established as one of the rules of democracy. All governments should thus include a proportion of women.

Men and women alike are fitted to hold government office in any sector whatever. Accordingly, posts allocated to women should not be confined to particular sectors but should be in any area (social affairs, foreign affairs, finance, interior, defence, etc.).

2. In Parliament - at the local, provincial and national levels

(i) Legislative action

The creation of a parliamentary committee whose specific terms of reference would be to deal with issues relating to the status of women can make an important contribution towards ensuring that special and permanent attention is paid to implementation of the principle of equality in all national legislation.

Parliament as faithful an image as possible of their relative strength". Mixed systems aim at combining the advantages of the two systems while avoiding some of their disadvantages. Descriptions given in "Electoral Systems - A Worldwide Comparative Study", "Reports and Documents" Series, No. 20 - Inter-Parliamentary Union, 1993.

In conformity with the principle of equality and based on the concept of partnership, such a committee should always be composed of both men and women.

(ii) Measures to ensure equitable distribution of responsibilities in Parliament

The governing body of the Parliament and parliamentary groups should be made aware of the need to ensure an equitable proportional distribution of posts in Parliament between men and women.

(iii) Trans-party women's groups

As a transitional measure until such time as a better balance between men and women in parliament is reached, the creation of an informal trans-party group of women parliamentarians can help to ensure that women legislators' views are taken into account when defining priorities, drafting legislation and allocating posts to be filled.

V. CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

The United Nations proclaimed 8 March International Women's Day and this should be marked by special events: special ceremony, national campaign, adoption of a text by the Parliament, etc. It is important for such events to be reported by the media in order to bring the event to the public's attention.

D. WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION'S ACTIVITIES

The following proposals are only conceivable in relation to the situation and corresponding measures within each National Group ⁺⁺⁺.

I. COMPOSITION OF DELEGATIONS TO INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS

National Groups must take special care to respect the provisions of Article 11.1 of the IPU Statutes, which states that "*The Conference shall be composed of members of Parliament designated as delegates by their National Groups, including if possible at least one woman if the Group has women members*". Non-observance of this rule should be the exception and solely as the result of special circumstances such as the unavailability of women parliamentarians.

This statutory provision, which is for statutory meetings, must be taken into account when deciding upon

⁺⁺⁺ For legal reasons pertaining to the constitutional provisions of certain countries, Parliaments have to constitute themselves as a « National Group » so as to become affiliated to the IPU.

delegations for non-statutory inter-parliamentary meetings, whether global or regional, and even if the delegation to those meetings is usually composed of fewer members than for a statutory conference ^{§§§}.

II. SHARING OF RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE UNION

The provisions recently adopted in order to achieve a balance between the number of men and women in the Executive Committee (Article 23.2 of the Statutes ^{****}) and in the drafting committees of the Conference's Committees (Article 15 of the Rules of the Committees ^{****}) should be strictly respected.

They may be strengthened by other provisions concerning the representation of National Groups in the Inter-Parliamentary Council and ad hoc or specialized bodies, for example:

1. Inter-Parliamentary Council

There are still very few women among the members of the Inter-Parliamentary Council. The National Groups should therefore be encouraged to appoint women as Council members.

As a transitional measure and until there is a better sharing of seats between men and women in the Council, each regional grouping represented in the Parity Working Group that drafted the present Plan of Action could be asked to nominate two women to represent it on the Inter-Parliamentary Council in addition to the two members representing each National Group. These twelve regional representatives could take part with full rights in the discussions and voting in the Council.

To that end, the Inter-Parliamentary Council decides that the procedure for the amendment of the IPU Statutes and Rules, as defined in Article 27 of the Statutes, be initiated ^{****}.

^{§§§§} Convocations to IPU Meetings refer to the statutory provision and, since 1995, a table showing the comparative proportion of women within each member Parliament and in each delegation to IPU meetings is circulated on the occasion of each round of IPU statutory meetings (held twice a year).

^{****} Article 23 (2) of the IPU Statutes reads as follows : *The President of the Council shall be ex-officio President of the Executive Committee. Twelve members shall be elected by the Conference; not fewer than ten shall be elected from among the members of the Inter-Parliamentary Council to which they shall continue to belong during their mandate. At least two of the members elected must be women.*

^{****} Article 15 (2) of the IPU Committees Rules read as follows : *"The number of members of a drafting committee shall not normally exceed eleven. Its composition shall take into account equitable geographical distribution and political and gender balance."*

^{****} A proposal to amend the Statutes along this line was rejected in 1996.

2. Special committees, working groups and other non-statutory bodies

Special care must be taken to ensure that every special committee, working group or other non-statutory body includes at least one woman. A provision to this effect could be included in the Rules ^{§§§§§}.

III. STUDY OF WOMEN'S ISSUES

Items concerning women will be placed more often on the agenda of statutory conferences.

Whenever a question specifically related to the rights of women is included in the agenda of an Inter-Parliamentary Conference, the Inter-Parliamentary Council may decide to include a number of competent international non-governmental organizations in the list of observers for the session in question.

IV. REPORTS AND STUDIES CONCERNING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

The studies carried out to date by the Inter-Parliamentary Union on the basis of questionnaires sent to all National Parliaments have provided a valuable means of assessing the situation. Surveys on the distribution of seats between men and women in National Parliaments and on the various aspects of women's participation in political life will continue to be carried out every four years on the basis of data transmitted by the existing national Parliaments, whether or not represented by a National Group within the Union, in reply to a questionnaire.^{*****}

V. RESULTS OF WORK BY THE MEETING OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The agenda of each of the Inter-Parliamentary Council's biannual sessions will in future include an oral report on the work, results and recommendations of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. ^{****}

VI. CONVENING OF AN INTER-PARLIAMENTARY MEETING ON WOMEN

Bearing in mind the success and long-term effects of the symposium held in 1989, the Inter-Parliamentary

^{§§§§§} So far, no provision to that effect was included in the Statutes but a practice consistent with the Plan of Action has developed.

^{*****} Since 1994, a number of world inquiries and surveys were carried out by the IPU as mentioned in Chapter V of this handbook.

^{*****} Since March 1994, a detailed report on the work and results of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians is presented to the IPU Council at each of its two sessions per year, by the President of the Meeting.

Council shall include in the Union's programme and budget a symposium-type meeting on "*Towards partnership between men and women in politics*", to be held preferably before the IVth World Women's Conference which will take place in Beijing from 4 to 15 September 1995. ^{****}

The Inter-Parliamentary Council decides that this world symposium, which should be organized in co-operation with the United Nations, shall comprise regional workshops to allow an in-depth exchange of views among men and women from countries with similar situations and the search for solutions to the specific problems identified.

VII. VOCABULARY USED

The Union's Statutes and Rules will need to be reviewed to ensure that the vocabulary and the terms used can in no way be construed as suggesting the superiority of one sex over another. The IPU Secretary General, in consultation with the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, should be asked to make proposals for any necessary changes. ^{§§§§§}

The same criterion shall be applied to all the Inter-Parliamentary Union's documents.

VIII. THE IPU AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY BODIES

The IPU should encourage other international parliamentary bodies to use the guidelines of the present Plan of Action in their activities. This will help establish an international machinery for gender equality seeking to collect and disseminate information and research, create model policies and support the cross-national networking of the national equality policy machinery.

E. MECHANISM FOR THE FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN OF ACTION

The implementation of this Plan of Action should be

^{*****} A specialised Conference on « *Towards Partnership Between Men and Women in Politics* » was held in New Delhi from 14 to 18 February 1997: see Chapter V of this handbook. As a follow-up to the Conference, in September 1997, the IPU set up within its Executive Committee a Gender Partnership Group - formed of two women and two men - entrusted with « *seeing to it that the interests and visions of both parts of the population are taken into account equally* » in all its activities and decisions.

^{§§§§§} In 1995, the language used in the Statutes and Rules of the IPU was entirely revised in the light of this provision.

evaluated periodically. Such evaluations should be carried at five-yearly intervals in the light of national reports

Within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the responsibility for examining these reports will be entrusted to a Parity Working Group set up specifically to this end. The views and recommendations formulated by this Parity Working Group will be examined by the Inter-Parliamentary Council and transmitted for action to the Parliaments of the countries concerned.

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* * *

INTERNATIONAL JURIDICAL INSTRUMENTS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS

ATTACHED TO THE PLAN OF ACTION:

- ◆ Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948): relevant excerpts
- ◆ Convention on the Political Rights of Women (1952): full text
- ◆ International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1960): relevant excerpts
- ◆ Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1979) : relevant excerpts
- ◆ Strategies for the Advancement of Women - World Conference to review and appraise the achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women: Equality, Development and Peace, Nairobi (1985): relevant excerpts
- ◆ Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action - World Conference on Human Rights (1993): relevant excerpts
- ◆ African Charter on Human Rights and People's Rights (1981): relevant excerpts
- ◆ American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man (1948): relevant excerpts
- ◆ American Convention of Human Rights (1969): relevant excerpts
- ◆ Inter-American Convention on the Granting of Political Rights to Women (1948): full text
- ◆ European Convention for the protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950): relevant excerpts
- ◆ (European) Declaration on Equality of Women and Men (1988): full text

***** The first thorough assessment is due to be carried out in 1999 or 2000.

Annex 2

BEIJING PARLIAMENTARY DECLARATION

Adopted by participants at the Parliamentarians' Day
on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing,
7 September 1995

We, members of Parliaments and, as such, a voice for the peoples of the world in the wealth of their cultural and political diversity, resolve to bring to the attention of Governments taking part in the Fourth World Conference on Women the following statement, which was approved at the Parliamentarians' Day organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world organization of Parliaments, on 7 September 1995, at the kind invitation of the National People's Congress of China:

1. At the dawn of the 21st century, the principle of equality between men and women having been established in nearly all our Constitutions and fundamental laws, few indeed are the countries where the right of women to vote and be elected has not yet been recognized and exercised.

2. Women make up half or more of the populations of our countries. In addition to pursuing their family role and traditional household activities, they have in under a century become an active labour force whose nationwide economic impact is often equal to and sometimes exceeds that of men. In some little-industrialized countries, they are the mainstream of the entire "informal" sector and bear the brunt in agriculture.

3. Women's intellectual potential, often decisive electoral weight and capacity to act for change are still inadequately understood and turned to account.

4. Women in fact remain sidelined at all levels of decision-making, especially in politics, and their economic contribution continues to be shaded over in national statistics and assessments. Our societies are still chiefly organized and run as their male element may determine, with the result that they continue either largely to forgo or to disclaim what female talent and endeavour may so vitally contribute to their development, as well as women's important role in consensus-building, conflict resolution and peace-building.

5. In April 1992, the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Council held that the concept of democracy would only come into its own when major policy objectives and national legislation were decided upon jointly by men and women with equal regard for the specific interests and aptitudes of each half of the population. Such an

active partnership of both elements of society is indeed one of the surest, most lasting foundations of democracy and development, and urgently needs establishing through structural and legislative measures aimed at the equal participation of women and men in the political decision-making process.

6. Today, all our countries face global political and economic challenges that are partly beyond our control, and many are undergoing radical institutional and structural changes whose long-term social, political and economic effects are extremely hard to manage in view of an unsatisfactory international order and insufficient economic co-operation. In such a context, no country can any longer afford to overlook any portion of its human resources. This means redirecting our perspectives and policies. Our domestic policies must henceforth, at all levels, be shaped and applied not just by men but with the full and equal participation of women.

7. Women and children suffer under conditions of war and civil strife and stress. Yet, we consider that there can be no equality or development without peace and justice.

8. By transforming a mode of governance and management based upon a wrong hierarchy of gender, we shall not only let women use their ability to govern but also tap their particular creativity and values, while at the same time reflecting their realities, needs and aspirations in our policies. Such an integrated approach will make for more balanced access to resources and fairer distribution between men and women of both the costs and the benefits of an equitable, balanced and sustainable growth, which is the prime purpose of human development..

9. To this end, we believe it essential for more women to be more active in politics. Yet

we regret to note that, according to surveys by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women still make up barely 11.3% of the world's parliamentarians, a proportion only slightly higher than fifty years ago.

10. Despite considerable progress in the division of political responsibilities and power in several countries, particularly the Nordic ones and some developing countries, women are generally in a minority in the upper echelons of political parties and movements, or even not present at all. In only 20 countries do women account for over 20% of parliamentarians; just 17 have a woman presiding over Parliament or a parliamentary Chamber; and there are 15 women Heads of State or Government. Some countries continue to deny women the right to vote and to be elected, whether to Parliament or to local or regional bodies.

11. This state of affairs in politics seems indicative of the situation of women in all other sectors and, as we are deeply attached to the concepts of democracy and equality, we believe that priority should go to reversing the current trend of politics for the sake of a new dynamic in political decision-making that would in turn benefit all other spheres of activity.

12. We believe that the *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life* (adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in March 1994 as a contribution to the Fourth World Conference on Women) might very well provide the basis for strategies which, in our own particular contexts and without disclaiming our traditional values, may remedy a state of affairs that has disastrous effects on our societies. We urgently call on Governments to use the Plan of Action to this end.

13. It is our resolve to ensure that the Plan of Action is taken into account by our political parties and movements. In particular, women must have access to executive posts so that candidatures for elections and electoral strategies are decided on fairly and make full allowance for the two-fold nature of society, and in order that more may be done to reflect the specific interests of women in electoral campaigns and day-to-day politics.

14. We undertake to seek the enlistment of all resources that may speed up the learning process for women in politics and their exercise of leadership. We believe it essential to give decision-makers and public opinion more

extensive information instilling in men and women themselves an awareness of the potential the latter represent and the essential role that is theirs in shaping new visions and policies.

15. As parliamentarians, and whether men or women, we have a basic duty to represent the views and interests of both and to serve the common interest. We believe that national legislation must focus just as much on the interests, values and aspirations of women as on those of men. We undertake to work for the reform of any legislation discriminating against or liable to harm women.

16. We further undertake to work for national ratification of the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women* (1979) and the *Convention on the Political Rights of Women* (1952), where this is not already the case, to examine the validity of any reservations or interpretative statements placed on ratification, and to take active steps with a view to their lifting.

17. We consider that each of our countries should have a mechanism - parliamentary or otherwise - such as a national committee or an ombudsman, for measuring the impact on the situation of women of any draft law or bill and any related budgetary provisions. This could curtail a form of administration that has proved nothing but damaging to the community as a whole.

18. Finally, we believe that priority should be given to action aimed at eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls and we undertake to adopt legislation to this effect.

19. We consider the Fourth World Conference on Women to be just a further step, one that must set off a long-term process aimed at an in-depth rebalancing of society. It is for all of us, whether Governments, Parliaments, non-governmental organizations or individuals, to move towards that goal.

20. As parliamentarians, we forthwith undertake to follow up the Beijing Global Action Platform and the Regional Platforms, adopted at the preparatory conferences, as well as the IPU Plan of Action, in what we deem to be the most fitting and effective manner and with the greatest possible dispatch. It is our intention, in this respect, to ensure that the necessary resources are made available for carrying out any measure we adopt.

Annex 3

QUESTIONNAIRE

***Beijing Platform for Action and the Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life:
What changes have they brought about in society
in the last five years ?***

The text of the *Beijing Platform for Action* can be consulted on the United Nations site at:
<gopher://gopher.un.org/11/conf/fwcw/off/plateng%09%09%2B>

The text of the *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life* can be consulted on the Union's site at: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/planactn.htm>

Replies to be sent by 31 January 1999

Background

The *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life* was adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in March 1994 as a contribution to the preparation of Section G (*Women in power and decision-making*) of the *Platform for Action* adopted a few months later, in September 1995, by the Fourth World Conference on Women. Section E of the Plan of Action, entitled *Mechanism for the Follow-up and Evaluation of the Implementation of the Plan of Action* foresees that:

« *The implementation of this Plan of Action should be evaluated periodically. Such evaluations should be carried out at five-yearly intervals in the light of national reports. Within the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the responsibility for examining these reports will be entrusted to a Parity Working Group set up specifically to this end. The views and recommendations formulated by this Parity Working Group will be examined by the Inter-Parliamentary Council and transmitted for action to the Parliaments of the countries concerned.* »

For its part, the United Nations has decided to hold a Special Session of the General Assembly from 5 to 9 June 2000 to review and assess the measures taken by States to follow-up the *Beijing Platform for Action*.

To reinforce the concerted action and synergy between the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations, the following questionnaire was prepared in consultation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women and the replies received will be shared with this Organisation in the framework of the preparation of the Special Session.

Nota bene: This questionnaire is independent from the questionnaire sent in August 1998 to women politicians in the world to interview them on their political experience and their contribution to the democratic process. The two surveys have different aims and are complementary.

Country

Measures by Parliament to take into account the *Beijing Platform for Action* and the *IPU Plan of Action*
See the Inter-Parliamentary Council's resolution on the approval of the Plan of Action
See Chapter V-A of the Beijing Platform for Action

Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation in your country?

1.	Has the Government presented the <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> to the Parliament?	Yes	No
2.	Has the Parliament debated the <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> ?	Yes	No
3.	Has the Government requested the Parliament to endorse the commitments taken in Beijing in September 1995 in the name of the State?	Yes	No
4.	If the reply is yes, please give (here or on a separate sheet) details and remarks you consider pertinent to the subject		
5.	If the reply to any of the first three questions is no, what measures are taken to remedy the situation?		
6.	Has your Government prepared a national action plan / strategy to implement the <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> ?	Yes	No
7.	Was the Parliament involved in the preparation of the plan / strategy?	Yes	No
8.	If the reply to Nos 6 and 7 above was yes, does the plan include a section on equality between women and men in political decision-making? (Please give details here or on a separate sheet)	Yes	No
9.	Has the Inter-Parliamentary Union's <i>Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life</i> been presented to Parliament?	Yes	No
10.	Has the Parliament debated the <i>Plan of Action</i> ?	Yes	No
11.	Has Parliament endorsed the <i>Plan of Action</i> ?	Yes	No
12.	Has the <i>Plan of Action</i> been officially conveyed to the Government?	Yes	No
13.	If the reply to any of the four preceding questions is no, what measures are taken to remedy the situation?		
14.	Since 1995, do you feel that progress has been made in your country to reduce the inequalities that may have existed between men and women?	Yes	No
15.	To substantiate your replies, and subject to your replies to the next series of questions, please give (here or on a separate sheet) details and specific examples		
16.	Additional information		

Development of the legal framework since 1995

See section B of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action
See Chapter III-I of the Beijing Platform for Action

Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation in your country?

	Before 1995		Since 1995	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
17.	Establishment of the principle of equality between men and women in the Basic Law or through a specific law			
18.	Implementation of a control mechanism to ensure compliance with the principle of equality defined by law (Ombudsman or another mechanism)			
19.	Adherence to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)			
20.	Lifting reservations expressed at the time of ratifying the CEDAW			
21.	Adherence to the Convention on the Political Rights of Women			
22.	Adherence to a regional instrument on the status of women			
23.	Adoption of laws specific to the content of the Union's <i>Plan of Action</i> or of the <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> (please specify)			
24.	Adoption of a law for the revision of terminology / Revision of terminology / used in the Constitution and national legislation to avoid any wording that conveys the impression that society is composed of men only or any formulation expressing the concept of men's superiority over women			
25.	Other (please specify)			

Specific developments concerning the Electoral Code since 1995*See section C of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action**See Chapter III-G of the Beijing Platform for Action***Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation in your country?**

		Before 1995		Since 1995	
26.	Voting rights of women: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promulgation of a law establishing women's right to vote • Promulgation of a law establishing women's right to be elected • <u>If the reply to the above questions is no</u>, has there been a debate on these issues ? • <u>If the reply to the above questions is no</u>, is it foreseeable that such measures would be adopted by the year 2000? 	Yes	No	Yes	No
Please give here, or on a separate sheet, any additional information you deem important					
27.	Has the electoral law been modified with a view to encouraging the election to Parliament of a larger number of women thus ensuring a more balanced presence of men and women in the national Parliament?	Yes	No	Yes	No
28.	<u>If the reply to the above questions is yes</u> , please specify the type of electoral law reform and, if pertinent, the effect seen at the most recent elections				

Developments concerning the political socialisation of women since 1995*See section C of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action**See Chapter III-G of the Beijing Platform for Action***Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation in your country?**

		Before 1995		Since 1995	
29.	Implementation of general national awareness campaigns on women in politics	Yes	No	Yes	No
30.	Implementation of national awareness campaigns on the importance of women's participation in recent elections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Campaigns to encourage them to register on voting lists • Campaigns to encourage them personally to take part in the vote • Campaigns to encourage them to be candidates to elections • Other 	Yes	No	Yes	No
To complete your replies, please give any additional information you deem useful					

Developments within political parties since 1995*See section C of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action**See Chapter III-G of the Beijing Platform for Action***Please give the questions contained in the second part of the questionnaire to each political party represented in Parliament****Developments within Parliament since 1995***See section C of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action**See Chapter III-G of the Beijing Platform for Action***Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation in your country?**

		Before 1995		Since 1995	
32.	Presiding Officer of Parliament / of a House of Parliament: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election / Appointment of a woman as Presiding Officer of Parliament / of a House of Parliament • Election / Appointment of one or several women as Deputy Presiding Officers of Parliament / of a House of Parliament 	Yes	No	Yes	No
<u>Since 1995</u> : a marked increase in the number of women within the Governing Body of Parliament				Yes	No

33.	Chairing Parliamentary Committees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Election / Appointment of one or several women as Committee Chairperson(s) • Election / Appointment of one or several women as Committee Vice-Chairperson(s) • <u>Since 1995</u>: a marked increase in the number of women among Committee Officers • <u>Since 1995</u>: diversification of Committees with women as Chairpersons or Vice-Chairpersons • <u>Since 1995</u>: have women chaired committees not traditionally associated with women, such as Foreign Affairs or Defence 	Yes	No	Yes	No
34.	Election / Appointment of one or several women as General Rapporteur on the budget (if this post exists in your parliamentary system)	Yes	No	Yes	No
35.	Establishment of a Parliamentary Committee on Equality / Committee on the Status of Women	Yes	No	Yes	No
36.	Appointment of a woman as Secretary General / Clerk of Parliament or a House of Parliament	Yes	No	Yes	No
37.	<u>Since 1995</u> : have the <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> or the <i>Plan of Action</i> inspired, directly or indirectly, modifications made to national law?			Yes	No
38.	<u>Since 1995</u> : do you feel that Parliament, when considering Government and private members' bills, pays more attention to ensuring that legislation takes better account of the specific requirements of women than in the past?			Yes	No
39.	<u>Since 1995</u> : do you feel that Parliament, when considering the national budget, pays more attention than in the past to the need to take more into account the specific requirements of women?			Yes	No
40.	If your reply is yes, please give (here or on a separate sheet) details and specific examples				
41.	<u>Since 1995</u> : Have resources been allocated to institutional arrangements (national machinery) for the advancement of women? If yes, please describe these arrangements (here or on a separate sheet)			Yes	No
42.	Other information				

Developments within the Government since 1995

See section C of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action

See Chapter III-G of the Beijing Platform for Action

Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation in your country?

	Before 1995		Since 1995		
43.	Are there women Members of Cabinet?	Yes	No	Yes	No
44.	Are there systematically women in the Cabinet?	Yes	No	Yes	No
45.	<u>Since 1995</u> : have you noted a clear increase in the proportion of women in the Cabinet?			Yes	No

Developments concerning the Inter-Parliamentary Union Group since 1995

See section D of the Inter-Parliamentary Union's Plan of Action

Using the following indications as points of reference, could you specify the situation within your National Group?

	Before 1995		Since 1995		
46.	Are there systematically women in the delegations to Inter-Parliamentary Meetings?	Yes	No	Yes	No
47.	<u>Since 1995</u> : has there been a marked increase in the number of women in the delegations to Inter-Parliamentary Meetings?			Yes	No
48.	Other information and comments				

Annex 4

QUESTIONNAIRE

To be sent to the political parties represented within the national Parliament

Beijing Platform for Action and the Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life: Five years after their adoption, what has changed within political parties?

The text of the *Beijing Platform for Action* can be consulted on the United Nations site at:

<gopher://gopher.un.org/11/conf/fwcw/off/plateng%09%09%2B>

The text of the *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life* can be consulted on the Union's site at: **<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/planactn.htm>**

Inspired or based on the IPU *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life* and / or the *Beijing Platform for Action*, the following questionnaire, prepared in consultation with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, is designed to help political parties to provide information on the changes that have occurred within them since 1995. A summary of replies received will be presented to the Inter-Parliamentary Union as well as to the United Nations.

Replies to be sent by 31 January 1999

Country

Political Party

To situate the party on the political spectrum:

1.	Please state whether it belongs to:		
	• The Christian Democrat International	Yes	No
	• The International Democrat Union	Yes	No
	• The Liberal International	Yes	No
	• The Socialist International	Yes	No
	None of these groupings	Yes	No
2.	Please give its position on the traditional spectrum:		
	• Left	Yes	No
	• Right	Yes	No
	• Centre	Yes	No
	• Far left	Yes	No
	• Far right	Yes	No

The party and international instruments containing recommendations addressed to it:

3.	Have the following texts been sent to the party:		
	• <i>Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life</i> , adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in March 1994?	Yes	No
	• <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> , adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in September 1995?	Yes	No
4.	Has the party used the <i>Plan of Action</i> and / or the <i>Beijing Platform for Action</i> to	Yes	No

reinforce its policy of equality between men and women?	
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Using the following indications as points of reference, please indicate which of the following provisions suggested in the Inter-Parliamentary Union's *Plan of Action* or in the *Beijing Platform for Action* have been more particularly implemented by the party since 1995:

5.	Revision of the party's fundamental texts to take into account the principle of equality between men and women	Yes	No
6.	Revision of the party's general policy taking into account the recommendations of the aforementioned texts	Yes	No
7.	Modification of the party's internal structures to enable it to promote a policy of equality: e.g. instituting a committee on equality, appointment of a focal point to deal with matters relating to the status of women, etc.	Yes	No
8.	Awareness campaign for women voters as to the importance of voting	Yes	No
9.	Revision of the voting policy as well as the rules and procedures for election to internal leadership so as to ensure that women have the same legal and practical opportunities to be elected as men	Yes	No
10.	Revision of the voting policy as well as the rules and procedures for election to public office, such as Parliament, so as to ensure that women have the same legal and practical opportunities to be elected as men	Yes	No
11.	Encouraging women to be candidates to internal elections as well as to public office such as Parliament	Yes	No
12.	Presenting at least one woman candidate per constituency	Yes	No
13.	Women candidates for regional or national election have at least one year of experience in political office at local level	Frequently	Rarely
14.	Adoption of a quota system (fixed or incentive percentage) for women candidates	Yes	No
15.	Adoption of an alternation system for the names of women and men candidates on voting lists	Yes	No
16.	Requirement to place women on voting lists in positions of eligibility	Yes	No
17.	Allocating a percentage of top positions on voting lists to women	Yes	No
18.	Measures to ensure a fair distribution of women and men candidates between constituencies in which the party has the most chances to win the election	Yes	No
19.	Reinforcing the party's logistic backing to women candidates to Parliament	Yes	No
20.	Adoption of measures to assist the financing of women's electoral campaigns	Yes	No
21.	Analysis of voting results to assess the respective chances of success of men and women	Yes	No
22.	Adoption of measures to facilitate the participation of women in the party's political meetings (e.g. starting and finishing times announced in advance and adhered to, setting up a crèche or a nursery)	Yes	No
23.	Revision of the aims and the working of the women's branch of the party, if such a branch exists, so that this body can contribute to promoting the participation of women in politics	Yes	No
24.	Special assistance to women parliamentarians in their parliamentary work	Yes	No
25.	Here or on a separate sheet, list at least five obstacles cited by women to their candidacy for political office: eg. traditional stereotypes, lack of time for public life, lack of finances, lack of interest, discriminatory barriers		

Please annex to these replies any additional information and relevant comments.