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Women's Political Participation in Asia and the Pacific

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Executive Summary:

This paper examines current patterns of women's political participation in the four subregions (Eastern Asia, South-Eastern Asia, South Asia and the Pacific Islands) of the Asia-Pacific region (summarised in table 1). Key enablers and obstacles to women's equal participation in formal politics (legislative institutions) and public life are analysed. Successful mechanisms for increasing women's descriptive and substantive representation, in particular countries are highlighted. In each subregion the existing or prospective impact of "fast track" policies such as gender quotas and temporary special measures are considered together with an assessment of future priorities for the political empowerment of women. A tools and resources section for subregion is provided with hyperlinks for further analysis.

Key Findings on Women's Political Participation in Asia-Pacific

- **On average women's political representation is lowest in the Pacific subregion at 3.65%** (excluding Australia and New Zealand), then East Asia at 17.6% closely followed by Southeastern Asia at 18.09% (including Brunei) and South Asia with 19.76%. **Women's representation is below the global average in all four subregions**.

- In all subregions there is **strong resistance to women's participation in public life** evidenced in the formal statements of leaders and politicians and in the mentalities of the broader societies. **Cultural, customary and religious discourses are frequently used to moralize that the 'rightful' place of women is NOT in politics.**

- **Women's political participation does not increase at the same pace as economic development. But women's economic participation is a necessary** (it brings resources, access to public networks and know-how) **albeit not sufficient precondition for increasing women's political participation**.

- **Gender quotas and reservations have significantly improved women's political representation at national and local levels.** Results are notable in Mongolia, Nepal, Timor-Leste, Afghanistan, New Caledonia and the non-independent territories of French Polynesia. Political and postconflict transitions provide special opportunities to institutionalise quotas. The parity principle avoids the use of quotas and reservations to limit women's representation rather than to achieve equal representation

- **High-level women and men may undermine gender quotas in political debates**. For gender quotas to be successfully adopted, women's movements must be consolidated and supported to get behind them as in the Timor case.

- **Political parties especially in unstable regimes across Asia-Pacific are often family-run political enterprises that enable elite women's participation** but serve as major barriers to non-elite women's political participation.

- **Violence against 'political' w**omen speaking up in public, defending human rights or seeking political office is very common, especially in conflict-affected countries/regions, across Asia and the Pacific and strongly dissuades women from participating in public life let alone seeking political office.

- **Women's mobilization about electoral systems and politics** through political parties, civil society and church/religious organizations **can build alternative pathways for women's political representation**.

Key Recommendations for Increasing Women's Political Participation

1. **Comparable data must be collected and monitored in an Asia-Pacific Women's Census of political participation** at different levels (local/village, provincial/state, national) and in different jurisdictions — legislature, executive, judiciary, bureaucracy, and opinion-leading institutions such as universities and think-tanks.

2. **Indicators should be created to measure meaningful outcomes of women's political participation** as well as counting women in public life and politics. Governments should be required to provide this data and data analysis should be independently verifiable.

3. **Gender quota lessons from transitional states should be leveraged in established political systems** and affirmative actions should be supported across jurisdictions at local, national, and regional levels. Constitutional provisions that guarantee women's participation should be supported.

4. **Electoral mechanisms that are known to increase women's representation in Asia-Pacific should be supported**, especially proportional representation systems with closed ("zippered") lists, which alternate the names of male and female candidates, should be advocated for at the regional level.

5. **Active measures must be undertaken to change societal expectations of women and to assist non-elite women's pathways to political participation** through political parties, trade unions, religious, media and civil society organizations.

6. **Political parties and civil society organizations need internal democratic reform to attract and promote women's representation** given women's lesser access than men to economic resources and to political networks.

7. **Women's civil society advocacy should be strongly supported by international actors** to ensure that women's political participation is accepted and encouraged from the grassroots by ordinary women.

8. **Anti-women in politics discourses** should be directly challenged and states held to account under international law and by peer states and civil society actors drawing on CEDAW and the UN Security Council Resolution 1325, which mandates women's participation in peace and political decision-making.

9. States should engage in **structural reform of the police/security sector and the judiciary to protect women's public access, security, and political participation**, **and to prevent violence directed against political women.** All

states should accept requests from the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women for country mission visits to investigate harassment and violence against women in the public sphere (India, Bangladesh and Nepal have all rejected requests for missions).

Background: The diffusion of international gender norms in the Asia-Pacific

One way social change for women can occur leading to increased women's political participation is through the global movement for gender equity. While formalizing equality in legislation does not instantly make a society equitable, it is a necessary first step forward. All countries in Asia-Pacific, except the DPRK, Tonga and Palau (despite heavy civil society pressure in the latter two countries), have ratified or acceded to the international 'women's bill of rights' (CEDAW) which enshrines international gender norms including women's equal participation in politics. National constitutions in most countries mirror CEDAW guarantees of equality for women. China, Mongolia and Japan were the first in the region to commit to the convention in 1980, although only China ratified that year (Mongolia the following year and Japan not until 1985). The Republic of Korea committed to CEDAW in 1983 and ratified the following year. Taiwan, Province of China ratified in 2007 but as an unrecognized state at the UN is only an unofficial party to the treaty. Cambodia, Lao, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines in Southeastern Asia ratified CEDAW in 1980, just after its 1979 UN adoption, as did Thailand in 1985. Singapore and Malaysia did not ratify CEDAW until 1995 and Myanmar (called Burma by many) in 1997. Timor-Leste acceded to the Convention just after it achieved independence in 2003 and Brunei ratified only in 2006. Fiji was the first Pacific Island state to become a party to the CEDAW convention in 1995 and this development increased pressure on other Pacific Island states to follow.

With respect to reservations under CEDAW Bangladesh, DPPK, India, Indonesia Malaysia, Federated States of Micronesia, Myanmar, Korea, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam all have listed reservations (see table 1). This is not the distinguishing factor, directly constraining women's political participation in those states relative to other complying states, however. There are also no reservations on Article 4 Political Rights. International instruments such as CEDAW, UNSCR 1325 and UN Declarations which establish women's political rights and rights to physical security as a 'human right' have been deployed by women's organisations across the region to challenge the 'normalisation' of women's social, economic and political subordination. Regional ratification of CEDAW in the Pacific and particularly the provisions of article 4 of the convention on political participation, have provided an important political platform for women activists and government machineries to push for electoral reform that might assist women across the region.

However, across Asia-Pacific, progress in applying CEDAW political rights has been uneven. "There are wide inconsistencies between the de jure position and de facto position in each country in respect of the areas where the law is free of sex discrimination, or even

where the law is specifically designed for gender justice."[1] In the Pacific, for example, a 2007 UNDP study of legislative (de jure) compliance in the region across 113 indicators showed that even in contexts such as Fiji, where rates of compliance appear high according to regional norms, full compliance occurred in just under half of the indicator areas (Jivan and Forster, 2007). Laws often hit a roadblock when it comes to dealing with national cultures, values, customs and traditions that are not consistent in the region. Although cultural rights are recognised as human rights within the UN Charter of Human Rights, cultural diversity is often invoked to deny women basic rights and voice in decision-making. Culture and tradition are invoked in pernicious ways to deny women their rightful place even in secular states like India where the laws of the land must strictly adhere to the written constitution. Men with conservative patriarchal values continue to issue diktats about women's social and political role across the Asia-Pacific region.

By contrast with women's political representation, there has been considerable progress in applying CEDAW to the development of laws and policies across the region. For instance, outlawing domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and trafficking has only recently been undertaken in many Asia-Pacific countries. Several countries, such as Viet Nam and Timor-Leste, have introduced general legislation promoting gender equality and women's political participation. Many governments are also committed to mainstreaming gender equality perspectives in national economic and social planning, requiring that national development plans include gender equality provisions, and allocating resources to develop national action plans (NAPs) (UNW-CEDAW 2012). For instance, Taiwan, Province of China established CEDAW monitoring and reporting mechanisms and passed 'The Enforcement Act of the CEDAW' requiring all government departments to consider the Convention and actively promote gender equality. Another example is Mongolia's 2011 Law on Gender Equality designed to comply with CEDAW.

CEDAW also has an Optional Protocol which has gained widespread international acceptance and allows complaints to the Committee to be investigated from individuals or organisations in signatory countries. The Republic of Korea and Mongolia have acceded to the Optional Protocol but Japan and China have not signed up and instead are observing and considering the procedures. Only Cambodia, Indonesia, Phillipines, Thailand and Timor-Leste have also signed the Optional Protocol (see Table 1 for summary).

In sum, CEDAW is used in advocating for women's equal political participation in Asia-Pacific both by transnational networks of gender advocates, government and non-government actors (True and Mintrom 2001). But to fully implement CEDAW rights, institutional mechanisms needs to be practically tailored for each country and subregion.

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[1] See < http://cedawsouthasia.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/PLD-CEDAW-Trainers-Guide1.pdf> (accessed 03 January 2013)

The Convention provides more of a lobbying and monitoring device, especially in addressing the most egregious underrepresentation of women, than a model for how to enact political equality in diverse jurisdictions. Above all, transnational women's networks and lobbying have been the critical mechanism in the spread of knowledge and advocacy for temporary special measures to address women's low levels of political participation (Krook 2009)

Table 1. Women's Political Representation in the Lower Houses of Parliament in Asia and the Pacific

Country (Non-Independent shaded)	Last Election	Women Elected	No. Seats	TSMs	CEDAW Reserve	CEDAW OP
East Asia						
China National Peoples Congress	2008	635 (21.32)	3000/2978	Reserved seats (indirect)	No	No
Japan House of Reps	2012	38 (7.92)	480	None	No	No
Korea DPPK	2009	107 (15.57)	687	Reserved Seats (indirect)	Yes	
Korea Republic National Assembly	2012	11 (14.86)	300	Candidate quotas	Yes	Yes
Mongolia Great State Hural	2012	11 (14.86)	76/74	Party list Quotas		Yes
Taiwan, Province Of China	2009	33 (29.2)	113	Reserved seats & Party list quotas		
Southeastern Asia						
Brunei (no representative legislature)						
Cambodia National Assembly	2008	25 (20.33)	123			Yes

Indonesia House of Representatives	2009	104 (18.57)	560	Party list Quotas	Yes	Yes
Laos House of Representatives	2011	33 (25)	132	Reserved seats (indirect)		
Myanmar House of Representatives	2012	4 (1.79)	224		Yes	
Malaysia House of Representative	2008	23 (10.41)	222/221		Yes	
Philippines House of Representatives	2010	65 (22.89)	287/284	Reserved seats		Yes
Singapore National Parliament	2011	24 (24.24)	99		Yes	
Thailand House of Representatives	2011	79 (15.08)	500		Yes	Yes
Timor Leste Nat Parliament	2012	25 (38.46)	65	Party List Quotas		Yes
Vietnam National Assembly	2011	122 (24.40)	500	Reserved Seats (indirect)	Yes	
South Asia						
Afghanistan	2010	69 (27.7)	249	Reserved seats (2 women per province)		
Bangladesh	2008	64 (18.5)	345	13%	Yes	
Bhutan	2008	10 (13.8)	72			
India	2009	59 (10.8)	545	Reserved seats 33% still be passed by Lower House	Yes	
Maldives	2009	5 (6.49)	77			

Nepal	2008	197 (33)	594	Reserved seats 33%		Yes
Pakistan	2008	76 (22.2)	342	Reserved seats 17.5%		
Sri Lanka	2010	12 (5.3)	225			Yes
Pacific Islands and Non-Independent Territories						
American Samoa	2012	1	21	None20		
Bougainville	2010	3	39	3 reserved seats		
Cook Islands	2010	1	24	None	No	Yes
Federated States of Micronesia	2011	0	14	None	Yes	
Fiji[2]	2006	13	103 (2 houses)	None	No	
French Polynesia	2008	24	57	Parity Laws		
Guam	2012	6	15	None		
Kiribati	2011	4	42	None		
Marshall Islands	2011	1	33	None		
New Caledonia	2009	24	54	Parity Laws		
Nauru	2010	0	18	None		
Niue	2011	3	20	None		
Palau	2012	3	29 (2 houses)	None		
Papua New Guinea	2012	3	111	None	No	No
Solomon Islands	2010	1	50	None		Yes
Tonga	2010	1	30	None	-	No
Tuvalu	2010	1	15	None		
Vanuatu	2012	0	52	None		Yes

[2] Since 2006 Fiji has been governed by a military regime that dissolved the country's elected parliament. This was the country's fourth coup since independence in 1970. The regime is currently overseeing constitutional negotiations in preparation for new elections scheduled to be held in 2014

Sources: Inter-parliamentary Union, PARLINE Database on National Parliaments, http://www.ipu.org/parline-e/parlinesearch.asp; http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?ul=en&country=178

Eastern Asia

China, Chinese Taipei (Taiwan, Province of China), Mongolia, Japan, South Korea, North Korea

'Women hold up half the sky' is a Chinese proverb that has become internationally popularized to affirm women's equal contribution and the struggle for their rights to equity in health, education, economic opportunities and political participation. While rising prosperity in Eastern Asia has narrowed the gender gaps in these areas, women's political participation has not increased at the same pace as economic development in this subregion. Eastern Asia includes countries with some of the strongest economies and highest human development rankings, not just in the Asia-Pacific region, but in the world. These countries include the democratic nations of Japan, South Korea and Chinese Taipei (Taiwan, Province of China). Eastern Asia also includes the 'medium human development' countries of Mongolia and China and the lesser developed Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Overall the ratio of women attaining decisionmaking positions in both the public and private sectors is still low in Eastern Asia. Much more support is needed for women to pursue both opportunities for economic and political participation and leadership.

High human development is a necessary but not sufficient factor contributing to women's political empowerment. Together, customary practice, socioeconomic conditions, political systems and political culture create different gendered roles and expectations that both facilitate and inhibit women's political participation and leadership. These factors combine to have various effects in particular national and local contexts creating significant variation across Eastern Asia. The indicators used to analyse the situations for women in each country are limited and do not consistently cover the same information. States make political choices about which data to collect and then what to make available according to how they want to present the situations in their countries. It is very difficult to clearly identify gender inequity if indicators are not measured or obscured in some way and also when it is hard to measure, such as meaningful political participation by women rather than symbolic inclusión. The political situations of Taiwan, Province of China and DPRK in this región mean that data is not always available and then not always independently verifiable.

Patterns of women's political participation

Women's formal political representation is influenced by a plurality of institutional political factors such as the type and longevity of the political system, as well as other factors such as economic opportunities, the role of state equality policy and ratification of international gender norms, education, culture and civil society mobilization. While processes of democratization are certainly important for women's political representation they do not necessarily increase women's participation or representation nor is democracy the only

political system through which representation can occur. The one-party Communist states of China and the DPRK have many more women in their national legislatures than the democratic states of Japan and the Republic of Korea and this comparison holds true for other parts of the world. In Mongolia the number of women in office plummeted from 25% to 4% during the process of democratization after the end of Communist one-party rule in 1990 (echoing similar patterns in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union at the same time).

Chinese electoral law dictates that the National People's Congress (NPC) and local people's congresses should include women deputies and that this should increase gradually. In the NPC, indirectly elected by provincial congresses, 635 of the 3000 seats (21.32%) are filled by women, placing China 60th in the world on this indicator of political participation (UN Women 2012). Yet the real centres of political power in China are the provincial Communist Parties where women only count for 10% of delegates (significantly less delegates than in the National Party Congress) and have few chances of attaining a leadership position. Political bias in China is a major barrier to women's equal political participation (Fubing Su 2006). In the DPKR women are represented in government and the National Assembly although similarly men dominate the upper echelons. While noting that women make up approximately 20% of the deputies to the 11th Supreme People's Assembly, and 30% of the local People's Assemblies, relatively low numbers of women occupy decision-making positions in the judiciary and the civil and Foreign Services (UNDP 2011d).

Key Enablers and Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

Rapid economic and human development

Rapid economic development, as has been seen in many societies in Eastern Asia, has increased women's education, health and wellbeing and reduced fertility rates and reproductive duties. These material improvements have given women more time to pursue economic and political goals outside the home. Yet societies can experience substantial growth and development without experiencing equivalent gains for women's economic or political empowerment. With a population of over 1.3 billion the People's Republic of China (PRC) is the world's most populous country with the world's second largest economy. Japan follows with the next largest economy in the world but with a much higher per capita income. Yet in Japan fewer women are represented in politics than in China mirroring the similarly lower female labour market participation rate in that country (Leblanc 1999). In democratic, affluent Japan women remain only 11.3% of the parliament (ranking 106th worldwide), and roughly 8% of representatives in local and regional bodies. Slightly better, in the Republic of Korea, women occupy 14.7% of parliamentary seats (ranking 87th worldwide). Korea is also a very high economic and human development country (ranked 15th in the world). Alternatively Mongolia, a 'medium human development' country (ranked

110th in the world), now has higher representation [12%] of women in parliament (discussed more fully below) than Japan (UNDP 2012).

Culture, civil society and change

Entrenched social and gender practices are obstacles to women's political participation in Eastern Asia. All over the world the predominance of women's domestic and reproductive roles as wives and mothers over other more community-oriented and public roles is a feature of societies and is especially marked in Eastern Asia. The gender attributes associated with these family roles, such as gentleness and passivity, are seen as incompatible with a more public and vigorous economic and political life and women are seen as incapable of fulfilling such roles. In China for instance, women's underrepresentation has been explained by 'feudal' attitudes that portray women as inferior and incapable of leadership. The official national women's organization, All-China Women's Federation (ACWF), has implemented programs to address these gender stereotypes. They have instigated a twofold strategy: The first targets sexist attitudes and 'feudal thinking' of both men and women and promotes a discourse of equality: The second materially increases women's political skills through training programs, yet structural barriers within political institutions remain (for a comprehensive account please see Howell 2006).

Economic Opportunities

When women do enter the workforce they face greater challenges than men. They are often expected to work and maintain heavier burdens of domestic and reproductive work. Many studies have shown that most national economies depend upon women's unpaid labour in the home. Similarly to the rest of the world, women in Mongolia are concentrated in low-pay and low productivity sectors, such as education, caring and service industries, while men tend to occupy better-paid and higher level positions in government and business that are common pathways to political influence and recruitment for political positions. The Republic of Korea has a highly developed economy but it is also highly male-dominated resulting in one of the largest gender pay gaps in the world: women average only 57% of the men's pay (UN-ENSCAP 2010). Female participation in the labour market is 50% compared to 72% for men (UNDP 2011a). The CEDAW Committee has noted, 'the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in [Korean] society' which translates into disadvantage for women in the labour market (CEDAW 2007). Male political leaders and business elites comment that women are not appropriate for leadership roles in public or private spheres since they are not available for the "nightwork" required in these roles due to their family responsibilities (True 2008).

Japan's gender inequity is also apparent in the labour force participation rate of women (47.9%) compared to men (71.8%). This is also reflected in Japan's 2012 Gender Equality Index score of 0,57 (made up of Education 0,93**;** Economic 0,65**;** Empowerment 0,14),

dragged down by the economic score but more so by the empowerment indicator, which is measured on the gender gaps apparent in the parliament and senior executive positions and other high-level positions in society (Social Watch 2012). In the private sector many professional women drop out of the workforce when facing the transition from middle to senior-level management. In Japan these drop-out rates are as high as 70.24% of professionally employed women in Japan and 52.88% of professionally employed women in China (Tuminez 2012). DPRK has made substantial gains in bringing women into the labour force but the rate of women's participation is still only 55.1% compared to 77.5% for men, and women have limited access to management positions. Their participation in the public sphere is curtailed due to the time and attention devoted to customary obligations and duties in the private family sphere (UNDP 2011d). These economic disadvantages for women only compound women's political disadvantage.

Education

Women's formal political participation and empowerment is built on the precursors of education and economic opportunities. Mongolia is one of the few places in the world where women have higher education attainment levels than men: 83% compared to 81.8% (UNDP 2011a). Yet female participation in the labour market (67.8%) lags behind men's (78.2%) meaning educational advantage has not yet translated into better employment outcomes for women. This is also the case in Japan where the level of secondary education attainment is high with little disparity (females—80% and males—82.3%) but is neither reflected in economic or political participation. In the DPKR too, women have equal access to primary and secondary education but this does not continue into university with one in seven men completing compared to one in 12 women. These examples suggest that by itself, education and economic participation are not enough to ensure women's political empowerment—in socialist or democratic countries and at higher or lower levels of economic development. Other measures must be undertaken to change societal expectations of women and to assist their path to greater political participation.

Electoral systems

Electoral systems have considerable impact on the representation of women. For instance, globally women's political representation averages 22.6% in proportional electoral systems compared with 18.1% in plurality-majority systems (see www.ipu.org). Three types of temporary special measures are possible within different electoral systems. First, in proportional systems, parties are encouraged to nominate women on the basis that inclusive party lists will broaden and increase their electoral appeal. Thus, proportional systems allow for gender quotas for the number of women and men candidates on the party list. Second, in majority or 'plurality' electoral systems gender quotas can be achieved internally within parties as a certain percentage of the total number of candidates running for office. Third, any political/electoral system may designate reserved parliamentary seats for women or any other traditionally under-represented group that all parties can compete

for (Krook 2010; Reilly 2012). Compared to the examples of China and DPKR above, democratic Japan has very low representation of women in parliament—only 13.6% (52 out of 480 seats) in the lower house and 10.8% (45 of 242 seats) in the upper house. Women fare a little better in Ministerial appointments at 11.8% or 2 out of 17. Japan uses a semi-proportional system (180 of the 480 lower house seats are proportional). While the predominance of majority seats goes some way toward explaining this very low level of women's representation in Japan, cultural factors and a lack of institutional remedies such as quotas and temporary special measures can also be identified as key obstacles to women's political participation in the Eastern Asian region more generally. Women are largely absent, from decision-making at all levels of Japanese society: in parliament but also in higher education (16.7% of lecturers and above) in government (2% of heads of departments) and 4% of CEOs. The recent economic, demographic and environmental crises in Japan have revealed a deeply gendered society and an urgent need for more gender-inclusive decision-making (Kano and Mackie 2012).

In 2010 the CEDAW committee urged Japan to undertake affirmative actions to improve women's participation in government, the bureaucracy and business. The government responded with a plan aimed at increasing the share of women in leadership positions to at least 30% in all fields by 2020. The Japanese government has implemented special measures and in some instances reached the 30% target for women's appointment to National Advisory Boards and public offices. Changes to personnel practices and the introduction of mentoring programs are also having some effect on the public service. Programs to assist and encourage private industry to abide by the Equal Opportunity Law have also been implemented along with public awareness raising activities (Government of Japan 2008: 25-29).

'Fast-track' policies: gender quotas and temporary special measures (TSM)

Women currently hold only about one fifth of parliamentary seats globally and even less of senior decision-making positions. At existing incremental rates, it will take a century and a half for women's parliamentary representation to reach parity with men's (UNDP 2012:17). The introduction of 'fast-track' policies, notably the introduction of gender quotas and other institutional reforms are justified by the rapid increase of women's representation in legislatures such as Mongolia's three-fold rise in the 2012 election (see below). Quotas are seen to be a transitional measure that will lay the foundation for a broader acceptance of women's representation and Scandinavia has been a leader in these strategies. In addition, political parties may be encouraged or adopt their own internal quotas for women. This is the most common TSM used to promote the participation of women in political life (Reilly 2012).

In 2004 the Republic of Korea introduced legal quotas into candidate selection processes to promote greater gender balance in parliamentary representation. Of the 56 seats elected proportionally, political parties must include 50% women on candidate lists. For the other

243 representatives elected by plurality vote in single member districts, political parties are recommended to include 30% women. However, despite this TSM, the CEDAW Committee noted the slow change in Korea with the low levels of women's representation in decision-making positions in the Government, judiciary, foreign service, academia and the private sector. They recommended the further implementation of TSMs, expanding skills and leadership training programmes for women leaders and for programs that raise awareness of the importance of women's full and equal participation in decision-making in society (CEDAW 2007). Continuing poor representation of women in the parliament may require "reserved seat provision," one of the three forms of TSM in parliament. The recent election of Korea's first female President, Park Geun-hye is a hopeful precedent for women's political participation. However, her success reflects the traditional, elite female pathway to politics; following in the leadership footsteps of a father, husband or brother.

Taiwan, Province of China, is significant for its established constitutional practice of reserved seats in parliament for women but women are now winning more seats than this minimum (Tsai-Wei Sun 2004). By 2000 the rate of reserved seats had been increased to 15% to 25%, depending on the size and level (local or national) of the electorate. For the 2008 election Taiwan also changed to a mixed electoral system with less seats in the national parliament (73 of the 113 seats are determined by plurality vote; 34 by second ballot proportionally by political party; and 6 seats are reserved for minorities). The system has also also strengthened more recently by the use of gender quotas for presidential appointees, legislative candidates, and positions within political parties (Huang 2012). Politicla parties have taken up these gender quotas to different degrees. The Nationalist Party (KMT), one of the two largest political parties, have 20 women out of 80 (or 25%) representatives in the parliament and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) have 12 out of 27 or (44.4%) (Gelb 2012). In 2009, women comprised 33 out of 113 (29.2%) members of the national parliament. If internal figures are accurate Taiwan now has one of the highest levels of women's political representation in Asia (28% across the three levels of legislature). Taiwan, Province of China is an advanced industrial economy and is ranked highly in terms of freedom of the press, health care, public education, economic freedom, and human development, as well as the development of national machineries for women and gender mainstreaming in the bureaucracy (APEC 2010).

Mongolia's 2012 Elections: New electoral system and quotas

Concerned with the low representation of women in politics—just 3% of elected members of the State Great Khural—the government in Mongolia recently changed its electoral system. The election law of 2012 contained new regulations, including the introduction of proportional representation for 28 or the 76 seats and a minimum of 20% of electoral candidates contesting seats had to be women. In the lead up to June elections the proportion of female candidates was well above the quota at nearly 32% but some parties put almost all their women candidates towards the bottom of party lists ensuring that male candidates had a much higher chance of being elected. Despite unfavourable listing four women won the election through the proportional system suggesting that voters made conscientious candidate choices and seven women were elected directly in the 48 first-past-the-post seats. Women now constitute approximately 12% of the new parliament - a significant step forward and an example of how 'fast-track' gains can be made. Along with the quota system this result was attributed to an increasing disillusionment with corruption associated with male-dominated leadership and the perception that women are more trustworthy and principled. However, women MPs now face significant challenges to collectively pursue common gender goals and form alliances with male parliamentarians to achieve this. The creation of a women's caucus to assist in this is underway. Opportunities to communicate with other women counterparts internationally and tap into a collective experience will also be important. The composition of cabinet and standing committees requires attention to make sure women are equitably represented at these higher levels (Narangoa 2012; Dierkes 2012).

East Asia Conclusion

Increasing the number of women representatives in legislatures and parliaments at local, regional and national levels will have flow on effects on the appointment of women into leadership or executive positions as ministers, party leaders, or heads of state and government. Legislative bodies vary greatly and parliaments can be weak 'rubber-stamp' institutions where members lack capacity (Fish and Kroenig 2009). While the inclusion of women might begin as a token gesture even in largely ceremonial assemblies, it has symbolic value and provides women with experience in political office. Women's inclusion by candidate quotas and other temporary special measures is critical to increasing the opportunities for women to gain political experience in the short-term in Eastern Asia while improving the quality of women's substantive political contributions and encouraging an inclusive political culture.

SouthEastern Asia

Vietnam, Brunei Darussalam, Laos, Singapore, Myanmar, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Indonesia, Timor Leste

High status for women has been claimed in SouthEastern Asian (SEA) societies yet relative gender disparity and low levels of women's political representation compared with the rest of the world is pronounced. This contradiction can generally be explained by the persistence of patriarchal attitudes and gender stereotypes that do not encourage women to participate in politics. Much variation exists in the Southeastern Asian region and an understanding of how gender relations operate within each particular cultural, social and economic context is necessary to explain this heterogeneity.

Traditional attitudes limiting women's political participation are reinforced by unequal human development and women's poor access to food, land, assets, finance, technology, education, training and economic opportunity in developing countries where these resources are themselves scarce. Indicators such as marriage, divorce and inheritance customs and the levels of gender-based violence and sexual and reproductive health are crucial factors affecting not only women's wellbeing, especially poor or marginalised women's wellbeing, but also their capacity to engage politically. Of particular concern is how society and governments deal with these personal status and/or family-related injustices, and the extent to which women themselves advocate for changes in norms and laws to redress these injustices.

Patterns of women's political participation

Women's formal political participation is influenced by the intersection of socio-economic inequalities, race/ethnicity and religion as well as a range of formal, institutional political factors especially the diversity of political systems in this subregion and their age. Viet Nam emerged from decades of war as a one-party communist state, similar to Laos. Brunei remains a Sultanate where neither women, nor men, have the right to political representation. After years of military rule, Myanmar is in an early transitional phase of democratization. Singapore and Malaysia are older parliamentary democracies dominated by ruling parties who have governed since independence and maintain significant state control of citizens. Thailand's older democratic system is vulnerable to military dictatorship by intense political party rivalries reflecting regional enmities. The Philippines and Indonesia have maintained democratic systems which have also been susceptible to dictatorship and corruption. Cambodia and Timor-Leste are building new democracies after long and destructive periods of armed conflict.

Tremblay's (2007) cross-national study of women's representation finds that the most important factor explaining women's parliamentary representation in new democracies is the voting system, whereas within well-established democracies, an egalitarian conception

of gender roles is the major factor affecting the proportion of women parliamentarians. In Southeastern Asia the length and integrity of the democratic experience and the type of electoral system both have a major bearing on the level of women's political representation. In the subregion only the Philippines can be described as long-standing democracy with an above average rates of women in parliament (23%). Countries with low liberal democratic ratings have varied percentages of women in parliament: Singapore (24.4%), Malaysia (10%) and Thailand (15%) (See Table 1; IPU 2012). Female parliamentary participation rates vary greatly in new or recently renewed democracies depending largely on the electoral system, from Myanmar (1.8%) to Indonesia (19%), Cambodia (20%) and Timor-Leste (38%) where proportional voting systems are in place and has been strongly advocated for (UNDP 2101:11, 31). Proportional systems provide an incentive for parties to maximize their appeal by including candidates from all social groups. Timor-Leste, Cambodia and Indonesia have all seen rises in women's representation over the last decade under this type of electoral system and with the introduction of gender quotas. However, in the Southeastern Asia overall participation rates have only slowly increased, and at the rate of the last decade will take more than a century to reach parity (UNDP 2012: 20; 21). Special measures have been shown speed up these processes (see below).

Adversarial party politics is not a political system women have designed or flourished in. Newly emerging democracies, in particular, like Timor-Leste, Cambodia, Indonesia and Myanmar, suffer from a dearth of women candidates. Parties typically avoid females as they come with access to few campaign resources (wealth, knowledge, or networks) or links to influential constituencies (UNDP 2010). Women are less experienced than men in public roles and must juggle their 'triple burden' (of reproductive, productive and community work) leaving little time for politics. Women's electoral success requires support from political parties and placement in 'winnable' positions (IPU 2011).

Elite women's political participation and gender attributes in SEA

SEA has produced an exceptional number of impressive women leaders. Yet many of these women are closely associated with men who were national leaders. Corazon Aquino (11th President of the Philippines 1986-1992) was the first female president in Asia and widow of assassinated Senator Benigno Aquino. After his death she continued a 'People Power Revolution' to topple corrupt President Marcos and restore democracy to the Philippines. Megawati Sukarnoputri (5th President of Indonesia 2001–04) opposed corrupt dictator President Suharto and replaced him after his downfall. Both Megawati and Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma (opposition political leader and now member of Parliament) are daughters of the 'founding father' of their country, deposed by a military coup and replaced by a dictatorship, which both women opposed. Thailand's new and first female Prime Minister, Yingluck Shinawatra is understood to have been voted in to redeem and replace her brother Thaksin, the Prime Minister overthrown in a 2006 military coup.

There has been much debate about whether these women are mere symbols of their fathers, husbands or brothers: simply 'leaseholders of patriarchal power'. Yet they have succeeded in political office where other male relatives have not. They also represent the elite strata of societies with strict social hierarchies and this status may trump gender especially in times of national crisis. When corruption and dictatorship dominate women are felt to be trustworthier than men. This may reflect the region's deep belief in the feminine and maternal attributes of honesty, self-sacrifice and fortitude and the valorising of these attributes. This attitude is summed up in a well-known Cambodian phrase about politics as the art of 'riding a buffalo through a muddy field' and something that is only useful in a time of crisis (Jacobsen 2010: 207).

Key Enablers and Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

Women's movements and socio-economic divisions amongst women

Improvements in women's political representation can also occur due to pressure from women's movements and mobilisation of local women's advocacy organisations on substantive issues of concern to women. Women's movements in SEA have had to overcome colonial gender regimes, deference to movements for nationalist independence and to survive authoritarian and patriarchal state rule. After war or crisis the familiarity of established patriarchal systems may appear attractive. National women's movements can also replicate existing patterns of social hierarchy and gender roles and be seen to represent elite rather than diverse groups of women overall. This has been the case in Cambodia, Indonesia and Timor-Leste (Jacobsen 2010, Blackburn 2010, Niner 2011: 427). Some women's movements, notably in socialist Vietnam and Lao, and the Philippines where 'people-power' has prevailed, have had more success in forming coalitions of women across socio-economic divisions and creating greater change for all women (Roces 2010).

Increased economic engagement

The need for more equitable gender relations and the importance of women's autonomy and contributions to the economy have been acknowledged across SouthEastern Asia has been acknowledged. However, in local economies women's productive work is often an extension of their home-based activities and has not increased their public engagement but rather reinforced restrictive social conventions. Today the rapid pace of global economic change in SEA furthered by government goals for building knowledge and export economies have increased the numbers of young women working in factories across the region and of female entrepreneurs and employers among the middle class (Elias 2011). But women's economic empowerment has yet to lead to significant political empowerment that might address, for instance, through women's advocacy and substantive political input, the exploitation of vulnerable women working as migrant domestic servants in largely unrelated sectors or working in illicit prostitution and sex trafficking industries in the subregion.

Grassroots political participation: education, employment and empowerment

While it is important to observe and encourage women's formal political participation, the precursors of education and employment are critical to also understand women's informal or grassroots political participation. Particular tools and measures can assess these factors. Measures like the independent Gender Equity Index (GEI) quantifies the gap between women and men in education, economic participation and political empowerment (0 means that no women is educated, employed or empowered and all men are and 100 indicates perfect equality) (Social Watch 2012). Regionally, Europe has the highest and best GEI at 0,73 and the Middle East and North Africa the lowest at 0,31 (Education 0,56; Economic 0,23; Empowerment 0,14); South Asia is only slightly better at 0,39 (Education 0,67; Economic 0,36; Empowerment 0,14) and Eastern Asia and the Pacific much higher at 0,69 (Education 0,95; Economic 0,70; Empowerment 0,42). As overall equity for women increases education appears to be the first indicator to rise, followed by employment and lastly political empowerment.

Reproductive health is also crucial for women's equity and empowerment and this is reflected in UNDPs Gender Inequality Index (GII), which is based on reproductive health, empowerment (which counts educational achievement) and economic activity (0 is complete equality and 1 is complete inequality).[3] Reproductive health increases women (and children's) wellbeing and means women can control the number and spacing of their children and have more time and resources to engage in activities other than their reproductive work in the family household. This means more time on productive or economic engagement as well as community and potentially political activities.

'Fast-track' policies: gender quotas and temporary special measures (TSM)

Recommendations to compensate for the obstacles to women's formal political participation and to fast-track women's representation in legislatures include the three types of TSM mentioned previously, establishing internal party and partly list gender quotas and targets and establishing reserve seats and quotas in parliament: reviewing political party processes for recruitment and nomination; building the political capacities of women candidates and representatives through civil society initiatives; and designing gender-sensitive parliaments that facilitate women's caucuses, family-friendly sessional hours and facilities for example (UNDP 2012:11). The Philippines provides reserved parliamentary seats for women and in Indonesia gender quota legislation for political party candidate lists was introduced in

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[3] The GII shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each gender and attainment at secondary and higher education; and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for each gender. Brunei and Timor-Leste do not have a GII calculated due to a lack of relevant data. Accessed http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/gii/

2003 (30%) then made compulsory in 2008 which has increased women's national political representation to 18%.

CASE STUDY: Timor-Leste — Highest political representation for women in SEA

Timor-Leste offers a positive example of the use of temporary special measures (TSM). In 1999 Timor-Leste became an UN-administered territory after a long and destructive period of armed conflict and for a decade the UN provided security, administration and humanitarian and development assistance. In 2000, in the lead up to independence, the East Timorese Women's Congress set a goal of 30% women in all decision-making bodies. *Rede Feto*, the national women's network, made the campaign for gender quotas a priority for the 2001 Constitutional Assembly elections. However, the UN Electoral Affairs Division refused to use quotas, despite the advocacy of UNIFEM, on the basis they were not 'democratic'. But they did establish a proportional electoral system (see True and Hall 2009). To compensate for no official gender quota, local women to advocate for affirmative action and successfully lobbied for international funds to support and train women candidates. As a result of these efforts, Timorese women won 25% of seats in the new Assembly.

A formal gender quota was eventually mandated in the 2007 National Election Law establishing that one in every four candidates should be a woman. In an amendment to Election Law in 2011, candidate lists must now include one woman for every group of three candidates (EUEOM 2012). Today women representatives hold 21 of the 65 seats (32.3%) in Parliament, ranking them 22 in the world and the highest in the Southeastern Asian subregion (UNDP 2011b). Women also have 3 of 13 (23.1%) ministerial positions in the government (UNW World Map 2012). However, this remarkable outcome must be reconciled with substantial gender inequity illustrated by the fact that women suffer malnutrition more often than men and have higher rates of illiteracy. Women are less likely to participate in the paid workforce and then usually in lower-level positions and earn one-eighth the salary of men (ADB 2005: 23). Fertility rates (5.9 children per woman) are among the highest in the world and compounded with poor health services contribute to extremely high maternal mortality rates (370/10,000). Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion, which may account for the high fertility rate, and also cultural conservatism concerning gender relations, stressing women's roles primarily as wives and mothers. The main challenges for women in Timor-Leste now lie in fulfilling not strategic, but practical gender needs: the result of deep poverty and conflict. Opportunities for poor, rather than elite women to participate in social, economic and political decision-making processes and improve outcomes for women need to be advocated for (UNW-CEDAW 2012).

Southeastern Asia Conclusion

Human development is a necessary albeit insufficient condition to guarantee women's representation or gender equity. Increasing women's political participation in SEA in the

medium term requires the forging of an egalitarian political culture that promotes and values women's participation. Singapore's strong economy and high Human Development Index (HDI) translates into high levels of parity in health and education but not in the economy as measured by labor market participation (53.7% for women compared to 75.6 for men), especially at senior levels, or in politics: Singapore is also the only country in the region with no female Ministers (UNW World Map 2012). Malaysia also has a high HDI but low parliamentary representation for women (14%); education attainment (66.0% of women reaching secondary or higher education compared to 72.8% of men) and labour market participation (women–44.4% and men 79.2) (UNDP 2012b). Islamic women face discrimination particularly with respect to personal status, marriage and family relations. While Malaysia declares a commitment to meeting a 30% target of women in decision-making positions, concrete affirmative actions, such as mandatory quotas have not been made (IPU Case Study 2010). In Indonesia, which has a much lower HDI and an Islamic majority,—quotas have been introduced and women are guaranteed equality under the constitution—and women's parliamentary representation is significantly higher (18%) as a result and 4 out of 35 Ministers are women (UNW World Map 2012).

The relationship between high human development, democratic political systems and increased women's political participation must be reconciled with high levels of women's representation in the one-party socialist states of Viet Nam (25.8%) and Lao (25%) underscored by these countries most equitable labour market participation in the region (for Vietnamese women at 68.0% compared to 76% for men and for Laotian women at 77.7% compared 78.9% of men—UNDP 2011b). Vietnamese and Lao women have the highest levels of formal participation in the region, second, and third, only to the special case of Timor-Leste as discussed, and all of them socialist and democratic – have established temporary special measures to increase women's participation. The Viet Nam Women's Union Central Committee proposed to increase the proportion of women to 30% in the National Assembly and in the People's Provincial Councils. Similarly, in Lao, the People's Revolutionary Party Congress in March 2011 established a target of 30% in the National Assembly and 15% in decision-making positions. The targets have not yet been reached but Viet Nam's Constitution the Law on Gender Equality (2006) guarantees women's equality with men although in the reality of women's lives discrimination continues (IPU Case Study 2010). Nonetheless, political gains for women are hampered by low (but equitable) rates of educational attainment, high maternity mortality (56/100,000) and adolescent fertility rates (26.8/1000), perhaps reflecting low HDI (UNDP 2011b). In Lao poverty and inequity is apparent in educational attainment (22.9 % of women achieve secondary or higher level education compared to 36.8 % of men). Yet the worst of Lao's indicators is the maternal mortality rate of 580/100,000—the worst in the region—combined with a high adolescent fertility rate (39/1000) (UNDP 2011b). Women surely cannot thrive under such conditions, let alone achieve equal political participation with men. Women's social and economic rights and equality need to be prioritised in such contexts as the foundation for political empowerment and participation if not their single driver.

South Asia

India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Maldives.

South Asia is one of the most volatile regions of the world with the presence of two nuclear armed and hostile states and violent intra-state ethnic conflicts. States in this region share certain predominant features: post-colonial state formation, centralised governments, socio-economic inequalities and intra state divisions and conflicts based on class, gender, religion, language, ethnicity and caste. For the past 60 years political systems have varied from democracy in India and Sri Lanka (with varying degrees of authoritarian tendencies) to outright military dictatorship, theocratic autocracy and democracy in Bangladesh and Pakistan. Nepal has made a democratic transition from a monarchy that was overthrown by a Maoist revolution but faces problems of consolidating its democratic base. Maldives is a small island country in the region and was declared a republic in 1968, bringing an end to more than 800 years of monarchy. Early this year, the President, Mohamed Nasheed was allegedly ousted in a coup and presidential elections have been announced for 2013. Afghanistan has had a long history of coups, monarchy and dictatorship and is now an Islamic Republic under President Karzai with the National Assembly consisting of the Upper and Lower houses. This region has 4 Islamic republics, 2 democracies with a Buddhist majority and two secular democracies with a Hindu majority.

Patterns of women's political participation

Understanding women's political participation in the region has to take into account the different forms of governance and political mobilisation as well as the size of the population and the socio-economic and cultural factors that shape gender roles. The first thing that stands out about the region is its impressive record of women as heads of state and government; Sirimavo Bhandaranaike and Chandrika Kumartunga in Sri Lanka, Indira Gandhi and Pratibha Patil in India, Benazir Bhutto in Pakistan, Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh. Women leaders are found across the political spectrum in these countries from the left/ultra left parties to the mainstream centrist and also within the radical right. Right wing political forces like the Jamaat-e-Islami[4] in Pakistan and Bangladesh and the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP), and the Shiv Sena with their highly patriarchal policies that place women in more traditional gender roles have mobilised women in large numbers at the grassroots as also at the leadership levels. BJP's Sushma Swaraj who was once the Information and Broadcasting Minister in India is a potential prime ministerial candidate. One can safely conclude therefore that the highest positions in the government and the state are not out of reach for women in South Asia. Maldives is an

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[4] See <http://www.currenttrends.org/research/detail/gender-ideology-and-the-jamaat-e-islami> (accessed 20 Nov. 2012)

exception that has banned women from holding the highest leadership positions of the president and the vice president. The country has been heavily criticised for its anti-women policies.[5]

Women's participation at all levels of government is not unusual in South Asia, given the long history of women's political activism, their participation in anti-colonial struggles and the strong influence of the women's movement. However, the number of women in national parliaments in South Asia is below the average 20% proportion globally despite the affirmative actions in most South Asian countries. Yet those who do manage to get into parliament have often climbed up the ladder to occupy ministerial positions including heads of states. Women who are politically active are considered 'exceptional' due to their family background or connections. At the grassroots level there are more women in power but it is very difficult to trace the political career of any woman at a higher level who succeeded without any male mentorship or family connection. India's former Railway Minister and West Bengal's current Chief Minister, Mamata Banerjee is possibly be an exception to the rule.

Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

Lack of intra party democracy

Lack of democracy within political parties is the biggest impediment to women's political participation in South Asia. All major parties in the region have leadership that is passed on from one generation to another in the same family. This is the most notable trend of South Asian politics where the Bhuttos, Nehru-Gandhis, Rajapakases all control political parties as a family unit. The leadership of these parties is strictly a family matter and thus may get passed on to women family members. This is the case with Sonia Gandhi, the current leader of the Congress Party in India, the widow of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the daughter-in-law of Indira Gandhi. Her son Rahul Gandhi is now the important and powerful leader of the Congress and the party has no intra party democracy in terms of choosing leaders other than the Nehru-Gandhi family. This is also the case with the Bhuttos in Pakistan where slain leader Benazir Bhutto's son, Bilawal, even adopted her surname to seek legitimacy as the anointed heir of the Pakistan People's Party founded by his grandfather and former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. His father and Benazir's husband, Asif Ali Zardari serves as the current President of the country. This situation is extremely unusual in a country where children would never take up their mother's surname. In Bangladesh, former Prime Minister, Begum Khaleda Zia, is the wife of former President Ziaur Rahman and current Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina is the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rehman, nationalist politician and founder of Bangladesh. The Rajapakase family in Sri Lanka currently holds all important offices. If more women from non-elite

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[5] See <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2007/wom1597.doc.htm > (accessed 20 Nov. 2012)

families are to participate in politics, political parties will need to be democratised. As long as parties are family controlled, even quotas for women will not achieve the desired results.

Gender prejudices and cultural factors

Resistance to temporary special measures such as gender quotas is based on the notion that only some affluent women with powerful connections will benefit from them. It is also based on deep-rooted gender prejudices held by male politicians who ironically do not mind their own female kin in the parliament but are hesitant to include women more structurally and systematically. For example, Indian politician (head of the Samajwadi Party), and former Defence Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav recently stated on the Women's Reservation Bill, "Only girls and women from affluent class can go forward...remember this…you (rural women) will not get a chance...Our rural women do not have that much attraction".[6] This is a bizarre comment from a man whose daughter-in-law, Dimple Yadav has been contesting elections and in 2012 was elected unopposed as a Lower House (Lok Sabha) member of parliament from Kannauj, Uttar Pradesh. This is not the first time Yadav has made disparaging comments about women's political participation. In 2010 he stated that if the Women's Reservation Bill was passed it would fill Parliament with the kind of women who invite catcalls and whistles. Yadav is not alone and these views are often made public by politicians who have encouraged women members of their family to contest elections and hold ministerial positions.

> "Women have been brought to the Assemblies as a sweet dish of democracy." Mr. Ahsanullah Waqas, MP, Pakistan. "They should prove their worth instead of sensationalizing the Assembly." Mr. S. Akbar, MP, Pakistan.[7]

As sociologist Gail Omvedt has suggested, the most seemingly intractable obstacle to women's political participation is the deeply embedded patriarchal social and cultural life.[8] The view that a woman's place is still in the home and political life is for men is still held by many in this subregion. With the exception of women who come from political families, women are usually discouraged from public life and political roles.

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[6] See <http://articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-11-09/india/35016070_1_rural-women-mulayam-singh-yadav-samajwadi-party-supremo > (accessed 19 November 2012)

[7] Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Pakistani Women in Politics, Swimming Against the Tide , <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Events/2010/Promoting-Womens-Political-Participation-in-South-Asia-Afghanistan-Nepal-and-India.aspx?p=1> (accessed 21 November 2012)

[8] Gail Omvedt, Women in Governance in South Asia, *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 40, No. 44/45 (Oct. 29 - Nov. 4, 2005), pp. 4746-4752

Violence against 'political' women

Apart from the sexism and prejudice that women face generally from men, violence against women who choose the political path is an increasing concern. The assassinations of Indira Gandhi (in India in 1984) and Benazir Bhutto (in Pakistan in 1997) and attempts on the lives of other female leaders in the región such as Chandrika Kumaratunga (in Sri Lanka) and SheikhHasina (in Bangladesh) are examples of political violence against women in positions of power. Although it must also be recognised that these women were targetted also for their policies and political positions (and men would have met the same fate). In general, however, violence against women with political aspirations is common and is reflective of deeper systemic violence against women in South Asia.

The recent gang rape episode on a Delhi public bus on Dec. 16, 2012 and the subsequent death of the 23 year old girl has brought thousands of Indians on to the streets in Delhi, protesting violence against women. The conditions in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka are no better and this remains the single biggest concern in the region in terms of gender justice and a major concern for increasing women's participation in the public/political sphere. Violence against women and girls begins in the womb with female foeticide and continues throughout life with infanticide, dowry deaths, sexual harassment, assualt and domestic violence. Rigid patriarcal norms work in tandem with caste, class and religious oppression in most of the countries in the region.[9]

As this report is being written a municipal councillor in West Delhi's Nangloi area has hanged herself at her home after strangling her baby daughter. 27 year old Satyam Yadav was elected to the municipality in April 2012, and was serving as a councillor from ward number 43 in Nangloi (East). Dowry harassment has been listed as a reason for this suicide and Yadav's family members have registered a complaint against her husband's family alleging that she was murdered because of dowry.[10] In another significant story from 2012, Rumi Nath, who represents the Borkhola assembly constituency in Assam, India was beaten up by a mob after it was revealed that she married Jaki Jakir, a Muslim, and converted to Islam[11]. Moral policing and violence against women who do not conform to traditional religious, ethnic and caste practices does not end when they acquire political power. This explains why even successful women leaders like Indira Gandhi, Benazir Bhutto, Sheikh Hasina, Sushma Swaraj, Uma Bharti, Sheila Dixit all endeavored in

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[9] See < http://www.unfpa.org.np/pub/vaw/VAW_REG_Analysis.pdf> (accessed 27 Dec. 2012)

[10]See < http://www.ndtv.com/article/cities/congress-politician-commits-suicide-allegedly-for-dowry-harassment-290248?pfrom=home-otherstories> (accessed 21 November 2012)

[11] See< http://www.ndtv.com/article/india/woman-congress-mla-and-her-second-husband-beaten-up-by-mob-in-assam-238003>(accessed 2 January 2011)

observable ways to make themselves acceptable as good wives, daughters, daughter-in-laws and religious women of virtue.

As well as India, violence has been reported by women in public life in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan politician Salma Hamza has had fuel bombs thrown at her vehicle by opposition members.[12] She is a member of the Urban Council and chief executive director of the Women's Empowerment and Development Forum in Kattankudy, Sri Lanka and the first Muslim woman politician in the entire eastern province of Sri Lanka. She has said that, "many women are greeted with violence if they even want to get their names on the nomination list for parliament."[13] In Pakistan, militants and religious fundamentalists have repeatedly threatened high profile women such as Asma Jehangir and Sherry Rehman for taking progressive stands.

In Afghanistan, Halima Askari, deputy head of the Maidan Wardak Provincial Council in Afghanistan has also talked about the violence and insecurity women face with concerns about the situation that will evolve when the US troops leave Afghanistan. This violence and insecurity affects women outside of their homes, in the streets, on the way to school and work, when seeking political office and as human rights defenders. For instance, Afghan women's affairs official Najia Sediqi in Laghman province was killed in Decemeber 2012 and the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack. Much of violence against women goes under or unreported since 2008 – stemming from political support to reconcile with the Taliban. This is a dangerous trend and coompletely ignores the ground reality of women who have to live under the Taliban.

Pakistan's National Assembly passed a resolution on 13 April 2009, approving the Nizam-e-Adl Regulation, the aim of which was to impose Sharia laws in the Swat Valley in the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan. The imposition of this Regulation marked the beginning of a series of murky 'peace' deals between the Government of Pakistan and the Pakistani Taliban. Under the "peace for Sharia" deal with the Government, the Taliban was expected to stop its armed campaign in the region and surrender its arms in exchange for the legal enforcement of Sharia laws in Swat. Sharia courts would interpret civil rights according to Islamic strictures which would render women invisible and inflict unprecedented violence on them.[14] The deal subsequently collapsed due to the Taliban's lack of commitment to disarm but since then, several efforts have been made to negotiate peace deals with the 'good' Taliban which would have disastrous consquences for women's

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[12] See <http://www.peacewomen.org/news_article.php?id=4798&type=news> (accessed 21 November 2012)

[13] Ibid

[14] See < http://intellibriefs.blogspot.com.au/2009/04/pakistan-when-peace-deals-wage-war-on.html>(accessed 03 January 2013)

rights. In Pakistan, the Sunni Tehreek expressed serious concerns over the appointment of Sherry Rehman as Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States (US) in November 2011. The Central leader of the Sunni Tehreek, Shahid Ghauri said Rehman was already following "policies of the US and the Jewish lobby as she tried to abolish the country's blasphemy laws."[15] Rehman resigned as Federal Information Minister in 2009, due to differences of opinion with President Asif Ali Zardari on imposing restrictions on the media. Her security was threatened, particularly when she took a public stance against the blasphemy laws of the country.[16]

Lack of economic and political resources

Another significant factor that constrains women's political participation is the lack of material resources available to women. In South Asia politics is about money, power and political networks. It is almost impossible to contest any election without adequate finance and access to political know-how and training. Because women are less integrated within powerful political and economic networks, it is even more difficult for them to participate in large numbers or to play an important role in political decisionmaking. South Asian women are economically disempowered and gender prejudices discourage them from cultivating political contacts early on in their education and careers to prepare them for political roles in the future. Some parties have a separate women's wing but rather than empowering women or expressing their solidarity these often marginalise women further.

In Kashmir, the Muslim Khawateen Markaz (Muslim Women's Organisation) is the only women's party within the Hurriyat Conference (an amalgam of separatist groups). However, not only are the women excluded from any decision making positions in Kashmir but there are no women stake holders or participants in the peace talks, which are dominated by men from separatist political parties, mainstream politics and even by former militants.

Enablers of women's political participation

Education and access to opportunities

Education is often mentioned as a necessary prerequisite to ensure women's greater political participation. Women in rural areas, with little or minimal education, have still achieved high levels of political participation. While it may make women aware of opportunities and of how gender imbalances exist in the society, contrary to this popular notion that education is critical for advancement of women's political rights, many women

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[15] See <http://tribune.com.pk/story/296301/blasphemy-sunni-tehreek-lambast-sherry-rehmans-appointment/> (accessed 22 November 2012)

[16] See <http://dawn.com/2011/11/23/sherry-rehman-profile/ > (accessed 20 Nov. 2012)

in South Asia have come into the political arena without formal education and training. Rural women, despite their lack of education, are frequently very politically aware and informed. Rabi Devi, Bihar's Chief Minister three times over is a case in point. Although she has been widely criticized as a rural illiterate woman from one of the most under-developed states in India, who replaced her husband arrested in a scam, she has stood her ground and embraced her political role for many years with ease and confidence. With education there is greater access to economic opportunities but in South Asia, lack of formal education does not necessarily affect political aspirations and performance. Significant increases in rural women's political participation at the *Zila Parishad* and *Panchayat* (district and village) levels due to gender quotas (discussed below) is evidence of this.

By contrast, the educated sections of South Asian societies often espouse the most reactionary, conservative, patriarchal and fundamentalist politics. Even when one looks at problems and violence that women confront, much of it like dowry harassment and female foeticide, is rampant in the urban educated class.[17] To promote women's political participation education is important but more than formal literacy is required. The focus should be on more holistic education that directly engages with issues of gender hierarchy and women's empowerment.

'Fast track' policies: Gender quotas and temporary special measures (TSM)

Gender quotas and other affirmative actions have helped to increase women's political participation even though the argument has been made that quotas tend to benefit those women who have family (male) members in positions of power. They have helped women to get elected to national parliament and local government in most South Asian countries. Article 83 of the Afghan constitution gives women 25% of seats in the lower house, and Article 84 guarantees them almost 17% in the upper house of the National Assembly.[18]

The democratic system of governance that was introduced in Afghanistan through the 2004 constitution has led to an unprecedented expansion of women's political participation. "In the years that have followed, millions of women have turned out to vote in successive rounds of presidential, legislative and provincial elections." [19] Marked improvement in

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[17] For example, Sociologist Ashis Nandy, in response to a comment by the leader of the Hindu right wing political group, RSS (Rashtriye Swayamsevak Sangh) that rape happens in urban India, not so much in rural 'Bharat', argues that violence of the kind we saw in the recent Delhi gang rape demonstrates that the anonymity of organic cities will breed a culture of violence. See < https://soundcloud.com/#tehelkaradio/ashis-nandy-on-mohan-bhagwats> (accessed 03 January 2013)

[18] See <http://www.parl.gc.ca/content/LOP/ResearchPublications/prb0734-e.htm#representation > (accessed 18 Nov. 2012)

[19] <http://www.areu.org.af/Uploads/EditionPdfs/1205E-Equal%20Rights%20Unequal%20Opportunities%20SP%202012.pdf> accessed 10 January 2013.

access to services such as education and healthcare, long-term migration to countries like Iran and Pakistan during the country's conflicts and work of aid agencies and INGOS have allowed ideas and alternatives to be debated. "The current internationally backed regime has instituted a number of constitutionally and legally constituted safeguards protecting women's equal rights as citizens and as participants in the country's democratic system, while the 2008 National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) sets out an operational framework for furthering women's empowerment and gender equality under the government's overarching Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS)."[20] The challenges are far from over, despite these initiatives. For instance, the CEDAW Committee in its 45th session in 2010 expressed regret and concern at the exclusion of women from executive decisionmaking roles and the absence of strategies to protect women's rights in Afghanistan.[21] Prevailing cultural norms, insecurity, corrupt and inefficient regime and the rise of conservative factions interested in peace deals with the Taliban, have generated anxieties about women's future.[22]

In Nepal, affirmative action for women's political representation was incorporated into the new Interim Constitution, which was adopted in January 2007.[23] Article 63(5) guarantees one third of the seats in the Constituent Assembly to women. As a result 33% women made it to the unicameral parliament in 2008 – the largest proportion of women parliamentarian in South Asia.[24] In Pakistan, 60 of the 342 seats in the National Assembly (17.5 percent) are reserved for women. These seats are allocated to the political parties proportionally from the provinces, according to the electoral result.[25] In Bangladesh, quotas or reservations are seen as practically the only way through which women can get into the legislature making them dependent on them alone. However, one can argue that quotas have had limited success in Bangladesh for the substantive representation of women. There is reasonable political representation (19% in National Parliament/Jatiya Sangsad) and also good legislation for the protection of women from violence.[26] But the stumbling block

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[20] Ibid

[21] For more details on CEDAW application and reports by each individual country, please see <http://cedawsouthasia.org/> (accesses 02 January 2013)

[22] http://www.unwomensouthasia.org/assets/Country-Reviews-Women%E2%80%99s-Political-Participation-in-South-Asia.pdf

[23] Åshild Falch, "Women's Political Participation and Influence in Post-Conflict in Burundi and Nepal," PRIO paper May 2010. Also available at <http://www.prio.no/sptrans/-803632624/Womens-Political-Participation.pdf>

[24] See <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=NP> (accessed 15 Nov. 2012)

[25] See <http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=PK> (accessed 15 Nov. 2012)

[26] Source: http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?ul=en&country=20

has been the protection and representation of minority women who continue to be marginalised. In Pakistan the quota system has also been quite successful despite only providing political access to women from elite backgrounds.[27]

In India the Upper House passed the 33% reservations for women bill in 2010 but it is still to be cleared by the lower house. While a number of people have questioned the logic of 33% when 50% voters are women, demands have been made within the bill for *quotas within quotas* to include representation of dalit and other women who are from marginalised sections of the population. The 33% reservation in parliament follows the model of reservations at the *Zila Parishad* and *Panchayat* (district and village) levels which have been very successful in terms of the descriptive representation of women. UN Women notea that "more than 40% of local council leaders are women", as a result of quotas.[28] There is also evidence that the one third *Zila Parishad* and *Panchayat* reservations for women have improved the substantive representation of women with more women-friendly policy outcomes on water, criminal justice, security, and education correlated with the change in gender-based representation (Beaman et al 2010; Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004).

Maldives has not adopted any quotas for women and the representation of women in the parliament is very poor at 6.5% with women banned from highest leadership positions.[29] Sri Lanka has made no effort to legislate quotas for women either and despite women having held leadership positions in the country, overall women's political participation remains extremely low at 5%.[30] Bhutan adopted universal suffrage after the new constitution was adopted in July 2008 and all adult Bhutanese women will be able to vote in the next general election. Since 2004, women have consistently held 9% of the parliamentary seats in Bhutan.[31] They also form 9.3% of female legislators, senior officials and managers. Bhutan has debated the low level of women's political participation but has yet to legislate for quotas.[32]

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[27] See <http://www.quotaproject.org/CS/CS_Bangladesh.pdf>(accessed 4 Jan. 2013).

[28] UN News Centre " Progress achieved in India highlights benefits of quotas for women, says UN official", <http://www.un.org/apps/news/printnews.asp?nid=43202 > (accessed 20 Nov. 2012)

[29] Source: http;//data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS

[30] Source: http://www.quotaproject.org/uid/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=LK

[31] Source: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SG.GEN.PARL.ZS

[32] See <http://www.prajnya.in/prcbg1.pdf>; < http://www.bhutanobserver.bt/quotas-women-2/> (accessed 20 Nov. 2012)

Quotas, therefore have had mixed results and the overall number of women representatives in national politics is still dismal. The estimated regional distribution of women parliamentarians is summarised in table 1 above.[33]

South Asia Conclusion

South Asia is strong on constitutional provisions to ensure women's political participation. These are in place in most states in the subregion, except Sri Lanka and Maldives. However, constraints on women's participation arise when cultural norms and patriarchy continue to be invoked to prevent women from taking on more public roles. A latest example of this is the recent Delhi gang rape case after which many politicians, leaders and public figures have made statements about how women should behave appropriately to avoid violence against them. These statements reinforce a mentality that is still unwilling to accept women in the public space and is rooted in a strong patriarchal tradition, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, clan, and ethnicity.

Current regional initiatives seek to redress these mentalities and bolster women's political participation in South Asia. The South Asia Women Parliamentarians' Conference was organised in Dhaka, Bangladesh in July 2012 and more than 100 delegates from South Asian countries attended and debated the issues in the region.[34] The Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) organised a visit of the delegation of women parliamentarians from Pakistan in May 2012. The women discussed forced marriages with Muslim parliamentarians in the UK and also interacted with the Pakistani community in Britain. They also discussed specific legislation enhancing women's rights in Pakistan.[35] Several other exchange programmes and studies have been conducted under the supervision of the UN and donor agencies.

Although women's participation is considered to be essential in a subregion that holds over one fifth of the world's population, more proactive efforts are needed by all states to enhance women's political participation and roles in decisionmaking. South Asia has a particularly poor record in gender mainstreaming and protecting women's rights. Cultural norms endorse patriarchal control of every aspect of women's lives. Amidst all this, one can argue that women have done reasonably well, owing to a long history of political mobilisation and women's movements in the region. **Quotas have improved women's participation particularly at local and national levels.** However, **unstable political**

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[33] Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Pakistani Women in Politics, Swimming Against the Tide , <http://www.ifes.org/Content/Events/2010/Promoting-Womens-Political-Participation-in-South-Asia-Afghanistan-Nepal-and-India.aspx?p=1> (accessed 21 November 2012)

[34] See < http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2012/07/11/south-asia-women-parliamentarians-take-lead/ > (accessed 22 Nov. 2012)

[35] See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8V5jMftz3a4> (accessed 22 Nov. 2012)

regimes and the fact that political parties largely remain family-run political entrepreneurships have been major barriers to women's political participation, followed by corruption and the dominance of money and extortionary tactics during elections. Political reform, especially democratizing party structures with more intra-party elections and addressing corruption and criminalisation of politics including, is needed to raise women's participation. Gender quotas will help only if parties decide to field women candidates and have more women working within their institutional structures. Collaboration between local NGOs and women's movements, and continuous international pressure through aid diplomacy can help address gender stereotypes that women are 'apolitical' or not suited for political roles. Moreover, sexist political leaders and political candidates with serious allegations of rape, violence and sexual assault should be named and shamed by their political parties. Transnational feminist networks in the region should leverage the widespread anger in India (against the gang rape), in Pakistan (against the shooting of Malala Yousufzai) and against violence faced by minority and indigenous women in Bangladesh and internally displaced Tamil women in post-war Sri Lanka to start a serious campaign about violence against women and the importance of women's political participation. Given the scale of the protests in India and the churning and self-reflection in the regional media, there is reason to be hopeful.

Pacific Islands

American Samoa, Bougainville, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, New Caledonia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.

Patterns of women's political participation

Pacific Island parliaments continue to be those most resistant to the inclusion of women of all the four subregions in Asia-Pacific. According to the most recent IPU statistics (2012), women in the Pacific region represent, on average, 12.7% of all members elected to single or lower house parliaments – but this figure includes the parliaments of Australia (at 24.7%) and New Zealand (at 32.2%). When these states are removed from the analysis, the proportion of women's representation are much reduced. As of November 2012, the Parliaments of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) member states (excluding Australian and New Zealand) **had an average of only 3.65% women in parliament** (or 16 women MPs out of 438 MPs).

Without discounting developments occurring in the region's non-independent political territories, where some advancement on this issue is indicated, there are good reasons for making the general claim that politics in the region is "men's business" (Huffer 2006, 45), that women are "politically invisible" (Thomas 2002, 3) and that socio-political and economic structures are responsible for this situation. Yet there is cause for optimism. In regional politics there is now a vigorous discussion about the desirability of women representatives. The agenda to increase women's political participation is being driven by Pacific women's organisations and government machineries, by regional intergovernmental institutions, particularly the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and by international development agencies engaged in the region: It is supported by a range of international policy instruments, most importantly CEDAW, that challenge women's subordination.

In practical terms, a number of positive trends can also be noted: Numbers of women candidates contesting elections are rising in many Pacific Island countries; some Pacific Island Governments are demonstrating a willingness to discuss the implementation of electoral mechanisms that will allow greater representation of women; and important regional lessons can be drawn from those non-independent, Francophone, Pacific Island territories where women's political representation has increased in the last decade. Key factors both constraining and enabling Pacific women's political participation are considered further.

Obstacles to Women's Political Participation

Custom and religion

Pacific women's political participation is shaped by some common socio-political factors even given the rich, cultural diversity in the subregion. It is frequently argued that "patriarchy has become entrenched" in Pacific societies as a result of colonial and missionary influences, even affecting matrilineal cultures in Palau (Wilson 1995) and Bougainville (Hermkins 2011) where women in the past had a legitimate influence on "public decision-making" (Huffer 2006; 33). Those who challenge the masculine dominance of formal politics often encounter "pervasive resistance" from men, and other women, who fear that 'traditional' customary power structure and ideas about women's 'place' are under threat (Huffer 2006; 34). The few Pacific women who seek political office are often accused of "inauthenticity" (Jolly 1992), of having inflated ambitions and acting "above themselves" or *bikhet* (Macintyre 2012, 247). If these women are successful in their bid for political office, they are accused of losing touch with tradition and their 'real' grassroots constituents/sisters.

Viewing custom as fixed in Pacific Island societies overlooks how customary values have been modified through Pacific Island communities' contact with colonial, missionary and other globalizing influences (Douglas 2002). Prior to European contact, matrilineal political and economic structures were present in tribal societies in many parts of the region. They privileged women's land rights, women's rights in decision-making and their role in economic exchange (Jolly and Macintyre 2010). Yet these structures were generally undermined as colonial governments created legal systems that replicated the "patriarchal, hierarchical and hereditary" structures of their own societies (Huffer 2006, 33). Additionally, through their participation in mission church groups, women were often encouraged to take up domestic activities considered to be more feminine and 'appropriate' for women (Douglas 1999). The combined legacies of these colonial and missionary influences have devalued women's household and agricultural work as 'subsistence' rather than economically 'productive', and celebrated the 'productiveness' of men's public economic and political capacities.

Religion has constrained women's political participation in other ways. Early post-Independence political leaders in many parts of the region were missionary educated and some were ordained religious leaders. Their political and customary perspectives on governance were highly influenced by religious values. In the Melanesian countries of Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Fiji, Christian values are closely intertwined with customary protocols and institutionalized within state constitutional structures (Douglas 2002). This has further contributed to a masculinisation of the political realm as male leaders frequently invoke religiously oriented discourses about the 'rightful'

roles of women. At times they have also adopted strongly moralistic tones to discredit female candidates, as Afu Billy, a divorcee, found when she stood for election to national parliament in Solomon Island in 2001 (Billy 2002, 57).

Economic structures – Big Manism and Wantok obligation

Politics in the Pacific Islands is generally also understood as governed by a 'big man culture' (Pacific Institute of Public Policy 2011). Although the term is more commonly used to describe power relations in the Western Pacific (Melanesian region), where political candidates demonstrate their capacity for political office through personal achievement, clan based exchange and material accumulation (Rich 2008, Fraenkel and Grofman 2005), it has been commonly applied to politicians across the Pacific. 'Big manism' is also used pejoratively to convey the idea that politicians in the region use resources at their disposal to cultivate their status through the sharing of wealth with 'wantoks' (clan-based networks).

While the 'big man' style of politics blurs the lines between customary resource distribution and 'vote-buying' (Sepoe 2002), it especially disadvantages potential women parliamentarians. Women tend to lack the required credentials – wealth and status – that are perceived to be necessary to representing constituents effectively in parliament. This view was reflected in statements made by one of the recent women candidates in PNGs 2012 election. She stated: "They say women don't stand up in a sing-sing place and speak out on behalf of the clan or tribe, and therefore women can't stand up and speak for us in parliament" (Margareth Tini Parua cited MacDonald 2012).

Gender-disaggregated economic data for the region indicates the types of economic obstacles that prevent women from acquiring the equivalent of 'big man' status. For instance, the majority of women work in subsistence food cultivation, agriculture or fisheries; with levels averaging between 66% and 54% of women in most countries, but rising to 95% of women in Papua New Guinea (SPC 2004 cited Huffer 2006, 38; True 2012). Patrilineal systems of hereditary land and wealth transfer, and gendered expectations which normalize women's work in both the domestic and subsistence spheres prevent women from accessing the capital, credit, education and knowledge that might improve their economic standing (YWCA 2000, 5). Even when they are employed in the wage economy, women are often ghettoized in low-skilled, low-income, feminized occupations such as factory production-line work (e.g fish canneries, garment manufacturing) teaching, nursing and caring professions, as well as low-scale clerical work (Bowman et al 2009). More men's participate in paid employment than women and at higher professional levels. For example in Fiji, indicative of regional trends, 44% of female workers earn incomes below the poverty line of FJD 60 per week compared to 34% of male workers. This proportion of women living below the poverty line increases to 67% of women within the informal, cash-based economy (Narsey 2007:128).

Women's subordinate economic status has negative implications for women candidates standing for election (Huffer 2006, Scales and Teakeni 2006, Thomas 2002). Across the region, women have had trouble gaining endorsement for their candidature from political parties. They frequently have to finance their campaigns as Independents from their own limited purse, or through their own fundraising (Billy 2002). They also have difficulty meeting the material expectations of their electorate (Thomas 2002: 5).

This lack of economic status and resources helps explain why it is often only women from high-ranking or politically successful families that are able to achieve parliamentary success in the Pacific as in Asia. Australian-born, Dame Carol Kidu, who between 1997 and 2011 was PNG's only female MP, has argued that she owed her initial electoral success to the fact that she was the widow of former Chief Justice, Sir Buri Kidu (Kidu and Setae 2002). The recent success of Vika Lusibea in winning a by-election in North Malaita, Solomon Islands, was unexpected but perhaps explained by the fact that this seat was formerly held by her husband. Likewise, Adi Asenaca Caucau, Fiji's colorful Minister for women between 2001 and 2006, no doubt owed part of her political success to the fact that her father, Ratu Isiraeli Caucau was a former president of Fiji's Methodist Church. Across the region many successful women candidates have been able to build on their work within church organizations or within women's civil society groups as alternative routes to developing parliamentary careers. Yet even in these cases, they have benefitted from being backed by families with a high chiefly or institutional political standing. This reality is particularly pronounced in Polynesian countries such as Samoa, American Samoa and Tonga.

State Fragility and Democratic Structures

It has become commonplace to argue that there is a contagion of state weakness across the Pacific Island countries (Reilly 2000), evidenced by recent conflicts occurring in Bougainville (1990s), Solomon Islands (early 2000s), a history of coups in Fiji (1987 onwards) and ongoing tribal fighting in the PNG highlands. In some contexts democratic values are described as "foreign flowers" and state interventions are sometimes seen by Pacific Islanders as challenging their everyday customary and religious norms (this is particularly so in remote settings and more marked in some Melanesian countries).

In contexts where these challenges are pronounced, women may be disinclined to become involved in politics. Until 2006 in Fiji, for example, 11% women's representation in parliament was unique in the region. However, in the Pacific as in South Asia especially, political office can come with a risk of exposure to violence that dissuades women from assuming a political profile. When civilian rebel forces invaded the country's parliament in 2000, women MPs were detained for a number of days by coup perpetrators and subject to threats of violence. The military coup that occurred in 2006 again led to the dismissal of the national parliament and the city councils. Women within provincial councils, labour

unions and civil society organisations who voiced criticism of the government were subject to military threats of arrest and intimidation (Kepa 2011, George 2012a).

These episodes are the regional exception rather than the norm. Within the majority of Pacific Island states, governance structures are upheld and democratic processes are respected. Yet these processes are often shaped by customary norms that can frustrate women's political ambitions. For example in Tonga, the only Pacific Islands country governed by constitutional monarchy, appointment to the parliament was at the request of the King and his nobles who selected 21 out of the 30 members of parliament. Processes of constitutional reform between 2005 and 2010, made more urgent after periods of violent civil protest in 2005-6, have put in place a new electoral structure: 19 representatives are now elected to the parliament and up to 13 are nominated by nobles or the King. However, these reforms have not improved women's political participation. Currently, Tonga has only one female parliamentary representative, Dr. 'Ana Maui Taufe'ulungaki appointed to the parliament by the King, and also serving as the Minister for Education.

In Samoa, a system of hereditary privilege limits women's political participation with only customary chiefs or *matai* being able to stand for political office (Fraenkel and Grofman 2005: 261). Women may inherit chiefly titles according to Samoan custom although it is less common than for men and thus undermines their standing in electoral politics (*Samoa Observer* 5 February 2011). Endemic levels of political corruption also make it difficult for women with limited financial resources to succeed in electoral politics. In the 2012 elections held in Vanuatu, a high number of women candidates contested seats in urban and rural areas. The fact that no women candidate succeeded in winning election prompted some to later identify corruption as a key factor which influenced voter behaviour and the conduct of the electoral office, preventing women in particular from winning office (*Radio Australia* 2 November 2012, *Vanuatu Daily Post* 9 November 2012).

Enablers of women's participation

'Fast track' policies: Gender quotas and temporary special measures (TSM)

As discussed the ratification of CEDAW debates in the Pacific have had mixed results. The Solomon Islands ratified CEDAW in 2002 and in 2008 Ethel Sigimanu, head of the Ministry of Women, Youth, Children and Family Affairs raised the need for consideration of TSMs to the Government to address the lack of women's political representation and government non-compliance with CEDAW. At that time just woman had held office at the national level since independence. Following this, a TSM campaign was developed and a Women in Leadership Working Group was formed. However, although recent survey data suggests there is broad public support in the country for reserved seats for women (McMurray 2012), these efforts did not translate into broader government support for a proposed bill to create 10 women's seats within the national parliament (*Solomon Star* 25 July 2011).

In 2011, Dame Carol Kidu, at that time PNG's only women in parliament, spearheaded a drive to see 22 reserved seats for women created within the country's 111 seat national assembly. Her efforts won strong public support and seemed headed for success when a constitutional amendment passed parliament in preparation for a later reading of the TSM bill (*Sydney Morning Herald* 24 November 2011). However, the latter attempt failed and the TSM bill has not become law. Moreover, the three women elected to parliament in the 2012 PNG election have stated that they do not support TSMs in PNG and will withdraw from the government if the bill is re-introduced. One of these three, Loujaya Toni, argues that women cannot expect to be handed "respect on a golden plate". Respect has to be earned, she claims, by getting "your hands dirty like the guys" (Loujaya Toni *ABC Radio Australia* 13 August 2012).

In March 2012, the Samoan government introduced a bill to amend the constitution and allow reserved 5 reserved seats for women. The bills detractors argued that the provisions were undemocratic and amounted to Samoa "following orders from the UN" (Levaopolo Talatonu cited *Samoan Observer* 5 February 2012). The implication that reforms to promote women's political representation are an imported agenda and ill-fitted to the local context replicates Pacific criticisms of CEDAW and women's human rights norms (see previous sections). While these provisions are still under debate within the parliament, the fact that all parliamentary candidates in Samoa must hold a *matai* title may undermine the success of the bill as it tends to precludes women from standing for political office.

During recent constitutional negotiations taking place before Fiji's 2014 elections[36], women's organisations issued a regionally 'radical' demand for half of all parliamentary seats be reserved for women. Citing the post-conflict example of Rwanda as providing an important global precedent for this claim, Tara Chetty from the Fiji Women's Rights Movement argued that rather than simply relying on a few elite women or women civil society leaders to enter parliament, such a move would allow a "critical mass of women" to attain political office (Chetty cited *ABC Radio Australia* 12 October, 2012).

In the region's Francophone territories, New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna gender parity provisions require political parties to field candidates alternating the names of men and women from the bottom to the top of the party list. In New Caledonia and French Polynesia these reforms have resulted in a dramatic increase in women's political standing rising from 17% to 46% in the Congrès de Nouvelle Calédonie and 12% to 48% in the Assemblée de Polynésie Française (Bargel et al 2007).[37]

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[36] The first election since Fiji's 2006 military coup which resulted in the previous 1997 constitution abandoned.

[37] Frankel (2006) argues that for parity provisions to assist the representation of women a stable party structure needs to be in place as well as a proportional voting system. The success of parity provisions relies upon only a few parties achieving most of the vote with the result that a large number of candidates will share out the seats

Quotas in Bougainville enable and limit women's participation

Constitutional negotiations during Bougainville's post conflict reconstruction process sought to recognise the matrilineal structures of Bougainvillean society and the important role women had played in the peace process, which provided the territory with constitutional autonomy from PNG in 2004 (Fraenkel 2006: 90). Three seats were reserved for women in the new territorial assembly (three seats were also reserved for ex-combatants). Sitting member Elizabeth Burain, elected to the Bougainville assembly in 2010 argues that the provisions have encouraged wide acceptance of women parliamentarians (*Radio New Zealand International* 28 March 2011). Yet women contesting the 33 open seats have been something of a rarity. In the most recent 2010 election, five women stood for open seats but were soundly defeated with the most successful only winning 21% of the vote. There is some evidence to suggest that Bougainville's voters are disinclined to support women campaigning for open seats, believing that the quota system gives them sufficient electoral representation. While quotas enable women to overcome the barriers that would otherwise exclude them from electoral politics, they may also create resistance against women trying to increase their parliamentary representation beyond the stipulated quota level (Kelly 2010).

International support

Beyond the efforts of Pacific Island countries themselves, women's participation in politics has received increased regional attention from intergovernmental institutions, academic institutions and multilateral and bilateral development agencies operating in the region. Studies have been commissioned to better understand barriers to women's political participation, programs have been developed to assist the ambitions of women candidates, and increased media attention has been devoted to the women in politics agenda. The Pacific Islands Forum, Regional agencies of UNDP and UN Women, advisory bodies such as the Canberra-based Centre for Democratic Institutions and Australian and New Zealand aid agencies are working in partnership with each other and with Pacific civil society networks to develop programs that will increase women's political participation (See the the tools and resources section for details). These programs have increased awareness of the lack of female representation in Pacific Parliaments as well as deliberation on how to remedy the status quo. Overall, increased information, financial commitment and practical programming by international agencies are helping to build regional momentum for reform.

Civil Society Support

Participation within faith-based, women's and labour-oriented civil society organisations has provided an important training ground for Pacific Island Women with political

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according to the party list order. In Wallis and Futuna a fragmented party system means that there have been up to 29 parties contesting 20 seats at a given election and only 1 or 2 winning more than two seats.

aspirations. Trade union involvement has proved a particularly effective pathway to achieve Labour Party endorsement in Fiji, and enabled figures such as 'Atu Emberson Bain (a former senator) and Lavinia Padarath (former Minister for Women, Culture and Social Welfare) to achieve political representation. Additionally, some women's organisations have worked in national and regional capacities to support the political empowerment of women. For example, since its formation in the 1980s, the Fiji Women's Rights Movement has regularly audited the policy platforms of major political parties competing for office prior to election, examining these parties' commitments to women's political representation and how their policies will impact on the standing of women more generally (George 2012b). The women's organisation Vois Blong Meri has performed a similar information dissemination role in Solomon Islands.

Many Pacific Island countries have National Councils of Women (NCWs) (e.g. Fiji, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Tonga, Kirbati, PNG,) that represent the diverse range of women's groups active in each national context. These councils often have strong working relationships with government machineries for women and work closely with them on key aspects of gender policy. Regional observers have noted the constructive role that NCWs might play in helping to promote greater awareness of the women in politics issue by building government support for electoral reforms that might assist women's political prospects and popular (female) support for prospective women candidates (Yee 2009). Yet these assessments also ignore the breadth of interests that are often brought together under the NCW umbrella and the divisions and organisational competitiveness that sometimes occurs as a result. These divisions have often undermined the broader political impact of NCWs and their ability to promote gender sensitive reform (Yee 2009, George 2012b).

Despite these challenges, NCWs in 7 Pacific Island states (Fiji, Tuvalu, PNG, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Cook Islands, and Tonga) have formed a regional network, PACFAW, which seeks to highlight the benefits of women's political empowerment as part of its broader commitment to advancing women's status. The Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development (APWLD 2011) has also worked with regional civil society groups toward this goal. However, momentum has proved hard to sustain within these regional networks. In the past five years the PACFAW governance program appears to have stalled with little recent evidence of targeted outputs. Similarly the APWLD appears to have restricted its outreach into the region as demonstrated by its 2011 Timor-Leste regional conference on the women in politics that attracted participation from only Fiji and PNG. This contrasts with the increasing regional momentum that has been generated by UNDP and UN Women agencies based in the Pacific on this issue. To avoid the accusation that these programs are 'imported', Pacific governments need to institutionally support regional civil society initiatives.

Legislative Track Record

Women parliamentarians do not always enact inclusive, gender-focused political agendas even when they are charged with overseeing government machineries for women. Fiji's Minister for Women between 2001 and 2006, Asenaca Caucau, often made public statements that admonished women for pursuing professional ambitions and neglecting familial responsibilities. As part of a strongly nationalist Indigenous bloc within the parliament, she also used parliamentary privilege to make notoriously racist comments vilifying Fiji's Indian population (George 2012b, 155).

Expectations that the three female parliamentarians recently elected to PNGs parliament might support the TSM bill have likewise been disappointed. In other Pacific contexts, the fact that women parliamentarians are so few has generally meant that they have limited resources behind them even when they choose to promote transformative political agendas. This helps explain the failure of Dame Carol Kidu's first TSM bill in PNG in 2011.

Pacific Women's legislative track record: A Francophone success story

Developments in New Caledonia and French Polynesia provide cause for optimism, though it is still hard for women to gain traction on gender issues within the parliament or to access high-level appointments within government. The increase in women's political representation in these territories due to parity provisions adopted in 2001 have improved substantive representation as well as descriptive representation of women. Women's have brought a new seriousness to the role of political representative in these assemblies and a dedication to questions of financial management and parliamentary committee work (Bargel et al 2007). In New Caledonia women's increased participation has allowed them to mobilise state resources to fund a series of agencies devoted to women's well-being known as "la secteur de la Condition Féminine". They have also enabled women to assume high political office. Between 2004 and 2008 an indigenous Kanak woman, Déwé Gorodé, held the office of Vice President in New Caledonia, and a European women, Marie-Noëlle Thémeraeau held the office of territorial President from 2004 until 2007. Déwé Gorodé currently serves in the current territorial assembly as government Minister for Culture, Citizenship and Women's Affairs.

Table 2 indicates the number of women who hold ministerial office within Pacific Island government. Aside from New Caledonia, women are generally given typically "femininised" ministerial portfolios such Health, Welfare, Culture, Education and Community Development as has been the experience worldwide until recently. Women have not been entrusted with areas of ministerial responsibility considered to have high prestige and require more technical skill, such as Finance, Treasury, Trade or Foreign Policy (Franceschet and Piscopo 2008).

Table 2: Pacific women currently holding Ministerial Office

Country	No.	Ministries
American Samoa	0	
Bougainville	1	Minister for Culture and Tourism
Cook Islands	0	
Fiji	0	
French Polynesia	1	Culture, Family, and Status of Women
Kiribati	2	Vice President; Minister of Education
Marshall Islands	1	Minister of Education
New Caledonia	1	Minister for Culture, Citizenship and Women's affairs
Niue	1	Minister for Health and Community
Palau	0	
Papua New Guinea	1	Minister for Community Development
Solomon Islands	0	
Tonga	1	Minister for Education
Tuvalu	1	Minister for Home Affairs and Rural Development

Many barriers restrict women's meaningful participation in Pacific politics but they can be challenged. First, the energies of women's organizations and civil society organizations must be more effectively harnessed toward encouraging positive national and regional debate about the desirability of increasing women's participation in governance. International agencies tend often to focus chiefly on increasing the electoral and parliamentary skills of prospective women political candidates and encouraging the emergence of women leaders. However, engagement with women's organizations and civil society organizations o (with strong records on reform in areas such as violence against women, the need for women's machineries within government and CEDAW ratification) on the women in politics issue will likely generate a greater level of popular acceptance of potential women parliamentarians. Local civil society organizations advocating the benefits of women in decision-making will also help to challenge the idea that this is an 'international' imported agenda.

Second, there is urgent need for more informed debate about the benefits of gender quotas and temporary special measures that might assist the electoral success of women since they are often viewed with suspicion across the region and frequently misunderstood. For instance, the noteworthy successes achieved by women in the Pacific's francophone territories need to be given much greater regional attention in civil society, aid and development and academic circles than it currently merits (George 2012b). The important

lesson relevant for the whole Pacific region from the Francophone territories is that women can achieve innovative gender sensitive reform through legislation and policy when they have a critical mass of representation inside the parliament.

Third, the development of networks of male political advocates supporting women's political empowerment is vital to women's future political success. Across the region, political gains for women are initially only made possible when male political leaders are willing to recognize the need for reform. The example of Samoa is instructive in this regard and contrasts with the lack-lustre response to TSM propositions in the PNG parliament. Programs working exclusively with potential women candidates and those aspiring to positions of community or political leadership should be expanded to include men. Working with male leaders to demonstrate to them where and how their own political ambitions could be assisted by the promotion of women would help to break down their resistance. Male political leaders might be harnessed to help drive national agendas of electoral reform to increase women's participation in electoral politics. Moreover, individual male mentors could be trained to help develop the political acumen of women decision-makers. There are many possibilities for raising women's political participation in the Pacific and the political opportunities are open for this advocacy and learning across the region.

TOOLS AND REFERENCES

Tools below were selected for their usefulness in gauging the situation for gender equity and women's political participation by country and región from both grassroots and national levels.

The references below were those quoted in the report and sorted by region

Gender Measuring Tools

The following are global measures that are useful in gauging the regional or country performance on gender equity.

Women in National Parliaments: Inter-Parliamentary Union

IPU maintains a database of women's representation in national parliaments and a program to assist women parliamentarians around the world.

http://www.ipu.org/iss-e/women.htm

http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm

Quota Project: global database of quotas for women

The Database provides information on the various types of quotas in existence today, detailing the percentages and targets in countries where they are applicable. This Database is intended as a working research tool. That is, it will continue to expand as more information becomes available and is verified. Only countries with electoral gender quotas will be found on this web site.

http://www.quotaproject.org/

UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) Tool

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) maintained by UNDP, shows the loss in human development due to inequality between female and male achievements (this Index replaces the Gender related Development Index and Gender Empowerment Index). The GII reflects gender-based inequalities across three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity. Reproductive health is measured by maternal mortality and adolescent fertility rates; empowerment is measured by the share of parliamentary seats held by each gender and attainment at secondary and higher education by each gender; and economic activity is measured by the labour market participation rate for each gender.

UNDP (2011) Human Development Report, Indices and Data, The Gender Inequality Index (GII) Accessed http://hdr.undp.org/en/statistics/gii/

Social Watch Gender Indicator: Gender Equity Index (GEI) Tool

Since 2007 Social Watch has been developing the Gender Equity Index (GEI) to make gender inequities more visible and to monitor the evolution in the different countries of the world. The GEI is based on information available that can be compared internationally, and it makes it possible to classify countries and rank them in accordance with a selection of gender inequity indicators in three dimensions, education, economic participation and empowerment. The way the GEI is calculated is a response to the need to reflect all situations that are unfavourable to women. Social Watch measures the gap between women and men, not their wellbeing. Thus, a country in which young men and women have equal access to the university receives a value of 100 on this particular indicator. In the same fashion, a country in which boys and girls are equally barred from completing primary education would also be awarded a value of 100. This does not mean that the quality of education in both cases is the same. It just establishes that, in both cases girls are not less educated than boys.

The Gender Equity Index (GEI) measures the gap between women and men in education, the economy and political empowerment. Social Watch computes a value for the gender gap in each of the three areas in a scale from 0 (when for example no women is educated at all and all men are) to 100 (perfect equality). The GEI, in turn, is the simple average of the three dimensions. In Education, GEI looks at the gender gap in enrolment at all levels and in literacy; economic participation computes the gaps in income and employment and empowerment measures the gaps in highly qualified jobs, parliament and senior executive positions.

http://www.socialwatch.org/node/14365

International Labour Organisation: Global Employment Trends for Women 2012

This report examines the conditions of women's engagement in the labour market, by estimating and analysing five key gaps, or gender differentials, between women and men which disadvantage women: in unemployment, in employment, in labour force participation, in vulnerability, and in sectoral and occupational segregation.

http://www.ilo.org/global/research/global-reports/global-employment-trends/WCMS_195449/lang--en/index.htm

Asia Pacific Region Tools

United Nations Women Asia and Pacific Office

http://asiapacific.unwomen.org/

ASEAN Confederation of Women's Organisations (ACWO)

Framework used to bring together women's organisations in the ASEAN region

http://www.acwo.org/

Asia Pacific Women Watch-Linked Organisations

http://www.apww-slwngof.org/index.php?option=com_weblinks&view=category&id=6%3Aorganisations&Itemid=34

The Asia-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW)

http://www.arrow.org.my/

East Asia Tools

Asian Association of Women's Studies Links

Many links to Korean and China Women's Organisations

http://kncw.or.kr/

All-China Women's Federation (English websites)

http://www.womenofchina.cn/html/womenofchina/node/80-1.htm

http://www.women.org.cn/english/index.htm

National Alliance of Taiwanese Women's Associations

http://www.natwa.org.tw/

Republic of Korea--National Council of Women

http://kncw.or.kr/

New Japan Women's Association – Shin Nihon Fujin no Kai (Shinfujin)

http://www.shinfujin.gr.jp/c_4_english/1_what/index.html

South East Asia Tools

Regional Overview of CEDAW Action in SEAsia
http://cedaw-seasia.org/regional_overview.html

Indonesian Women's Organizations

Kongres Wanita Indonesia (Indonesian Women's Congress) (KOWANI)

http://www.kowani.or.id/

Aisyiyah (a large religious membership-based organization)

http://aisyiyah.or.id/

Solidaritas Perempuan (Women's Solidarity)

http://www.solidaritasperempuan.org

Timor-Leste Women's Congress Rede Feto (with list of 24 members)

http://redefeto.com/member/

Philippines GABRIELA Women's Network (and members list)

http://gabriela_p.tripod.com/home.html

http://gabriela_p.tripod.com/1-orgprofile/members.htm

Singapore Council of Women's Organisations (and members list)

http://www.scwo.org.sg/

http://www.scwo.org.sg/index.php/membership/our-members-alphabetically

National Council of Women of Thailand (NCWT)
Focal point for coordinating, promoting and supporting all the activities of women's organizations throughout Thailand.

http://www.thaiwomen.or.th/en.html

Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD)

Local NGO cooperating with government, civil and private sector

http://cwpd.net

National Council of Women's Organizations, Malaysia (NCWM)

Formed in 1963 as a consultative body with 72 member organisations

http://ncwo.womencommunity.net

Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation (MWAF)

http://www.mwaf.org.mm

Singapore Council of Women's Organizations (SCWO)

The national coordinating body for women's organisations in Singapore.

www.scwo.org.sg

Vietnam Women's Union (VWU)

Founded in 1930, the VWU represents all women and promotes women's rights, advancement and equality.

http://www.hoilhpn.org.vn

South Asia Tools and Resources

www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm

http://www.manushi.in

http://wcd.nic.in/

http://www.guide2womenleaders.com/

http://www.ifes.org/Content/Events/2010/Promoting-Womens-Political-Participation-in-South-Asia-Afghanistan-Nepal-and-India.aspx?p=1

http://asiafoundation.org/in-asia/2012/07/11/south-asia-women-parliamentarians-take-lead/

http://genderinglobalgovernancenet-work.net/comment/the-world-economic-forums-global-gender-gap-report-a-critical-commentary/

http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/Mem/Women_MPs/Mem/About_Us/Organisation/Commonwealth_Women_Parliamentarians/Commonwealth_Women_Parliamentarians.aspx?hkey=4bf32fba-284a-43f8-9016-a996f8ced2ec

http://www.cpahq.org/cpahq/Mem/Resources/Documents/Gender_Issues/Mem/Document%20Library/Gender_Issues/Documents_on_Gender_Issues.aspx?hkey=bc99ca33-b7ba-46e6-a592-e16f85c0f656

Women and Politics: Realities and Myths

   http://www.unicef.org/sowc07/docs/sowc07_figure_4_2.pdf

Human Development in South Asia 2000, Human Development Report 2003, http://www.mhhdc.org/html/ahdr.htm

Electing Dragons, Women, Power and Politics, International Museum of Women,

   http://www.imow.org/wpp/stories/viewStory?storyId=1699

National Women's Association of Bhutan, About NWAB

   http://www.nwabbhutan.org.bt/aboutus.html

Pacific Tools and Resources

Space on the mat http://wilgpacific.org/

Website examining the roles and profiles of Pacific Women in Local Government

http://womensuffrage.org/

Website which includes valuable statistics on women's suffrage in Oceania

http://www.pacific.clgf.org.uk/index.cfm

Commonwealth Local government project in the Pacific Islands

http://www.pacwip.org/

Pacific Women in Politics. Site includes data bases, news items and a range of other resources

http://www.undppc.org.fj/pages.cfm/our-work/democratic-governance/strenthening-parliaments-democratic-institution/promoting-women-parliament/

UNDP (Pacific) Outline of program priorities to promote Pacific women's parliamentary representation. Includes a range of resources on TSM's, lobbying, campaigning

http://www.unwomenpacific.org/pages.cfm/our-programmes/advancing-gender-justice/gepg-design/

UN Women Gender Equality in Political Governance Programme

http://www.ausaid.gov.au/HotTopics/Pages/Display.aspx?QID=791

Outline of AusAID programme to empower Pacific Women – 3 Pillar program including a focus on women in decision-making

http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/__GENDER_Home.htm

Centre for Democratic Institutions – Gender and Political Leadership Program

http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/.SI/2011-12/D/2011_12_RES-PPS9_SOLS_WMN_PPLS_SRVY_McMurray/2012_01_PPS_CM_SIPS.pdf

Policy paper on perceptions of women in electoral politics Solomon Islands

http://www.cdi.anu.edu.au/.AP/2010-11/D/2010_11_RES_PPS8_BGV.SOLS_Kelly/PPS_2010-02_NK_BGV_SI_FIN.pdf

Policy paper on Bougainville elections 2010

http://www.forumsec.org/pages.cfm/newsroom/publications/womans-place-in-house.html

Pacific Island Forum Secretariat Report from 2006 on Pacific Women in Politics

https://crawford.anu.edu.au/rmap/devnet/devnet/gen/gen_civil.pdf

Series of articles from 2002 examining gender, civil society and political participation in the Pacific Islands

http://www.fdc.org.au/data/Briefing_Note_No_11_-_Final_e-version.pdf

Foundation for Development Corporation Women in Politics Briefing note.

http://www.spc.int/hdp/index2.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=76&Itemid=44

Secretariat of the Pacific Community report on impact of Parity provisions in the Francophone Pacific Island territories.

http://www.undppc.org.fj/_resources/article/files/TCL_Executive%20Summary1.pdf

UNDP CEDAW compliance report Pacific Island countries

http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/presscenter/pressreleases/2011/11/03/2011-human-development-report-pacific-islands-progress-jeopardized-by-inequalities-and-environmental-threats.html

Human development report – Progress in Pacific Islands 2011

http://www.spc.int/prism/data

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