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United Nations Development Programme

## DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE:  
LESSONS LEARNED IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

### COUNTRY REPORT FOR BOLIVIA<sup>1</sup>



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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AC</b>	Constituent Assembly	<b>CPE</b>	State Political Constitution
<b>ACOBOL</b>	Association of Councilwomen of Bolivia	<b>CSCIB</b>	Bolivian Confederation of Intercultural Peasants Unions
<b>AECID</b>	Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation	<b>CSMCIB</b>	Workers' Confederation of Women from Intercultural Communities of Bolivia
<b>AIOC</b>	Indigenous Native Farmer Autonomy	<b>CSUTCB</b>	Unified Syndical Confederation of Rural Workers of Bolivia
<b>ALD</b>	Departmental Legislative Assembly	<b>DANIDA</b>	Danish International Development Agency
<b>ALP</b>	Plurinational Legislative Assembly	<b>DFID</b>	United Kingdom Department for International Development
<b>AMUPEI</b>	Women for Equity and Equality	<b>EMB</b>	Electoral Management Body
<b>AND</b>	National Democratic Action	<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>APG</b>	Guarani People Association	<b>FBDM</b>	Bolivian Foundation for Multi-Party Democracy
<b>BC</b>	Birth Certificate	<b>FENATRAHOG</b>	National Federation of Domestic Workers of Bolivia
<b>CA</b>	Constitutional Assembly	<b>FES</b>	Friedrich Ebert Foundation
<b>CIAG</b>	Inter-Agency Gender Committee	<b>FORUM</b>	Women's Political Forum of Bolivia
<b>CIDA</b>	Canadian International Development Cooperation Agency	<b>FUN</b>	National Unity Front
<b>CIDOB</b>	Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia	<b>FUNDAPPAC</b>	Foundation to Support the Parliament and Citizen Participation
<b>CM</b>	Women's Coordinating Office	<b>GIZ</b>	German Agency for International Development
<b>CMIB</b>	Indigenous Women's Federation of Beni	<b>GPECS</b>	UNDP Global Programme for Electoral Cycle Support
<b>CONAMAQ</b>	National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyo	<b>GRUS</b>	Group of Partners for the Development of Bolivia
<b>CNAMIB</b>	National Federation of Indigenous Women of Bolivia (CNMIB)	<b>GTG</b>	Gender Technical Group
<b>CNE</b>	National Electoral Court	<b>ID</b>	Identification Card
<b>CNMCIQB 'BS'</b>	National Confederation of Indigenous Farmer Women of Bolivia, 'Bartolina Sisa'	<b>IDB</b>	Inter-American Development Bank
<b>CNTCP</b>	National Federation of Self-Employed Workers		
<b>CP</b>	Popular Consensus		

## LIST OF ACRONYMS (CONT'D)

<b>IDEA</b>	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance	<b>OAS</b>	Organization of American States
<b>KAS</b>	Konrad Adenauer Foundation	<b>ODIHR</b>	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
<b>LERT</b>	Law on Temporary Electoral System	<b>OSCE</b>	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
<b>LL</b>	Lessons learned	<b>PEI</b>	Institutional Strategic Plan
<b>LPP</b>	Law on Popular Participation	<b>PR</b>	Proportional representation
<b>MAE</b>	Highest Executive Authority	<b>PRONAGOB</b>	National Governance Programme
<b>MAIPO</b>	Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous Peoples	<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>MAS</b>	Movement towards Socialism	<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>MBL</b>	Free Bolivia Movement	<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal	<b>TED</b>	Departmental Electoral Tribunal
<b>MDG3</b>	Fund of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs for MDG3	<b>TSE</b>	Supreme Electoral Tribunal
<b>MIR</b>	Left Revolutionary Movement	<b>UMPABOL</b>	Union of Parliamentary Women of Bolivia
<b>MNR</b>	National Revolutionary Movement	<b>UNCT</b>	United Nation Country Team
<b>MP</b>	Member of Parliament	<b>UNDPA</b>	United Nations Department of Political Affairs
<b>MSM</b>	Fearless Movement Political Party	<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>NDI</b>	National Democratic Institute	<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>NED</b>	National Endowment for Democracy	<b>VERDES</b>	Social Truth and Democracy
<b>NGO</b>	Non-Governmental Organization		
<b>NPC</b>	New Citizen Power, Santa Cruz		



# 1. INTRODUCTION

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Despite having their political rights fully recognized since 1952, Bolivian women have been marginalized in the country's political processes. However, since 1985 and the wave of democratization in Latin America, Bolivian women have played an integral role in the country's quest for democracy. The past two decades have seen progressive growth in women's political inclusion, progress influenced by women's ongoing struggle for equal rights and by legal reforms in electoral politics. The presence of international assistance providers has also been influential.

This case study<sup>2</sup> aims to identify lessons learned in the area of gender mainstreaming and women's empowerment in electoral assistance programming in Bolivia over the past 10 years. This includes support provided to the Electoral Management Body (EMB) and to women in their capacity as candidates and voters. UNDP and many other organizations provided support to a range of key institutions that have laid the basis of democratic governance and elections.

This report covers three moments in Bolivian women's political and electoral struggle for their rights. The first deals with advocacy for

electoral reform, which started in 1996 and led to the adoption of quotas for women in the electoral law. A second period built on these advances to secure new commitments to women's political participation before, during and after the 2008 Constituent Assembly. Most of the focus is on the period 2009-2010, when political and electoral post-constitutional reforms recognized and applied the rule of parity and alternating of candidates on electoral lists.

## 1.1. Background to Political Participation in Bolivia

Bolivia was one of many countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean that were swept up by a wave of democratization in the 1980s. The transition to democracy was not an easy one. Bolivia has a long history of instability and a succession of military and authoritarian regimes that violated citizens' civil and political rights. Democratic electoral processes were established in 1982 and Bolivia experienced seven different government administrations by 2009. Bolivian women have been active participants in this evolving political framework; however, they have not always enjoyed equal access to formal political spaces.

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<sup>2</sup> The research was based on a preliminary review of literature and various documents to identify and convey the political and institutional complexity in the country, the key actors within the political process and the projects funded by international assistance agencies. Finally, interviews were conducted with 30 stakeholders. This included representatives and officials responsible for programmes and projects at the UN, UNDP and other international assistance agencies, current and former EMB officials, female members of political parties, women legislators and elected officials, representatives of associations that support locally elected women, female members of NGOs and experts in the study and analysis of democratic governance in Bolivia.

Bolivian society has historically been characterized by deep social divisions between the criollo elite and the indigenous majority (who constitute between 50 percent and 70 percent of the population). These divisions have defined the framework of political change in the country throughout much of the 20th and 21st Centuries. In the 1950s, the Revolutionary Nationalist Movement (MNR) spearheaded the Bolivian National Revolution to address these inequalities. The sweeping reforms they introduced included universal suffrage in 1956, which opened the door to women's political participation. However, 12 years of turbulent reform left the country divided and Bolivia entered a 20-year period of military rule. It was not until 1982 that a non-violent social movement led by workers/union members, university students and private business owners succeeded in ousting the military. On 5 October 1982, the Bolivian military accepted the civilian-engineered political solution (*Salida*) and agreed to turn over power to the previously elected president and the 1980 Congress, thus launching the modern era of democratic governance.

Multi-party elections were held in 1985 and Bolivia quickly became "a much-lauded development model that successfully followed a path of democratization, stabilization, and (neo) liberal economic reform"<sup>3</sup> for the following 15 years. However, by the

early 2000s, new social pressures and a series of political crises marked another period of turmoil, culminating in the resignation of the elected president, Gonzalo Sanchez de Lozada, and his appointed successor, Carlos Mesa, in 2005.

The Bolivian Constituent Assembly (AC) convened on 6 August 2006 to draft a new national constitution and approved the new Political Constitution of the State on 9 December 2007. The constitution was put to a national referendum and went into force on 7 February 2009. The new political moment also signalled a growing role for the government in the national economy, including important revisions in economic, social and drug/coca policies<sup>4</sup> under the leadership of Bolivia's first president of indigenous origin, Evo Morales. These changes have been polarizing. On the one hand, the Morales administration has had impressive successes, including the approval of the constitution by 61 percent in national referendum and his strong election and re-election results. On the other hand, the private business sector and regional groups seeking more autonomy from the central state and traditional elite have contested the sweeping changes.

In all, elections have been held regularly in the democratic period that began in 1982.<sup>5</sup> General elections were held every four to

<sup>3</sup> Jonas Wolff, "Challenges to Democracy Promotion: the Case of Bolivia," *Democracy & Rule of Law*. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. March 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Wolff, 2011.

<sup>5</sup> In the past 30 years, eight general elections have been held for president, vice president and members of the legislature and there have been nine municipal elections. Furthermore, due to the political crisis and the transition and implementation of a new constitutional order, there were the special election of members of the Constituent Assembly, the election of nine prefects of departments, and a choice of nine governors and departmental assemblies between 2004 and October 2011. In October 2011, there were elections for officers of four institutions that make up the judiciary. Moreover, since the adoption of the constitutional referendum as participatory democratic institution in 2004, the electoral body administered four referendums.



five years beginning in 1985.<sup>6</sup> The 1985 Organic Law of Municipalities restored local mayor elections and created a legislative body, the municipal council, in each municipality. The first local elections were held in 1987. The 1994 Law of Popular Participation (LPP) introduced a profound decentralization reform at the local level. Since then, more than 300 municipal local governments have been created in urban and rural areas. Under the LLP, the central government allocated autonomous resources and promoted participatory local planning and budgeting opportunities for local populations. This reform introduced accessible and inclusive democratic processes for indigenous and peasant populations and had a profound impact on democracy and women's participation in subsequent years.

Departmental elections for Prefects began in 2006 and elections for Departmental Legislative Assemblies (ALD) began in 2010 in each of Bolivia's nine departments, recognized as subnational government levels within the state's new territorial structures.

## 1.2. Situational Analysis of Women's Political Participation

An important feature of Bolivian democratic development has been the expansion of political representation, with the inclusion of women, indigenous peoples and farming sectors that had been historically excluded. The significant advances in women's participation were influenced by the Beijing Conference in 1995, women's movements in different regions of the world and sustained

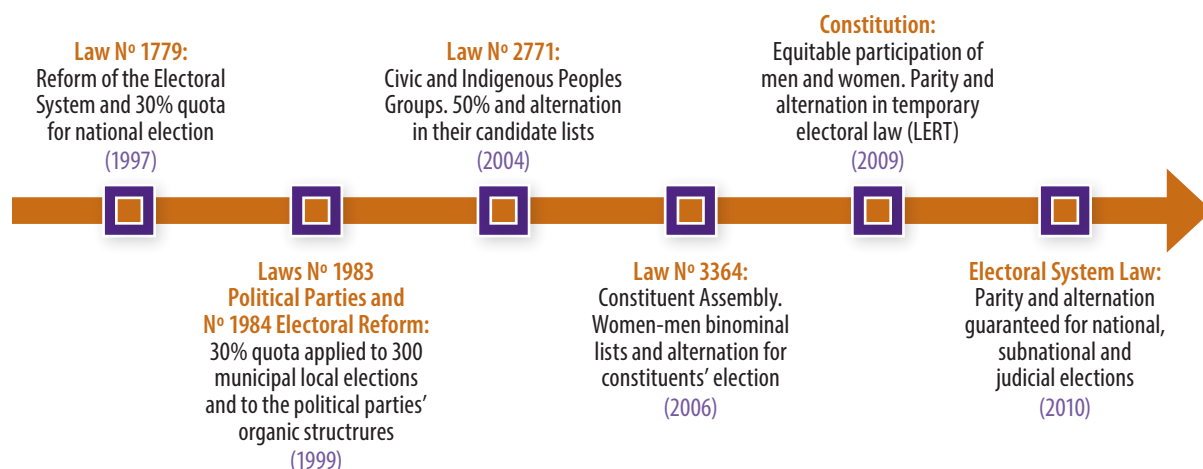
mobilization by Bolivian women. From the early 1990s, women fought to close the gap between legal equality and the reality still characterized by exclusion and marginal participation in political representation and leadership.

### Electoral Quotas

In Bolivia, as in other countries around the world, the introduction of universal suffrage (formal equality) in 1952 was insufficient for ensuring full and equal participation by men and women, indigenous and other groups (substantive equality). Although Bolivia inaugurated a democratic cycle in 1982 with elections and multiparty competition, it took another 15 years to introduce electoral quotas (temporary measures) and 25 years for the reality of parity (permanent outcome that may require temporary measures to achieve) to approach the ideal (on the next page).

The 1997 Law on Electoral System Reform introduced a 30 percent quota for women on candidates' lists for the presidential and parliamentary election. A specific article stated that one of every three persons on candidate lists for the Lower House (Cámara de Diputados) should be a woman, which applied only to half of the 130 seats elected under the proportional representation (PR) electoral system. Of the 130 seats, 53 correspond to seven multimember departmental constituencies elected through PR, 70 single-member departmental constituencies elected by simple majority and seven constituencies reserved for indigenous MPs. Evidence links the lower participation

<sup>6</sup> The four-year period was extended to five years after 1987. The electoral cycle was reduced back to four years in 2005 and 2009 in order to implement the new constitution



and representation of women with single-member constituencies, along with other factors.

The 1999 electoral reform introduced a 30 percent quota for women in municipal elections and in political parties' structures. Following the constitutional reforms introduced between 2002 and 2004, the Law on Civic and Indigenous Peoples Groups established for the first time the principles of parity and alternation to be applied to candidate lists. The new constitution and Electoral System Law formalized and guaranteed the principle of parity and alternation between male and female candidates in national, departmental, municipal and judicial electoral processes. The 2009 Constitution enshrined these very progressive values from the point of view of gender and ethnicity.<sup>7</sup> Overall, the quota system in Bolivia has been progressively refined to

bring closer the desired outcome of parity in parliament and other state structures. The evolution is a reflection of the shared objectives by a coalition of diverse sectors of women's movements and organizations in Bolivia. Through their efforts, women's participation in the structures of political power has steadily increased.

### Impact of Electoral Reforms

From 1982 to 2009, only 83 of 910 deputies (9 percent) were women and only 9 of 182 senators (5 percent) were women elected throughout this period. In 1993, prior to the introduction of the electoral quotas, women's representation reached a historical high of just under 9 percent. In 1997, with the application of the 30 percent quota of women on candidate lists, women's participation rose to 13 incumbent and 28 substitute deputies, or 11.5 percent of the Parliament.<sup>8</sup> By 2009,

<sup>7</sup> Stephanie Rousseau. "Indigenous and Feminist Movements at the Constituent Assembly in Bolivia: Locating the Representation of Indigenous Women." *Latin American Research Review*. 46(2), 2011.

<sup>8</sup> In Bolivia, party lists include candidates to principal public officials, also known as Incumbent or main candidate (M) and their corresponding alternates (A) or substitute. This pair-based logic is translated into continuous M-A-M-A lists. The parity principle and alternation system refer to the intercalated order of candidates, men and women, which is mandatory. While this measure has had a positive impact, its implementation has not been without drawbacks. For example, some political organizations practice 'rotation', i.e., internal agreements that, at half-term, the holder must give his/her seat to the alternate. This has been harmful to women and is one of the precipitating factors of violence against women in politics.

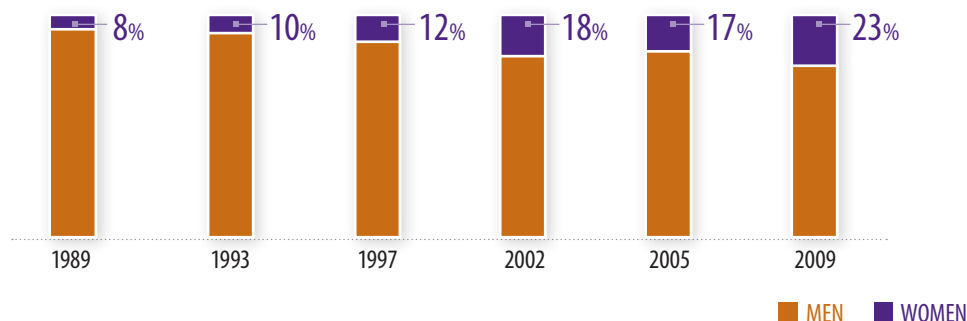
under the parity and alternation principles, over 30 percent of the Parliament (both chambers) were composed of women. The table below shows the progression in the Lower House over two decades, from 1989 to 2009.<sup>9</sup>

The progressive impact of the quota system on women's participation resulted mainly from two changes. First, the 1997 constitutional and electoral reform replaced the closed-list proportional representation (PR) system for the Lower House of the Congress with a mixed-member proportional (MMP) system. Article 60 of the reformed constitution established that 68 deputies out of 130 would be chosen by plurality rule in single-seat districts, while the remaining 62 would be chosen by party-list voting according to proportional representation in nine regional multi-seat districts.<sup>10</sup> While this reform responded to other political concerns at the time, one of its effects was to neutralize the impact that the quota could have made if

the closed-list proportional representation system had been maintained. In practice, the quota system was only applied to the candidates on lists in the nine 'multi-member' districts. Practical provisions for applying the quota to the 68 single-member seats were not developed, leading to a disappointing outcome in parliaments elected under this system.

The second factor relates to Bolivia's unique parliamentary structure where alternates (also called "substitutes") are elected for each main, principal (or "incumbent") Member of Parliament (MP). In this context, when the quota was introduced, political parties opted to designate women as candidates to the less-desirable alternate positions as a means of bypassing the quota provisions. Political parties that did not want to comply often chose to place women candidates in lower positions on the PR-closed lists and, in the uninominal races, women candidates were generally placed in districts where

### Proportion of Members in the Cámara de Diputados (Lower House)



<sup>9</sup> Observatorio de Género de la Coordinadora de la Mujer. "Participación de las Mujeres y Agenda Legislativa - Datos: representación política de mujeres - Nivel Nacional. Available at <http://www.coordinadoradelamujer.org.bo/observatorio/index.php/general2niv/mostrar/boton/2/sub/17/id/11/tem/2>, accessed July 2013.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Soberg Shugart and Martin P. Wattenberg. "Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?" Oxford Scholarship Online. November 2003.

their party was unlikely to win. Due to these two factors, it was not possible to reach a minimum representation of 30 percent of women in parliament under the provisions of the 1997 constitutional reform. However, the demand for parity and alternation in parliament continued to grow. Tables 1 and 2 illustrate the progress made.

The increased presence of women in elected political positions also reached other elective and non-elective public positions, in particular in the Constituent Assembly that rewrote the Bolivian Constitution. The Constituent Assembly was elected in 2006 with the express mandate to produce a total constitutional reform including the composition of the executive, electoral and judicial branches. The special law that convened the Assembly included a mandatory binominal

voting system for female and male candidates. This system provided for parity and required that candidates be alternated by sex on multi-member proportionally-elected lists. As a result, 34 percent of the 255 elected members of the Assembly were women and a Quechuan female farmer, Silvia Lazarte, became its president.

It is important to recognize that the promotion of the 30 percent minimum quota by the women's movement drew its inspiration and legitimacy from what took place at the municipal level. As described above, the 1995 municipal elections introduced a radical decentralization policy reform that not only created 311 municipalities as the new basis for local governance in Bolivia, but also transferred self-governing attributions and fiscal resources to these municipalities.

**Table 1:** Women's participation in the Chamber of Deputies, 1982-2009

Before quotas were introduced					Quotas and mixed electoral system			Parity & alternation
	1982	1985	1989	1993	1997	2002	2005	2009
Main	1	4	11	11	13	24	19	33
Substitute	3	7	13	19	28	28	37	97

Source: IDEA (2011), EMB and Ardaya (2006 preliminary). All figures are the number of women elected out of a total of 130 representatives.

**Table 2:** Women's participation in the Chamber of Senators, 1982-2009

Before quotas were introduced					Quotas and mixed electoral system			Parity & alternation
	1982	1985	1989	1993	1997	2002	2005	2009
Main	-	-	2	1	1	4	1	17
Substitute	2	3	2	1	9	6	10	19

Source: IDEA (2011), OE and Ardaya (2006 preliminary). Total senators: 27 (1982-2005), 36 members (2009)

The 1995 electoral results were not very encouraging for the inclusion of women though, as only 8 percent of council positions went to women.<sup>11</sup> In 1999, however, a 30 percent quota plus alternation measure were adopted for the municipal elections, and the 1999 municipal results surpassed the minimum quota: 46.6 percent candidacies for alternate members, 29.4 percent for main members, 21 women mayors elected (compared to 12 in 1995), and 32 percent council members (compared to 8.3 percent in 1995).<sup>12</sup> The positive experience of the municipal elections increased the support for the parity and alternation measures which were ultimately adopted at the national level in 2009.

### The 2009 Election Results and Impacts of Parity

After the 2009 elections, under a new constitutional framework and with the implementation of a 'zipper' system of parity-based lists, women 'main' MPs constituted 30 percent of the legislature for the first time. At the municipal level, progress continued steadily and in 2010, women secured 43 percent of municipal council seats as a result of the parity requirement. In the executive branch, the participation of women as ministers ranged from zero to two between 1993 and 2003. In 2003, women represented 25 percent of ministers, and 19 percent in 2005. Between 2006

and 2009, women accounted for 20 percent of ministers. In 2010, the first 'parity' cabinet was inaugurated under the Morales government and women were named to influential ministries such as the Ministry of Planning and Defence. Maria Cecilia Chacón became Bolivia's first Defence Minister and Ana Maria Romero was elected the second female President of the Senate. Since 2012, both chambers of the ALP are headed by women, as well as the TSE (the lead body of the EMB) and several others. Leonilda Zurita became the first female leader of the Movimiento al Socialismo (MAS) party in Cochabamba and other parties also appointed more women in leadership roles.

Women's representation has also grown in Bolivian electoral management. Change began to be noted under the National Electoral Court, the government-appointed court that oversaw elections and electoral results at all levels from 1956 to 2010. Since 2000, the Court significantly increased the number of women appointed to senior positions and reached gender parity in some departments and subnational branches. The Plurinational Electoral Authority, which replaced the Court in 2010, has carried on this trend. In the TSE, three of the six members elected by the Plurinational Legislative Assembly are women. Including the national and subnational offices of the EMB, women represent over 60 percent of the members in all nine departments. It is notable that the nine

<sup>11</sup> This figure shows a reversal compared to levels achieved in local elections under the previous centralized model. This decline came despite the progressive and more inclusive approach of the Popular Participation Act that opened the way for increased government presence and the inclusion of indigenous identities in local participatory democracy. When money and real political power were guaranteed, men became interested in becoming local authorities.

<sup>12</sup> Jimena Costa Benavides. "Women's Political Participation in Bolivia: Progress and Obstacles." Paper Presented at International IDEA's workshop 'The Implementation of Quotas: Latin American Experiences'. Lima, Peru, 23-24 February 2003.

legally mandated presidential appointments to complete the departmental electoral bodies went to women. In addition, five women serve as presidents of their Departmental Electoral Authorities.

Two decades of sustained pressure and advocacy by women's groups succeeded in adapting the electoral law reform and including women in the power structures of the state. The quota system was subsequently expanded to other sectors, e.g., since 1997, women in trade unions and neighbourhood associations have promoted minimum gender quotas for the composition and structure of their organizations.

### The Indigenous Women's Movement and the Feminist Movement

Women's movements were very influential in supporting the changes that took place in the past decades. However, it is important to recognize that Bolivian women do not always speak with one voice in support of shared objectives. Instead, within the diversity of voices, there have been two main women's movements involved in political change. On the one hand, the indigenous women's movement has been aligned with popular-sector movement for decades, engaging in hunger strikes, street protests and barricade movements in defence of land and labour rights. On the other hand, the women's movement is composed of middle-class urban women who have advanced a feminist movement through NGOs, different political parties and collective

organizations since the 1980s. This feminist movement has promoted women's human rights, gender-sensitive policy-making and the integration of women in politics and development. As described in this report, the different organizations involved in this movement have worked closely with international donor organizations promoting women's political participation and equality, which now are also supporting the indigenous and peasant women organizations empowered during the last decade.

Interestingly, much of the influence the women's movements asserted during the Constitutional Assembly (CA) negotiations was due to the collaborative approach the two blocs adopted during the process. However, the cohesion of their coalition has been eroded under the polarized political climate following the accomplishment of the constitutional agenda. Indigenous movements' rise to power with the election of Evo Morales signalled a new political moment that affected the dynamics of the Bolivian women's movement.<sup>13</sup> Specifically, the indigenous women's movement has moved into an influential position, while the feminist movement has seen its influence decline. Between 2011 and 2012, the indigenous women's movement has experienced internal conflicts resulting in a confrontation between lowland indigenous organizations and highland *aymara/quechua* women organizations. Frustration, mistrust and mutual criticism have characterized the relation between the two factions of the women's movement in recent years.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Karen Monasterios. "Bolivian Women's Movements in the MAS Era." NACLA Report on the Americas. 40(2): 33-37. 2007.

<sup>14</sup> Rousseau, 2011.





## 2. INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Through support to local women's organizations, Bolivian women in politics, and state institutions over the past three decades, UNDP and other international organizations have played an important role in promoting women's participation.

Many entities have contributed at various points to the development and strengthening of democratic institutions, especially the TSE, and to discussions about political and electoral reforms and the inclusion of women, youth and indigenous people. Bolivia is a unique case in the field of international assistance to democracy and elections. The Morales administration and the deep political changes of recent years have been polarizing for international assistance providers as well. Different donors have taken different approaches depending on their sensitivity to Morales' "serious effort to build a democracy different from the

existing Western liberal models."<sup>15</sup> Bolivia is constructing its own model of democracy, named "intercultural democracy" (see Box<sup>16</sup> on the next page), and the most effective assistance programmes are those that have supported inclusive dialogue in the political process.<sup>17</sup>

This has shaped the direction of aid and has, at times, given rise to deeply divergent strategies and some disagreement. UN programmes, which rely on requests for assistance from the state, and those of other international organizations such as International IDEA have consistently focused

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<sup>15</sup> Wolff, 2011.

<sup>16</sup> Political Constitution of the State, 2009 (Bolivia) (Hein Online World Constitutions Illustrated library 2011).

<sup>17</sup> Wolff, 2011.

## BOLIVIA - POLITICAL CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE (2009)

### Chapter One - Model of the State

#### ARTICLE 1

Bolivia is constituted as a Unitary Social State of Pluri-National Communitarian Law that is free, independent, sovereign, democratic, inter-cultural, decentralized and with autonomies. Bolivia is founded on plurality and on political, economic, juridical, cultural and linguistic pluralism in the integration process of the country.

### Chapter Three - System of Government

#### ARTICLE 11

- I. The Republic of Bolivia adopts a participatory democratic, representative and communal form of government, with equal conditions for men and women.
- II. Democracy is exercised in the following forms, which shall be developed by Law:
  1. Direct and participatory, through referendum, citizen legislative initiative, revocation of terms of office, assembly, councils and prior consultation. The assemblies and councils shall have a deliberative character in accordance with the Law.
  2. Representative, by means of the election of representatives by universal, direct and secret vote, in accordance with the Law.
  3. Communal, by means of the election, designation or nomination of the authorities and representatives pursuant to the norms and procedures of the native indigenous nations and peoples, among others, in accordance with the Law

on inclusive participation and electoral support before and after 2006. US bilateral aid was an important contributor for many years; however, following a period of “diplomatic breakdown”<sup>18</sup> in 2008, USAID closed all its democracy and governance programmes, with the exception of some municipal strengthening activities,<sup>19</sup> in 2009. Meanwhile, private organizations that provide assistance to political processes, such as the German political foundations (Stiftungen), have maintained their work in Bolivia and taken varied approaches with civil society and political parties at different levels of government. Overall, support to the EMB and political processes in the past decade has often taken place in a sensitive political context.

Assistance to promote women’s political participation has focused largely on three main areas. One area, support to the women’s NGOs that articulated Bolivian women’s demands, started three decades ago when political reform was introduced. Women’s mobilization has followed political changes in the country ever since, extending the support to a variety of grassroots (indigenous/peasant) women’s organizations. A second area, support to women candidates, was significant ahead of the CA elections and again during the general elections of 2009 and subnational elections of 2010. This support carried over after the elections to provide assistance to women elected to office and women’s legislation. Finally, the third area was in technical assistance to the electoral commission and support

<sup>18</sup> George Gray Molina. “The United States and Bolivia: Test Case for Change.” In *The Obama Administration and the Americas: Agenda for Change*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal, Theodore J. Piccone and Laurence Whitehead (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2009), 167–82, 171–76. Cited in Wolff, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> US Department of State, Congressional Budget Justification: Foreign Operations 2011, Washington DC. Cited in Wolff. 2011.

to women's political demands related to electoral processes. These three areas are discussed in more detail below.

## 2.1. Support to Women's Organizations

Sustained international assistance committed to the agendas of Beijing and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has reinforced the advocacy of Bolivian women and their organizations since the 1980s and especially in recent years. International assistance entities have enabled the operation and organizational development of some of these NGOs to help them channel the talents of organized women's groups to advocate for political rights. Today, there is a broad constellation of organizations whose missions include the strengthening of women's political participation. This section explains the assistance provided to these groups as they evolved from the early days of reform through the CA period and beyond.

### Mobilizing the Women's Movement and Reinforcing Parity Rule - 1996-2009

The women's movement began advocating and organizing many years before the introduction of the parity and alternation measures and has benefited from long-term partnerships of international organizations. A pioneer in this field, the Women's Coordinating Office (CM), is a network of private development institutions and individuals that has worked to promote women's political participation in Bolivia since 1984. With the support of Sida, CIDA and the Embassy of Denmark, the CM has established partnerships with key women's social organizations and with political decision

makers to coordinate the efforts of multiple women's interests groups. The CM network consists of 26 NGOs with nationwide coverage, which generate learning-based exchange processes, research, and advocacy and communication strategies to promote public mobilization, legislation and policy, and justice for women. For nearly 30 years, CM has promoted opportunities for dialogue and discussion among diverse women's organizations with the aim of contributing to the establishment of a plural and diverse women's movement.

In association with the Women's Political Forum of Bolivia, as well as other organizations and networks, the CM managed and executed a major project that supported the women's movement agenda before and during the AC, 'Women at the Constituent Assembly', funded by Sida (Sweden), CIDA (Canada) and the Embassy of Denmark. The CM has also advanced and held politicians to their promises in this area. For example, when Evo Morales called for women to take



up 50 percent of all government positions, the CM, with the support of International IDEA and other local partners, launched a campaign with the slogan “We Share Your Dream, Mr. President”, which contributed to the drafting and approval of Article 9 of the Temporary Electoral Law (LERT) dealing with equal opportunities for women and men.<sup>20</sup>

A product of Bolivia’s rapidly evolving political dynamics, the Women’s Political Forum of Bolivia (Forum), was founded in 1996 by women political party members and parliamentarians supporting the quota strategy. The Forum promoted the strengthening of political leaders in various national, departmental and municipal levels and played a key role in the incorporation of affirmative action and a quota proposal between 1997 and 2007. The Forum did not have a permanent financing source like the CM. However, during the quota campaign, the Forum had the support of the government’s pro-gender equity mechanism committed with the Beijing Plan of Action. Later, between 2002 and 2009, the Forum received some financial support from the National Democratic Institute (NDI), UNDP and International IDEA and private German foundations, as discussed below.

Since 1997 and during the 1999 elections, the Forum has supported processes seeking to consolidate the Union of Parliamentary Women of Bolivia (UMPABOL) and supporting the creation of the Association of Councilwomen of Bolivia (ACOBOL) with female politicians from several regions on the basis of departmental forums. The

Forum was integrally involved in the CM-led ‘Women at the Constituent Assembly’ programme mentioned above. Since 2008, the Forum’s influence and activities have declined, in part due to the collapse of the past party system, the polarized political context, the lack of funding and the emerging prominence of the grassroots indigenous and peasant organizations aligned to the powerful official party headed by the president.

For every national and subnational election since 1997, a vigilant women’s movement composed of the CM, the Forum and other women organizations has monitored candidate list submission. Women benefit from agreements that allow multi-party commissions to enter electoral offices to review and ensure compliance with the electoral law governing candidate lists. The organization of the women’s movement has allowed for this vigilance and has enjoyed the support of international actors for more than a decade.

In addition to the organized elected women’s organizations, other important non-governmental groups have also made significant contributions. Women Networking for Equity and Equality is a nationwide network of civil society organizations and diverse political activists working to strengthen the women’s movement in order to monitor and enforce public policy for women’s rights and protections. Since its official inception in 2000, it has focused its activities on training and capacity-building for leaders of political and social organizations.

<sup>20</sup> International IDEA. “Advocacy triggers tangible electoral results in Bolivia.” Available at [http://www.idea.int/publications/15\\_years\\_supporting\\_democracy/tangible\\_results\\_bolivia.cfm](http://www.idea.int/publications/15_years_supporting_democracy/tangible_results_bolivia.cfm), accessed May 2013.

In 2004, the efforts of this broad coalition of organizations, civil society advocacy and education programmes paid off with the introduction of the representation rules in the laws on Civic and indigenous Peoples Groups, the Constituent Assembly Special Law on the Constitution, and the Law on the Temporary Electoral System (LRET). Groups worked to ensure that the parity and alternation measures were respected, that the population was educated about the issues and that women were encouraged to step forward as candidates.

In this context, since the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS) party became a dominant political force, many indigenous and peasant women's organizations have gained visibility and become empowered political actors. The National Confederation of Indigenous Farmer Women of Bolivia (CNMCIQB-BS), the National Federation of Indigenous Women of Bolivia and the Workers' Confederation of Women from Intercultural Communities of Bolivia have played the most significant role has been played.<sup>21</sup> In spite of the diverse political perspectives of these strong and massive organizations, they ultimately supported and unanimously enforced the general women's movement agenda before, during and after the AC. Since then, their leaders have become candidates, MPs and ministers of the Morales government administration. Beyond their symbolic significance, the influence of these appointments continues to develop. For example, the

rapid promotion of peasant representatives, particularly women, has met with some challenges due to the women's low levels of education, inexperience with political leadership and ongoing social marginalization. Nevertheless, there has been a slow, but progressive strengthening of indigenous women leaders at the local level and through the public system.

### UNDP

In 2001, UNDP established the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund (DGTTF) to provide country offices with discretionary funds to explore innovative approaches in democratic governance in politically sensitive environments. Six DGTTF programmes were run in Bolivia between 2002 and 2007, five of which incorporated gender issues and one of which was exclusively focused on strengthening women's political participation. The gender programme, which ran from May to December 2002 following local elections, was intended to help women to function as municipal councillors in 325 municipalities. Although materials were developed, the training sessions were never held due to internal conflicts in the partner organization, ACOBOL. Analysis of the initiative also indicated that materials were generic and equally applicable to men and women councillors.<sup>22</sup> International and national organizations learned from successes as well as failures to develop better educational materials and partnerships.

<sup>21</sup> The National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyo (CONAMAQ), National Federation of Self Employed Workers (CNTCP), Indigenous Women's Federation of Beni (CMIB) and National Federation of Domestic Workers of Bolivia (FENATRAHOG) are other important empowered grassroots and popular organizations that have been targeted by international donors.

<sup>22</sup> UNDP, "Evaluation of the Democratic Governance Thematic Trust Fund. Country Study: Bolivia." Available at [http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Democratic%20Governance%20Thematic%20Trust%20Fund/DGTTF\\_Bolivia.pdf](http://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Democratic%20Governance/Democratic%20Governance%20Thematic%20Trust%20Fund/DGTTF_Bolivia.pdf), accessed May 2013.





Since 2009, a separate programme targeting women members and leaders of existing political organizations has sought to nurture the participation of rural and indigenous women. The UNDP/EU programme entitled ‘Strengthening the Capacity of Bolivian Social Movements to

Submit Proposals and Engage in Dialogue in the Construction of the New State’ was implemented from 2009 to 2011. Funded by the EU and implemented by UNDP, this initiative worked with representative indigenous and farmers organizations and focused on strengthening the capacities for analysis and advocacy of young men and women of indigenous movements and political groups.<sup>23</sup>

Beyond assistance from the UN system, other donors have played important roles, including the Netherlands, CIDA, Oxfam and Hivos. These groups created Conexión: Fondo de Emancipación (Emancipation Fund) in 2009 to provide a flexible and solidarity-based funding mechanism for all grassroots movements. Its main objective is to promote inclusion, empowerment and equality in the exercise of the rights of people traditionally marginalized and subordinated, such as women (especially indigenous) and people of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Its project portfolio, mainly funded by CIDA

and The Netherlands, promotes the inclusion and effective participation of women in diverse realms of social representation and political action for the preparation of legislative agendas, promotion of indigenous leadership, NGO capacities and grassroots organizations committed to the empowerment of women. The initiative works at the subnational, departmental and municipal levels in order to apply the National Development Plan and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The EU, CIDA, Sida as well as the Conexión fund have supported civil society organizations involved in advancing women’s rights in legislation and public policy. Notably, they have assisted Women for Equity and Equality (AMUPEI) and other organizations with women’s Legislative Agenda, as outlined below.<sup>24</sup>

## 2.2. Support to Women Candidates and Women in Political Processes

International assistance to Bolivian women’s organizations has continued since the 2009 elections. Following the constituency agenda process, this assistance has focused on advocating for enhanced legislative protections and enforcement of current laws and on educating Bolivian women about their rights, responsibilities and opportunities to participate in electoral competition and government management.

The successful introduction of the parity law was only one relevant step toward integrating women into Bolivia’s political

<sup>23</sup> Midterm report. Bol 73828 Project “Strengthening the Capacity of Bolivian Social Movements to Submit Proposals and Engage in Dialogue in the Construction of the New State,” UNDP-UE, June 2011.

<sup>24</sup> Connection: Emancipation Fund, Project Portfolio. 2011. Available at [www.conexion.org.bo](http://www.conexion.org.bo), accessed May 2012.



processes. Once the bar for participation was set, Bolivian women needed to seize the opportunity presented by the parity law and step forward as political aspirants and candidates. For many, the presidential and 2009 elections were the first experience running for office. In order to meet new candidates' high demand for capacity training and orientation and to help women in politics to advance their careers, international assistance providers offered numerous resources. Two main areas of activity are 1) capacity support for women on the national stage and subnational political processes and elections and 2) support for legislation protecting women in politics from violence.

### Advocacy Campaigns and Capacity Building of Women Candidates

A first step in building women's capacity was to advocate for respect of the parity laws and for women's rights within political party structures. Ahead of the national 2009 elections and regional and municipal 2010 elections, the first phase of the advocacy campaign focused on ensuring that the political parties respected the 50 percent parity requirement on their lists. A national meeting and nine departmental meetings were held across the country in coordination with the social and institutional organizations in the presence of representatives from women's organizations, candidates and leaders from political parties and civic groups, and representatives from the electoral councils and media. The meetings

resulted in public statements demanding respect of the parity measure. Representatives of the women's movement reviewed the submitted lists and their analysis of party lists that failed to meet the parity and/or alternation requirements received wide media coverage. Their analysis included cases of fraud where male candidates registered as women to bypass the computerized approval system. Simultaneously, silent vigils were organized in front of all Departmental Electoral Councils to promote awareness of the parity/alternation requirement.<sup>25</sup>

The second phase of the advocacy programme sought to influence parties' agendas regarding women's equality and rights. Departmental level meetings and a national meeting were held with male and female candidates from diverse parties to present the Women's Legislative Agenda. Many coalitions and organizations launched creative and determined campaigns around the 2009 elections to promote women's participation. The most significant of these was the 'Mujeres listas para las listas' campaign (Women Ready for the Lists), which was held before the 2009 national elections and 2010 subnational elections with the support of The Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs MDG3 Fund as well as International IDEA and British NGO WomanKind.

The programme was organized in coordination with the EMB and had two main elements: political advocacy and communication.<sup>26</sup> Bringing together more than

<sup>25</sup> International IDEA. "Bolivian women ready for politics: Parties still need to be prodded." 23 February 2010. Available at [http://www.idea.int/americas/bolivia/women\\_ready\\_for\\_politics.cfm](http://www.idea.int/americas/bolivia/women_ready_for_politics.cfm); WomanKind Worldwide. "Country Section: Bolivia." Available at <http://www.womankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/Country-section-Bolivia2.pdf>

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

200 organizations from around the country, the programme sought to ensure compliance with the LRET and the Constitution's parity/alternation requirements as well as to raise awareness and encourage women's participation as candidates and as voters. A simultaneous communication campaign supported the advocacy campaign and played a major role in its success. A professional logo was designed and used for all information, including t-shirts, fliers, posters, etc. Five jingles, radio slots and two TV commercials were produced and disseminated and slogans and street signs were used on a nationwide scale. The EMB supported this strategy by helping to get reduced fares at the most prominent national TV networks. The campaign broadcast public statements and press releases demanding respect for the LRET and the Constitution and publicized the advocacy actions, such as the vigils. The advocacy and communication campaigns were highly successful in raising general awareness of the issue and helped to lay the foundations for a common legislative agenda after the elections.

United States assistance to rule of law, good governance, electoral process, consensus-building, civic society and education in Bolivia increased progressively until 2009. USAID made a strong commitment to supporting this effort and mainstreaming gender and indigenous issues into its strategic planning on democracy and electoral assistance until it discontinued most democracy programmes in 2009. Its commitment included from early on "working with women legislators to develop

a gender-focused legislative agenda and working with women municipal council members to strengthen their voice and vote", which was referred to regularly in subsequent planning and strategy.<sup>27</sup> USAID also supported the capacity of regional and municipal governments in Bolivia beginning in 1996 through a number of organizations, including USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI). OTI provided over US\$4.4 million in small grants in support of prefectural staff between March 2006 and June 2007. Following the 2005 elections, USAID launched a significant programme, 'Strengthening of Democratic Institutions' (Fortalecimiento de Instituciones Democráticas, FIDEM), in 2006 to support regional governments. Within the FIDEM's programmed activities, the women's agenda was an important area of support.

USAID-funded projects in Bolivia up to August 2009 introduced substantial innovations in the support of women candidates. Until 2007, the International Republican Institute (IRI) trained candidates for the Constituent Assembly and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) organized debates for candidates across the political spectrum. From October 2007 to July 2008, IRI and NDI supported political parties (including the governing MAS party), citizen groups and indigenous peoples via multi-party events and workshops. IRI continued to operate in Bolivia with funding from a NED grant, while NDI closed its Bolivia programme in 2009 after the Bolivian authorities rejected its application for registration.

<sup>27</sup> Deborah A Caro. Cultural Practice LLC. "Analysis of Gender and Indigenous Issues with Regard to USAID/Bolivia's 2005-2009 Strategy." 18 November 2004.

NDI supported a number of programmes for women candidates ahead of the 2009 elections. From 2008 to 2009, in collaboration with local Bolivian partners, NDI conducted a series of national multiparty women's leadership workshops to prepare and empower women for successful political participation and potential public office candidacy. In 2007, in partnership with the Simon Bolivar Andean University, NDI conducted a political leadership training academy for 35 emerging women leaders to strengthen their ability to effectively engage in politics as well as to promote a network of politically active women leaders. In 2004, NDI implemented a nationwide women's leadership school, *Winning with Women*, in association with the Forum and ACOBOL, which trained more than 2,000 women on political leadership skills, responsible municipal management practices and campaign strategies. The Association of Women Councillors of Bolivia (Asociación de Concejalas de Bolivia, ACOBOL) has played an important role in furthering women's participation at the local levels. In an effort to build the network of women councillors and to advocate for gender equity at the municipal level, ACOBOL organized 31 electoral forums with candidates for mayoral offices and municipal councils and promoted initiatives on 'Gender-Sensitive Plans and Budgets'. In addition to promoting the protection of women through legal municipal services for the prevention of violence and for victims, ACOBOL made violence prevention against candidates a priority of its work, as described below. ACOBOL receives financial support

from a wide range of assistance organizations and was awarded the Madeleine Albright Award by NDI.

IRI launched the Women's Democracy Network (WDN) to increase women's political participation, leadership and representation in elected office. The Bolivia Country Chapter of the WDN was launched in 2008 and focuses on building coalitions to address common issues facing women. In 2008, WDN Chapter members, who also served in Bolivia's Congress, conducted a multi-party women's roundtable to promote legislation that would require the National Electoral Court to intervene in cases where women are illegally removed from their elected positions and replaced by men. Participants of the roundtable drafted the bill following nine months of debates and discussions at the national and local levels. The bill was adopted into law in January 2009. In 2011, the Chapter conducted three conferences to establish a dialogue between civil society representatives and elected officials. During the conferences, citizens presented legislative initiatives for inclusion on local and national legislative agendas.<sup>28</sup>

The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) has continued to provide support to women at the departmental level. Notably, in 2011, NED provided a grant to Casa de La Mujer to empower women in the Department of Santa Cruz to participate in local public affairs and advocate for gender-sensitive policies and to promote a gender perspective in the drafting of local

<sup>28</sup> Women's Development Network. Available at <http://www.wdn.org/discover-our-programs/country-chapters/bolivia> and Cruz Mabel and Chavez Silvia (2008) "Heha la ley, no a las trampas" Mesa Multidaria de Mujeres, Editorial Escorprios, La Paz Bolivia.

governance by-laws. Working in the city of Santa Cruz and three rural municipalities, Casa de la Mujer sought to institutionalize a gender perspective in local government administration and budget allocation.

UN Women has brought together a diverse group of women's organizations to coordinate the creation of a joint political platform to bolster the rights of Bolivian women, including Indigenous, rural, urban, Afro-descendent and self-employed women, domestic workers and miners in the midst of widespread legal reform. The CM was implementing the project 'Building a Culture of Equity for the Enforcement of Rights in the Process of Social Transformation in Bolivia' from November 2010 to December 2013. This project was funded by UN Women, with a small counterpart co-funded by the CM. Featuring a multicultural lens, the CM

and an alliance of 19 women's organizations worked with the National Assembly from 2010 to 2011 to press for updates to seven national laws and to propose 20 gender-specific laws to anchor women's empowerment in the new legal framework. This precedent-setting alliance across sectors engaged 200,000 women directly and, through legal advocacy and multi-lingual (Aymara, Quechua and Spanish) radio programmes, indirectly impacted three million Bolivian women and their communities. By 2012, the project had achieved significant policy advances towards gender equality in five key laws derived from the new constitution. This legal framework includes the Laws on Electoral Authority and Electoral Regime, the Judiciary Organization Act, the Constitutional Court Act and the Framework Law on Autonomy and Decentralization (for sub-national, regional and municipal governments). The project was continuing to work on legal review in 2013.

A second UN Women joint programme was 'Support and Accompaniment to the Transition of the Bolivian Democratic Model: Promoting Change in Peace', which aimed to assist the transition to a democratic model by strengthening three strategic actions: 1) support to enhance and strengthen the rule of law; 2) support for legislative development within the new constitutional framework; and 3) development of capacities for constructive conflict management. A key component of this programme was the project 'Strengthening of Governance: Addressing Gender-Based Political Violence', focused on addressing and preventing harassment and political violence against elected women. The joint programme had



as local country counterpart the Ministry of Autonomy and Ministry of Cultures (Unit for Depatriarchalization, one of the government's pro-gender equity mechanisms). The local beneficiary of the anti-violence project was ACOBOL (in coordination with the Plurinational Electoral Body – EMB). The programme is described in more detail below.

### Support to Women in Parliament

International assistance providers have supported women in parliament and the CA, particularly during the constitutional process. Notably, International IDEA's Bolivia Programme has provided support for women's political participation, including the development of an analysis of women's rights included in the new constitution. The analysis highlighted the need to adapt current laws or pass new legislation to ensure enforcement of the gender equality principles and rights enshrined in the constitution. Training programmes were organized for female candidates to enhance their knowledge of political communication and electoral regulations. International IDEA has also worked with indigenous women leaders on international norms on women's rights.

Throughout 2010 and 2011, the International IDEA – Bolivia Programme supported the development of legislation stemming from the new constitution. International IDEA has worked in strategic partnership with many organizations to carry out advocacy processes that promoted gender equity in more than five laws. Proposals and surveillance activities were developed for mainstreaming gender and women's rights into the new regulations. Thanks in part to

these broad processes, the newly established legal framework incorporates among its principles gender equity, parity and alternation, including specific items to safeguard the exercise of women's rights. These laws were the Judiciary Body, the Plurinational Electoral Body, the Plurinational Constitutional Law and the Electoral Regime Law, the Framework Law of Autonomies and Decentralization, and others. At the departmental level, International IDEA supports women assembly members in their new role and in the articulation of a gender agenda.

As mentioned above, UN Women has fostered women's capacity development in order to influence decision-making from a women's rights standpoint. UN Women's programmes contributed to strengthening the capacities of women in decision-making positions, such as indigenous women leaders, female ministers (50 percent of the cabinet) and female parliamentarians. They also seek to strengthen the capacity of young women in decision-making positions and leadership, particularly young indigenous women leaders.

Networks of women parliamentarians have furthered this work. During the 1993-1997 legislative term, Bolivia's six elected congresswomen decided to form a group to convene women parliamentarians across party lines to leverage their efforts, promote a greater presence for women in parliament and work together for greater gender equality. In 1997, the Union of Parliamentary Women of Bolivia (Unión de Mujeres Parlamentarias de Bolivia, UMPABOL) was formed as a result of two chamber resolutions, one in the Senate and one in the Lower House. Since then, UMPABOL, along with the Forum,

has served as a forum for addressing gender mainstreaming in legislative work across both chambers. According to a study by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), "One of its [UMPABOL's] most interesting characteristics is that it includes both titular legislators and substitutes. Because of this, during the legislative term under study, it has been highly valued by women serving as substitute legislators. Another significant characteristic of UMPABOL is that it was conceived as a venue for multi-party coordination, with a horizontal structure that did not reflect the balance of power among parties. Some of the female legislators interviewed considered this the best form of organisation. Others considered it unnecessary for women from the majority parties to hold the presidency of this multi-party forum. Women deputies were also of the view that the structure needed to reflect "the balance of power."<sup>29</sup>

In 2010, UMPABOL signed an agreement with AMUPEI to carry out a project entitled 'School for the Strengthening of Legislative Capacities in the Plurinational and Departmental Legislative Assemblies'. It played an important role in the passing of laws against domestic violence and establishing permanent coordination with institutional mechanisms towards gender equality. It has benefited from the support of the IPU. Unfortunately, UMPABOL was affected by the political instability, conflict and political polarization in the country following the weakening of the political system and collapse of the traditional partisan system since 2005. UMPABOL continues to work

on issues around the legislative agenda; however, its influence has diminished.

### 2.3. Violence against Women in Politics

Since 1999, violence against women candidates and women elected to office has come to the forefront of issues facing women in politics in Bolivia. After the first municipal election with minimum gender quotas in 1999, there were numerous forced resignations of councilwomen who underwent various forms of pressure. There were more than a few cases of extreme violence and harassment. Since then, the women's movement, first with UMPABOL, the Political Forum and ACOBOL, accompanied by NGO networks that combat political violence, has positioned this issue on the public agenda. Between 2000 and 2009, these institutions reviewed 249 cases of political harassment and violence and created the Steering Committee on Women's Political Rights and Political Violence Prevention.

ACOBOL registered 249 cases of political violence against women between 2000 and 2009 and many more incidents are likely to have gone unreported. A total of "36 percent of all cases of harassment and abuse [that were registered] were aimed at forcing women councilors to resign and leave their seat to a male candidate or alternate. Twenty-one percent of complaints were both for physical violence and for harassment and pressures to keep women away from municipal government oversight and supervision functions. [As a result,] women

<sup>29</sup> Interparliamentary Union (IPU). "Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice." Reports and Documents No. 65-2011, available at <http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gsp11-e.pdf>, accessed May 2013, p. 47.



councilors don't usually run for a second term."<sup>30</sup> The head of ACOBOL suggests that the study shows that "power relations based on violence affect women directly just because they are women and because they hold political and public office [...] and that violence against] women in politics affects women in every party, cuts across the full spectrum of ideologies, and occurs in indigenous communities and grassroots and civil society groups as well."<sup>31</sup>

With the backing of ACOBOL and its local and international partners, Bolivia's Legislative Assembly approved the ground-breaking Law against Harassment and Political Violence against Women on 14 May 2012 to protect women and their political participation. The law seeks to "defend and guarantee the enjoyment of political rights by female candidates – incumbent and elected – and to guarantee a legal framework and set penalties for individual and collective harassment and political violence."<sup>32</sup> The law establishes penalties for perpetrators of acts of political harassment and violence against women candidates and elected and acting officials, including administrative, civil and criminal measures, and may temporarily or permanently bar offenders from public office. The law provides a two- to five-year prison sentence for anyone who pressures, persecutes, harasses or threatens an elected woman or those exercising public functions. The penalty for practicing physical, psychological or sexual aggression is three to eight

years in prison. The provisions are applicable to all incumbent and elected candidates with a popular mandate to democratically represent their constituents at the national, departmental and municipal levels who are prevented from or restricted in exercising their political rights.

The Law defines political harassment as the act or series of acts of pressure, threats, harassment or persecution, committed by a person or group of persons directly or through a third party against a woman candidate – elected or incumbent – in the exercise of a public or political function. The definition of political violence encompasses actions, conduct or assault causing bodily harm, psychological or sexual abuse against a woman or her family aimed at preventing her from or restricting her in exercising her duties or causing her to take decisions against her will, principles or the law. The Law considers factors such as whether the abused woman is illiterate or has a low level of education, whether the perpetrator is the leader of a political party, civic groups or a public servant and whether the acts of discrimination involve minors or family members of women politicians. Due to the fact that some elected Bolivian women had been forced to sign their resignation under duress, the Law stipulates that resignations tendered by elected women officials are valid only if the woman in question appears in person before the National Electoral Court.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Franz Chávez. "Bolivia: Politics, a Risky Business for Women. IPS News Agency, 27 October 2009. Available at <http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=49024>, accessed July 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Maria Eugenia Rojas. Inter-parliamentary Union. 2009.

<sup>33</sup> Elizabeth Salguero Carrillo. "Political violence against women." World of Parliaments. IPU. Issue 36. December 2009.

The Law took many years to pass and momentum was only rekindled after the tragic murder of two women councillors from the Lowlands and the Deltaplano regions in 2012. It was passed following extensive advocacy by women's groups, particularly UMPABOL and the national women's network *Coordinadora de la Mujer*, which has been supported by UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality since 2010. Since its passage, other assistance providers have sought to ensure its enforcement. Notably, NED provided a grant to the *Oficina Jurídica para la Mujer* (OJM) to strengthen the leadership and decision-making capacity of women victims of violence and discrimination in the Department of Cochabamba and to raise domestic and international awareness of human rights threats in Bolivia. OJM offers free legal assistance to women; provides training on the new legal framework to women, youth and indigenous leaders; and monitors Bolivia's compliance with ratified international human rights agreements and conventions and calls attention to potential democratic and human rights setbacks.

Finally, since 2010, the Support Programme to Municipal Democracy (PADEM) has promoted a sustained anti-violence media campaign funded by the Swiss Assistance Agency (COSUDE), which recently established a partnership with ACOBOL and other local institutions. The programme focuses assistance on developing institutional capacity to prevent, mitigate and fight all kinds of violence against women in the country.

## 2.4. Gender Mainstreaming in Electoral Administration

Bolivian electoral administration has undergone institutional changes because of successive reforms to the electoral laws and regulations. These were intended to improve the EMB's performance while ensuring impartiality and transparency. During this time, the EMB experienced periods of political and institutional crisis as well as periods of development and consolidation. Following the passage of the 2009 Constitution, the National Electoral Court was replaced in late 2010 by a fourth branch of government, the Plurinational Electoral Organ. The new body is the independent and permanent EMB responsible for the organization of elections and the maintenance of the permanent voter registry. According to the Organic and Electoral System Laws of 2010, the EMB is headed by the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) and nine Departmental Electoral Tribunes (TED) at the subnational level. The full chamber of the TSE is the Highest Executive Authority (MAE). The TSE is composed of seven members, including at least two indigenous members and three women. At the subnational level, each of the nine TED chambers has five members, including at least one indigenous and two women members. The mandate period is six years and cannot be renewed.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>34</sup> The designation modality gives the Plurinational Legislative Assembly (ALP) the mandate to choose six of the seven members of the TSE and four of the nine members in TED ("voto cualificado" because of the need for a high level of approval from these bodies). By a two-thirds majority, the ALD determines the short list for each of the four positions of the TED and sends the list to the ALP for final selection.

### Assistance to the EMB's Electoral Registry and Civil Registry Service

In late 2001, the National Electoral Court, the body responsible for electoral administration, requested electoral assistance from the UN. Following an assessment by the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, a programme was initiated to support the preparation of the June 2002 general election. This project would become the first of four major UN programmes to accompany electoral processes in Bolivia over the next decade.<sup>35</sup>

- Technical Assistance to the National Electoral Court, 2002
- The Right to Identity and Participation, 2004-2007
- Election Funds I and II, 2005-2007
- Support to the Consolidation of the Modernization of the Bolivian Electoral Authority, 2010

The programmes were administered by UNDP, with various donors' support. As an example, the Election Funds I and II were managed by UNDP and funded by CIDA (40 percent) and The Netherlands (60 percent). Institutional strengthening was provided for civil registration, electoral processes and civic education. These programmes, though, did not mainstream gender equality.

Support provided during these years coincided with a period of successive elections and consultations characterized by greater

democratic participation and inclusion of marginalized groups. The early years of this assistance took place amid persistent political crisis in which the CNE was a crucial guarantor of the citizens' will by addressing governance issues after the call for CA elections. Recommendations emerging from projects during these years emphasized educational and training initiatives designed to meet the needs of the marginalized stakeholders, including those of indigenous people, women and youth. Although the original objectives of the programmes did not target women, the programmes eventually substantially supported women once recognizing the gap after the programme was launched.

With UNDP assistance, the projects implemented between 2002 and 2010 focused on strengthening internal capacities to coordinate, plan and manage electoral logistics, including cleaning and updating the electoral registry and improving the civil registry. Additional assistance focused on the publication of electoral results, electoral training, institutional campaigns for civic education, oversight of public resources allocated to political parties, and other related matters.

Through the years of programming, it is not evident that gender mainstreaming has been systematically incorporated into the planning, implementation, monitoring and assessment of the UNDP election programmes. However, despite the absence of an explicit gender mainstreaming

<sup>35</sup> Based on the following documents provided by UNDP office in Bolivia: 1. "Asistencia Técnica a la Corte Nacional Electoral" (Nº 02/001) 2002 Final Report, Technical Mission Report (June – July, 2002); 2. "Derecho a la Identidad" BOL/36981 (2004-2007) Evaluación Externa: Resumen Ejecutivo and Informe Final/Anual de Progreso del Proyecto; 3. Fondo Electoral I (BOL/46866) - Fondo Electoral II (BOL/51371) (2005-2007), Project documents and final reports; 4. "Apoyo a la Consolidación de la Modernización del Organismo electoral Boliviano" (BOL/72770) (2010) Documento de Proyecto Informe del Tribunal Supremo Electoral.

approach, a number of specific, isolated interventions by international donors, the EMB and other local stakeholders were introduced to address the specific needs of women as voters and political actors during this period. The presence of women and officials committed to gender equality and intercultural values contributed to this work in the CNE and the TSE.

### Identity Documents

UNDP ran the Right to Identity<sup>36</sup> project between 2004 and 2007. This project aimed to promote political and inclusive participation through strengthening the capacities of the state and the citizens to demand rights and duties (issuance of identity cards) and to enhance the right to identity, especially that of women and marginalized groups. The initiative was a follow-up project to previous CNE projects supported by DFID, Danish (DANIDA) and Dutch assistance offices; it also had recommendations from UNDP emerging from the 2002 project Technical Assistance to the National Electoral Court. In fact, some components of the programme were already underway within the support framework provided by UNICEF and DANIDA. This new project coincided with and was linked to other projects promoted by the Human Rights Ombudsman, an institution created in 1998, the Ministry of Indigenous Affairs and Indigenous Peoples (MAIPO) and the Vice Ministry of Women. These institutions were designing projects to support the National Police initiative to fulfil the

mandate to provide national identity cards (ID) to indigenous people and women in several municipalities. The project had positive results, notably in issuing identity documents to undocumented Bolivians, especially the poor, women and members of indigenous groups. Indeed, the outcomes showed that 55 percent of women in four of Bolivia's nine departments benefited from the effort.<sup>37</sup> Although gender mainstreaming was not an explicit aim, the project helped to establish the foundation for a plan within the EMB that included civic education (about identity documents) targeted towards women. The objective was to ensure women's right to obtain a birth certificate and a national identity card and to motivate them to have their children registered.

A recent project implemented by UNDP with EU funding was Support to the Consolidation of the Modernization of the Bolivian Electoral Authority. It was carried out during 2010 in the framework of the UNDP Country Programme 2008-2010. This project set out to achieve "effective exercise of human rights for the construction of an intercultural society with gender and generational equity." The project supported the consolidation of the National Electoral Court and its transition to becoming the Plurinational Electoral Authority that the new constitutional reform established to improve the safety, transparency and integrity of elections. Operationally, the UNDP project contributed to updating of the Biometric Electoral Registry for the subnational

<sup>36</sup> "Derecho a la Identidad" BOL/36981. The right to identity is the right to become a citizen through registration at birth by obtaining a birth certificate (BC) and identification card (ID). The ID is required to vote and ensures other rights. The ID was provided by Bolivian policy until mid-2011 and the birth certificate is issued by the Civil Registry that is maintained by the EMB.

<sup>37</sup> "Derecho a la Identidad" BOL/36981 (2004-2007). Final Report

elections slated for 2010. It also supported the transition of the National Electoral Court to the mandates of the new constitution and contributed to “strengthening the capacities for strategic management” of the EMB during the post-constituent assembly transition.

While there were delays as a result of the institutional transition and the replacement of authorities, this last project was important in that it updated the Biometric Electoral Registry by closing the traditional gap in the registration of male and female voters. In 2009, after the EMB successfully implemented the biometric electoral register, UNDP supported this update. Initially, and unexpectedly, the cleansing process identified hundreds of thousands of women for elimination from the system and the register – which would have denied these women their right to vote. The reason was that there was a mismatch between their birth names and their names on their identity cards, which listed the surnames of their spouses. In 2011, the electoral biometric registry recorded over 5.2 million registered voters, of whom 51 percent were women and 49 percent men.

### New Perspectives in Gender Mainstreaming for the EMB

Electoral assistance did not explicitly include gender mainstreaming or a comprehensive vision for gender equality. However, the EMB, in tandem with ongoing support programmes from international donors, took advocacy and affirmative action measures

on behalf of women in fields such as civic education. It prioritized its service to indigenous people and women to reduce the registration deficit.

Since 2008, Sida and CIDA (with UNDP at first and later with The Netherlands) have contributed through a basket fund to support the EMB’s institutional budget. This support aided the implementation of the 2008-2012 Institutional Strategic Plan (PEI) of the EMB and its institutional dialogue towards a long-term planning process to promote initiatives regarding gender mainstreaming.<sup>38</sup> In this context, authorities agreed to 1) incorporate equity criteria in the proposed electoral law, 2) discuss the situation of gender equality at the institutional and programmatic levels for possible actions and 3) conduct a midterm evaluation of the Strategic Plan to incorporate gender mainstreaming.

The assessment of this report indicated that none of the 25 projects in six programmes identified in the planning portfolio referred to gender equality, incorporated inclusive language or referred to women’s rights. Instead, support for gender mainstreaming and the achievements attained during the last elections were driven by the EMB and sustained pressure from women’s civil society, which demanded electoral reforms regarding parity and alternation.

At present, the donor countries contributing to the basket fund for the EMB have asked International IDEA to carry out an external midterm evaluation of the 2008-20 PEI and a basket fund reformulation for the 2012-2016

<sup>38</sup> Orientación para la incorporación de la perspectiva de género en el mecanismo estratégico de gobernanza. ACDI Noviembre 2010 (Guía de orientación incluye al PEI del TSE).

PEI. IDEA was contracted for its expertise in electoral matters and gender issues and, in fact, IDEA's current interventions include gender mainstreaming. In coordination with the above-mentioned programmes, International IDEA has also supported technical electoral processes. International IDEA assists the National Electoral Court in areas related to norms, civic education and voter registration, with special emphasis on voting abroad. As a result of the activities carried out in the second half of 2009, the National Electoral Court submitted to the Plurinational Legislative Assembly a draft proposal for the Law for the Electoral Body and Electoral Regime (prioritized in the new constitution). Technical and financial assistance was also provided to the electoral body to provide comparative experiences of voting abroad, which informed arrangements for the first balloting by Bolivian migrants in four countries.

## 2.5. Democracy and Governance Assistance

Besides institutional assistance for the EMB, UNDP and other assistance agencies implemented other initiatives relevant to women's empowerment and political participation, e.g., the projects Strengthening of the Mechanisms for Representation and Participation in the Bolivian Political System 2007-2009 and Democratic Strengthening of Political Organizations in Bolivia 2009-2012. Implemented by UNDP and International IDEA with financial support from Sida, these initiatives helped to strengthen the party system

amidst high political complexity, political tension and uncertainty about the changes scheduled for the country. However, this context was also appropriate for encouraging the renovation and strengthening of political parties. With a focus on improving the internal and external organizational performance of the political organizations with which they worked, the projects promoted training for teams in charge of organizing the processes of political representation. To this end, the projects partnered with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal and the Intercultural Democratic Training Institute, the Bolivian Multiparty Foundation (FBDM) and academic organizations to promote training programmes and implement an academic diploma programme in political management and inter-cultural democracy.

Both projects explicitly proposed and prioritized actions to motivate women and youths to participate in and influence political organizations (internally and externally) with a broader perspective and with better skills. Since then, the parties to the project have begun to crystallize reform processes to amend their by-laws. Given the importance of these projects in defining specific intervention approaches to enhance women's participation, this report includes the lessons learned and the recommendations that emerged from those approaches and strategies that sought to enhance the participation of women who were members and leaders of the existing political organizations in the country.





## 3. LESSONS LEARNED

### 3.1. Good Practices

The Bolivian case offers diverse and valuable lessons learned in international electoral assistance to support the participation of women in political and electoral processes. Some of the most important lessons for the formulation and design of future electoral assistance are highlighted below.

#### Coalitions and Partnerships among Women

Multi-party, plural and solidarity-based coalitions and partnerships among women have been very effective. Therefore, programmes and projects can consider processes that guide, encourage and learn from other successful women's coalitions and partnerships.

The experience of women in Bolivia shows that gains in political gender parity are explained by women's ability to establish partnerships around a specific agenda and collectively pursue advocacy strategies. In particular, since 2002, the coalitions expanded and became stronger with the inclusion of women from popular and indigenous

sectors. Bolivian women do not always speak with one voice and there are different visions of feminism in the country; however, when indigenous and feminist movements joined forces, they had a strong impact. This was demonstrated in their success in enacting the parity measures and in overseeing the implementation of these measures.

Women's alliances must be renewed and even reinvented. This implies evaluating the process, adopting new topics and supporting new actors and including a widening circle of partnerships and discussion. Although they may be successful, alliances are also particularly vulnerable and sensitive to political and ideological conflict.

#### Ongoing Review of the Electoral System

Electoral legislation or electoral systems are not static or rigid. In the case of Bolivia, positive approaches to women's political participation include the parity law and its application to alternate candidates. The parity model should account for the electoral outcome rather than the percentage of women who compete.

The system of alternate candidates can be a disadvantage and an opportunity for women's political representation. Designing candidate lists with gender parity, including the candidacy of 'alternates', is not very common in traditional electoral systems. In Bolivia, the existence of alternate candidates has created a second, less desirable tier of elected officials and offers a loophole to political parties that do not want to respect the spirit of the parity measures. The practice has led to sustained controversy about the substitutes' legitimacy, since they are in essence shadow or duplicate political representatives and involve substantial extra expense. Beyond the debate about the legitimacy surrounding this arrangement, the alternate system reinforces the illegitimacy of historically marginalized groups in political representation, as in the case of women and minority indigenous populations settled in the eastern region of Bolivia. The benefit of the alternate system is that it provides an educational opportunity for the full exercise of political representation by providing greater access to politics, exposure to campaigning and candidate process.

### Campaign Funding and Access to the Media

Financial constraints faced by women candidates are a key barrier to women's participation. The cost of campaigns, the elimination of public funding to political parties, a lack of legislation to implement reasonable limits on campaign spending, the costs of political advertising and poor access to media coverage require novel intervention strategies so that women can compete equitably. In Bolivia, the experience in media campaigns promoted by the Ready for the Lists initiative is interesting and successful. Electoral cooperation

may help identify incentive policies for the media or possible programmes to manage fair coverage of political proposals and their contribution to public offices.

### Violence against Women in Politics

Bolivia has successfully enacted a groundbreaking law to combat violence against women in politics that can serve as a model for countries around the world. ACOBOL and others were successful in raising awareness about the need to be vigilant about violence driving women from their candidacies or elected positions. The challenge remains in enforcing the law. Substantial education is still required to give confidence to women to run for office, to make victims of violence aware of available recourse and to make potential perpetrators aware of the consequences of gender-based political violence in Bolivia.

## 3.2. Further Opportunities Gender Mainstreaming in the EMB

Insufficient support to integrating gender mainstreaming into the work of the EMB can be challenging for international electoral assistance. Experience elsewhere shows that it is beneficial to maintain a persuasive and operational leadership within the EMB in this area in order to achieve the institution's long-term gender equity goals. In Bolivia, the transition of the CNE to the TSE provided a significant opening to introduce the issue.

### Sex-Disaggregated Data

Understanding the evolving political participation of Bolivian women requires data disaggregated by sex. In Bolivia, voting and the counting of votes do not differentiate between the voting tendencies of men and women. Several options are under consideration to introduce mechanisms for this

goal, such as the Chilean method of having separate ballot boxes for male and female voters or processing secondary information derived from exit poll surveys or other mechanisms. Such a mechanism would show voting preferences and would help indicate the different policy priorities of women and men voters.

### Increasing Women's Voice in Decision-Making Structures

The absence of institutions or their challenging circumstances, the lack of rules, informal decision-making processes, the lack of spaces for debate and deliberation, and political favours and patronage in political organizations conspire against the stability and permanence of women in political activities. Going beyond simple numbers elected, these issues of access need to be addressed to provide women in office with a real voice in policy.

### Gender Mainstreaming for the Local Context

'Gender mainstreaming' is a frequently used phrase in Bolivia, but the concept has not been incorporated into the programming of plans and projects for electoral assistance. It appeared for the first time as part of international assistance programming and was little understood and not necessarily requested by previous and current EMB authorities. Owing to limited knowledge, few government officials responsible for local projects and other initiatives can gauge the significance and potential of gender mainstreaming as a conceptual and methodological tool. Therefore, promoting the understanding and adopting of gender mainstreaming for the local context is a need and an opportunity.

### Applying Gender Mainstreaming

The lack of understanding of the concept of mainstreaming among authorities and officers responsible for institutional planning processes can lead to the view that mainstreaming is incompatible or can replace the implementation of projects targeting women as protagonists in political and electoral processes. This is exacerbated by the complex transition towards the establishment of the new plurinational state, the high rotation of public officers and the loss of leadership and top personnel in the government gender mechanism. Gender equality has been viewed by some as the sum of specific projects with little consideration of the challenge of devising ways to incorporate the agenda into the operational medium- and long-term planning of institutions such as the EMB or others that work to strengthen the institutions of representative democracy.

### Enforcing the Quota

The final composition of elected bodies has not reached commitment expressed in the quota law, nor reached gender parity. In light of election results and the effective distribution of seats in Bolivia, gender quotas were understood as a ceiling, not as a floor. This finding has led to a rich discussion about the limitations of the majority-based electoral system, mixed in the Bolivian case, to produce the equality proclaimed by the constitution. Other positions argue that there is a 'reasonable' limit to be applied to the conditions of equal competitive opportunity, one that should not force the results. In any case, more equitable outcomes will be the result of more mature objective and subjective factors that currently limit a steady and increasing presence of women in partisan political activism.





## 4. CONCLUSION

The Bolivian experience demonstrates that laws and affirmative action measures are significant but not sufficient and that government oversight is effective. Additionally, gender quotas and the application of parity can ensure access, but do not guarantee that women are able to implement a gender equality agenda – other measures are needed, such as reforms to the parliamentary institution or their retention in office. Finally, legislatures and EMBs should address cases of political violence and harassment that violate the rights of women candidates and representatives as a considerable threat to women’s effective competition for office.

In terms of increasing access for women to elected positions and leadership roles, it is necessary to comprehensively rethink the scope and duration of assistance to women and to take an intercultural approach. This means aligning interventions between donor and implementing agencies; expanding assistance to post-electoral

periods that allow for focused support and visibility to women in the most senior political positions; considering the inclusion of a component related to the media within electoral assistance; and disseminating legislative models that limit the cost of campaigns.

International electoral assistance efforts to mainstream gender in the EMB demonstrated that the concept, while frequently employed, is little understood or applied. Gender mainstreaming is often confused with specific projects on behalf of women (e.g., women-only programme components). As a result of this, of legislative advances and of the dynamics of the women's movement, the adoption of gender mainstreaming should be accelerated. Efforts to mainstream gender should also articulate and defend the advantages of gender mainstreaming by reinforcing the capacity of the people who carry out elections and political participation programmes and of the gender experts or gender focal points in electoral assistance projects.

In terms of international assistance to women voters, the change to a woman's nominal identity due to a change in her marital status can prevent her from exercising her political rights and other rights for which official identification is required. As mentioned in the analysis, there was an unexpected registration gap between men and women in Bolivia during the period of electoral reform because women who had changed their names could not be matched with their old identities by using the new biometric or electronic system. The manual matching of identities, though, has solved this problem.

The Bolivian experience shows that ideologically polarized environments and institutional crises among political parties and democratic institutions more broadly hinder women's participation. In these tense political environments, the efforts of electoral assistance to address a gender

perspective are limited. There should be a mitigation of the limitation or postponement that chronic crises can cause for the gender mainstreaming of interventions carried out by international organizations, in electoral assistance programmes and in electoral reform processes. Furthermore, there need to be persistent efforts to give women the capacity for debate, the space for dialogue, and the opportunity for pluralistic, democratic interaction with their male counterparts at the highest levels of debate and decision-making.

Finally, the establishment of UN Women can be leveraged as a persuasive tool at the country level to encourage other partners to address real inclusion of a gender perspective in programming. This effort can be executed within existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms and tap into the momentum of local partners already committed to gender equity and equality.

## Recommendations

- **Capitalize on international commitments and gender agenda.** Make use of the legitimizing force that the international agenda on gender equality plays in promoting the principles of justice, equality, development and peace. These principles inform the design and implementation process of assistance programmes that include a gender perspective.
- **Build on historic progress of collective action.** Programmes and projects that are models of women's use of networks and partnerships that have collectively advanced their agenda to participate

fully in politics can be shared and examined for the extent that they may influence more effective interventions.

- **Assess and harmonize assistance.** Periodically assess intervention models to assist and support women in their capacity as voters and candidates in electoral process while harmonizing and aligning inter-agency interventions.
- **Highlight media's role in advancing equality.** Consider incorporating a programme component related to the media in electoral assistance programmes (e.g., prizes, awards, recognition of media for more inclusive programmes and coverage, promotion of truly democratic discussion models, etc.).
- **Support a cadre of women 'electoral engineers'.** It is necessary to empower women and train more 'electoral engineers' to improve their ability to analyse, negotiate and influence largely technical processes that have, nonetheless, a determining political impact. BRIDGE training methodology can serve as a useful tool in this field.
- **Strategically mainstream gender.** Promote and develop effective tools for mainstreaming gender as an activity inherent to all programme or project interventions. Ensure that the concept has local understanding and ownership and strengthens the capabilities of the technical operators, not only of the gender focal points in electoral

assistance projects. Male actors (party leaders and members, EMB staff, etc.) should be broadly involved. For gender to be mainstreamed effectively within institutions, it must be applied and owned not only by the key counterpart institutions of the EMB, civil registry, training schools, political parties and institutions related to electoral justice. Gender mainstreaming should also influence technical teams and men and women coordinators responsible for designing, programming, monitoring and evaluating all portfolios for technical assistance projects carried out by various implementing agencies.

- **Seek long-term approaches that address core issues.** Inform and persuade EMB authorities and other local democratic institutions about the advantages of overcoming the short-term approach focused on specific projects for women and of moving towards longer-term processes and strategic approaches that incorporate gender mainstreaming.
- **Support legal progress with appropriate resources.** Bolivia is far advanced in its legal framework for equality. However the resources and practical measures to implement this framework still offer room for improvement. Laws are largely symbolic and unevenly applied, notably in the area of political violence against women and gender budgets. Dedicated adequate material resources can support the enforcement of these progressive measures.







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