



AFWPL

AFRICAN FACILITY FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

*Increasing Women's Meaningful and Equal
Political Participation and Leadership
in Africa.*



GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Africa



DELIVERY MODEL

Regional fund with
country-level electoral
support delete the
word electoral

WHAT IS THE AFRICAN FACILITY FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The African Facility for Women in Political Leadership (AFWPL) is a continental initiative established by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in partnership with the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Women Leaders Network (AWLN).

Launched on the margins of the African Union Heads of State and Government Summit in February 2025, the Facility seeks to accelerate women's meaningful participation and leadership in political decision-making across Africa through leadership development, institutional strengthening, policy reform and strategic partnerships.

The Facility serves as a catalytic platform for advancing women's political empowerment through coordinated regional action, innovative financing, knowledge generation and context specific intervention.

WHY WAS THE FACILITY ESTABLISHED?

Despite important gains across the continent, women remain significantly underrepresented in political leadership and decision-making positions. According to the Women's Political Participation (WPP) Africa Barometer 2024:



26%

Women represent only 26% of members of lower house of parliament in Africa.



21%

Women occupy only 21% of seats in upper houses of parliament.



24%

Women hold approximately 24% of cabinet positions.



25%

Women occupy only 25% of local government positions.



9%

Women lead only 9% of political parties across the continent.

With only a few years remaining to achieve the targets under the Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) and Agenda 2063, many African countries remain off track to achieve equal and effective participation of women in political decision-making.

KEY DRIVERS OF UNDERREPRESENTATION



Deeply entrenched patriarchal norms



Restrictive cultural practices



Limited access to campaign financing



Technology-facilitated political violence



Violence against women in politics



Harmful media stereotypes



Weak implementation of gender quotas

THE THREE STRATEGIC PILLARS:

AFRICA FACILITY FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



I

THE AFRICAN ACADEMY
FOR WOMEN
IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP



II

REGIONAL AND
NATIONAL ACTION



III

ENABLING POICY
AND INSTITUTIONAL
ENVIRONMENT

PILLAR I: AFRICA ACADEMY FOR WOMEN IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

The Africa Academy for Women in Political Leadership is the Facility's flagship leadership development programme. It is designed to equip current and aspiring women leaders with the knowledge, skills, networks and resources needed to navigate political systems, influence decision-making and advance inclusive governance across Africa.

Key Partner: African School of Governance

Objectives

- Strengthen leadership competencies among women political leaders.
- Address financial barriers to women's political participation and leadership.
- Build strategic networks and alliances.
- Foster intergenerational mentorship and learning.
- Promote ethical, accountable and transformative leadership.

Programme Structure



Four-week blended learning programme.

- Two weeks virtual learning
- Two weeks residential learning and applied leadership practice.

Target Participants



- Young women leaders
- Women political aspirants
- Elected officials
- Women with disabilities
- Grassroots leaders
- Emerging political leaders

KEY LEARNING AREAS



Historical Account/Foundations of women's leadership in Africa



Financing women's political leadership



Strategic communication



Coalition building and negotiation



Political leadership and governance



EARLY ACHIEVEMENTS

UNDP also launched the call for applications for the African Academy for Women in Political Leadership, in partnership with the African Union Commission, African Women Leaders Network, and African School of Governance. The call attracted **1,336 applications** from **41 African countries**.



1,336

Applications
received



41

African
countries
represented

PILLAR II: REGIONAL AND NATIONAL-LEVEL EFFORTS

Pillar II supports regional and national initiatives that strengthen women's political participation and leadership through advocacy, convening, coalition-building, knowledge exchange and strategic partnerships. Through high-level engagement and grassroots mobilization, the facility is creating pathways for women to access political spaces, shape policy conversations and influence decision-making processes across Africa.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE



High-Level Advocacy and Global Engagement

- Mobilized **300 women leaders from across Africa** through strategic dialogues, networking opportunities and peer-learning exchanges.
- Supported high-level advocacy on women's political leadership during the **United Nations Assembly (UNGA)** including calls to action aimed at advancing women's participation in political decision-making. and convened and engaged 170 leaders. Elevated women's political leadership on global and continental agendas through advocacy by senior leaders, including engagement by the **United Nations Deputy Secretary-General (UN DSG)** and other champions of gender equality.



Building Networks and Leadership Pathways

- Facilitated AWLN **Intergenerational Leadership Retreat**, bringing together established and emerging women leaders to strengthen mentorship, solidarity and knowledge exchange.
- Convened a **Dialogue on Financing Women's Political Leadership**, addressing one of the most persistent barriers to women's participation and leadership.



National-Level Mobilization: Côte d'Ivoire

- **250 women were mobilized** through leadership and political participation activities. **45 women expressed interest in pursuing political participation and leadership opportunities.**
- A **digital mobilization campaign** was launched to increase awareness, engagement and participation of women in political processes.

These initiatives demonstrate the growing demand for women's political leadership and the importance of sustained investment in leadership pipelines across Africa.

PILLAR III: ENABLING POLICY AND INSTITUTIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Pillar III works to transform structural barriers and create an enabling environment where women can lead equally and effectively. This pillar focuses on strengthening laws and policies, promoting gender-responsive institutions, addressing violence and harmful norms, and advancing accountability for gender equality commitments.

PRIORITY AREAS



Legislative and policy reform.



Gender-responsive electoral frameworks.



Public financing mechanisms for women candidates.



Strategic media engagement and narrative change.



Prevention of violence against women in politics.



Advocacy for gender equality and women's political representation

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS TO DATE

Zambia: High-Level Conference on Women's Political Participation and Leadership ahead of the August 2026 General Elections.

In April 2026, UNDP supported the Zambia Country Office in convening a High-Level Conference on Women's Political Participation and Leadership ahead of the August 2026 General Elections. The three-day conference brought together over 160 participants. Key outcomes included a **Gender Equality Pledge** signed by all political parties, marking a cross-party commitment to women's political participation, and the **adoption of a unified national political declaration** outlining concrete actions ahead of the 2026 elections and beyond.

Nigeria: Advancing Legislative Reform and Public Advocacy

The Facility has supported efforts to create a more inclusive political environment through advocacy, public engagement and coalition-building around women's political representation.

Key achievements include:

- Conducted **desk-to-desk legislative advocacy** in support of the Women's Reserved Seats Bill.
- Engaged more than **100 legislators** to build awareness and support for reforms that increase women's representation in decision-making.
- Mobilized over **880 young leaders** to participate in advocacy and civic engagement initiatives.
- Partnered with more than **25 national and state media outlets** to promote positive narratives around women's political leadership.
- Implemented strategic media and public awareness campaigns that generated over **1 million social media impressions**.
- Advanced national conversations on women's representation through targeted advocacy and narrative-change initiatives.

Malawi: Advancing Electoral Reform and Women's Political Participation

The Facility has supported national advocacy efforts aimed at addressing structural barriers that limit women's participation in politics.

Key achievements include:

- Supported advocacy for the introduction of **mandatory gender quotas** through electoral reform processes.
- Promoted the development of **gender-responsive public financing mechanisms** to reduce financial barriers facing women candidates.
- Supported the development and dissemination of the **Women's Manifesto**, providing a platform for advancing women's political priorities and strengthening accountability around gender-responsive governance.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE FACILITY

The African Facility for Women in Political Leadership is grounded in:

- African ownership
- Sustainability
- Strategic partnerships
- Inclusion and diversity
- Accountability
- Innovation
- Intergenerational leadership
- Sisterhood

ALIGNMENT WITH REGIONAL AND GLOBAL FRAMEWORKS

The Facility contributes directly to the implementation of:

- Sustainable Development Goal 5: Gender Equality
- Sustainable Development Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
- African Union Agenda 2063
- African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance
- Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa
- Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action
- UNDP's Strategic Plan 2025-2029, Regional Programme for Africa 2025-2029 and Gender Equality Strategy 2026-2029

PARTNERS

The African Facility for Women in Political Leadership is jointly led by:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- African Union Commission (AUC)
- African Women Leaders Network (AWLN)
- Africa School of Governance (ASG)
- Regional Economic Communities (RECs)
- ECOSYSTEM of Partners (Media, Private sector, Academia etc)

Together, these partners are working to ensure that women across Africa can participate fully, effectively and equally in political leadership and decision-making processes.



WHAT IS AHEAD



Official Launch of the African Academy for Women in Political Leadership in August 2026



Convening the West Africa High-Level Women's Political Leadership Forum



Development of the African Union guidelines on addressing financial barriers to women's political leadership.



High level forum on the Margins of the UN General Assembly

LINKS

1. **International IDEA:** [Women's Political Participation \(WPP\) Africa Barometer 2024 full report.](#)
2. **African Union Commission:** [Agenda 2063 Framework Document: The Africa We Want Core Targets.](#)
3. **International IDEA:** [Women's Political Participation \(WPP\) Africa Barometer 2024 full report.](#)
4. **African Union Commission:** [Agenda 2063 Framework Document: The Africa We Want Core Targets.](#)