

OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP

- The legal framework around women's political participation could be revisited now that national elections are completed and there is a reasonable timeframe to manage a serious legislative reform process. INEC has a gender policy that could be used by election authorities to incentivize party reforms in the inter-election period and parliament could reconsider measures on gender equality.
- Due to their long exclusion from the political space, women have developed a strong presence in civil society and have successfully advocated for legislation to promote WPPL, among other gains for women's rights.
- Primary and secondary schools provide an important space for girls and boys to begin engaging in politics, though these institutions are not without some similar challenges to political parties. In addition, higher education is more accessible for women than ever before.
- There is openness amongst some traditional and religious leaders on the benefits of women's participation and leadership and the demerits of women's exclusion from political spaces.

“...It is not the people that repress women's political participation but the prevailing culture and the political set up. Because in some cultures women are not even allowed to go out. They are strictly in their homes as housewives and mothers. For her to even come out to vote, is a problem.”

—Woman CSO member



SELECTED RECOMMENDATIONS

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

- The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with local stakeholders, should support gender transformative education programs in primary and secondary schools.
- Donors and CSOs should develop programming that engages men gatekeepers and allies, including in political parties and INEC, to shift harmful views and behaviors.
- Donors should support locally-led WPPL public information campaigns, rooted in cultural values, that name and take on patriarchal behavior, including partnering with leaders of religious organizations to show how religious views and gender equality can coexist.
- CSOs should train a diverse groups of media workers (e.g., regional/national, print, television, digital) to cover WPPL, VAWP, and Gender Based Violence (GBV) to transform harmful gender norms, prevent gendered disinformation in their platforms, and promote women candidates.

INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS

- Stakeholders both in the government and civil society should regroup and reignite advocacy efforts for the passage of gender equality bills, such as the quota bill that ensures that women constitute at least 35 percent of federal and state executive councils or ministerial and commissioner positions.
- In partnership with CSOs, INEC should act on its existing authority to advocate for gender equality in political parties, which are key to promoting WPPL.

INDIVIDUAL FACTORS

- International and local CSOs should provide consistent and proactive capacity building of women party members and support for existing young leaders, not only around important elections. Capacity building should include campaigning, media engagement, and knowledge of the legal framework.
- Donors should design and implement a mentorship program for women politicians to teach them the formal and informal rules needed to deepen participation and leadership and deepen a peer network.