



# **SUPPORTING THE INTRODUCTION OF TEMPORARY SPECIAL MEASURES (TSMs)**

GUIDANCE FOR UNDP COUNTRY OFFICES

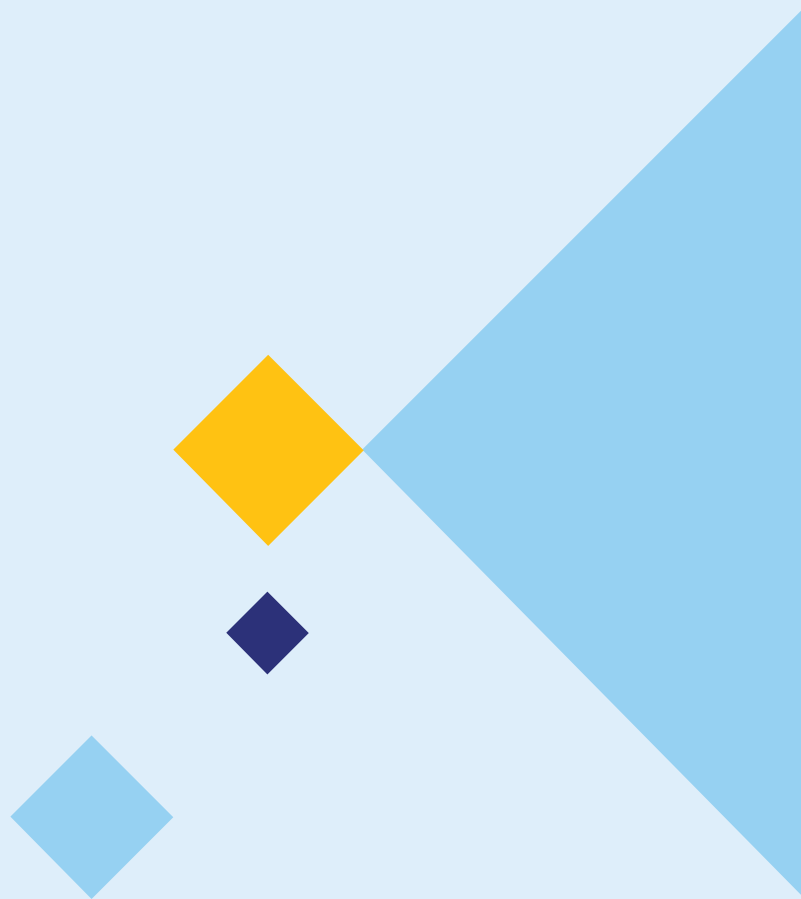
November 2023

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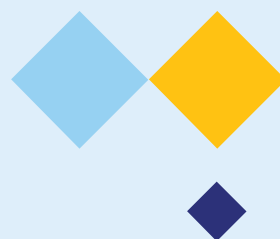
United Nations Development Programme  
One United Nations Plaza  
New York, NY 10017  
USA





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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This guidance note focuses on supporting the introduction of Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) to promote women's representation in elected offices. It was developed by UNDP's Bureau for Policy and Programming Support (BPPS) to guide UNDP's efforts in strengthening women's political participation globally. We express our deep appreciation to the author of this guidance note, Independent Expert Donia Ben Romdhane, who developed it under the guidance of Alexandra Wilde, Senior Governance Expert and with the support of Sarah Lister, Head of Governance and Raquel Lagunas, Head of Gender. The guidance note benefited from an advisory group of UNDP advisors and specialists, including Joanna Hill, Najia Hashemee, Aleida Ferreyra, Dan Malinovich, Agata Walczak, Doina Ghimici, and Oisika Chakrabarti. We are most grateful to the UNDP Country Offices (Lebanon, Georgia, Maldives and Ethiopia) and their partners who supported the development of the case studies that are showcased here, including Nora Mourad (UNDP Lebanon), Guilnard El Asmar (UNDP Lebanon) Mrs. Joelle Aboufarhat (fiftyfifty), Katherine Green (UNDP Ethiopia), Desset Abebe Teferi (UN Women Ethiopia), Cherer Aklilu (UNW Ethiopia), Natia Tsikvadze (UNDP Georgia), Umutai Dauletova (UNDP Georgia), Ilaria Mariotti (UNDP Regional Hub Istanbul), Fathimath Hamna Shareef (UNDP Maldives). With thanks also to UNDP's partners at the University of Pittsburgh, Dr. Müge Finkel and Dr. Melanie Hughes, for their expert input and with gratitude for extensive comments and information from the women's political participation team, led by Julie Ballington at UN Women, Asako Hattori and Teizu Guluma in the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), Abigail Esther Ruane and Lone Jessen in the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) Gender, Peace and Security Unit, Steven Martin and Asma Nassery in the DPPA's Electoral Assistance Division (EAD), Katarina Mansson, in the Rule of Law Unit, Executive Office of the Secretary-General and Ruth Bolline Aluoch at the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO).





# FOREWORD

While the global percentage of women in elected office continues to increase, the pace remains slow, and there remain parliaments in which no women at all are represented. In many places, well-designed temporary special measures (TSMs) have driven up women's representation in parliament. However, despite the global recognition that such measures are among the most effective and quickest means to increasing women's representation, in many jurisdictions they still meet with opposition. Sensitizing societies and their decision-makers to the benefit of TSMs and generating broad-based support for and acceptance of this benefit is an important initial step in transforming attitudes and political culture.

Even though there is a well-documented body of technical knowledge and good practice on context-specific design of TSMs, there is a need for detailed and actionable guidance on the process for generating support for them through political advocacy and campaigns, and the UN system's role in this regard. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has developed this practical guidance for UNDP Country Offices to support in-country advocacy efforts for improving gender equality in elected office. It provides examples of good practices and lessons learned on policy advocacy campaigns and draws on a range of resources.

The genuine participation of all citizens – the right to vote and to be elected – is a fundamental democratic principle. As half of every country's population, women have the right to equal participation in public decision-making systems and processes and institutions including in government across all levels, sectors, and positions. Equality and diversity in public institutions including the parliament increases responsiveness and accountability to diverse public interests and increases trust and confidence in public organizations.

While this guidance aims to contribute to the global ambition of 50/50 gender parity in public office, gender equal participation and leadership is not merely about adding women to existing structures, but about transforming those structures to allow for women's leadership and meaningful participation. Through its Strategic Plan and Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025, UNDP is committed to strengthening democratic institutions and processes, state capacities and public spending, while creating an enabling environment in which women and men thrive.



**Sarah Lister**  
Head of Governance  
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support



**Raquel Lagunas**  
Head of Gender Equality  
Bureau for Policy and Programme Support



# INTRODUCTION

In virtually all societies, the prevailing cultural and social norms influenced by patriarchy result in gender inequalities that affect women's status in all areas of life in society, whether public or private, in economic or political life, as well as in social gender relations. Temporary Special Measures (TSMs) are concrete actions to reduce the gaps between men and women in economic, social, and political spheres. TSMs aim to influence the structural, social and cultural changes necessary to correct past and current forms and effects of discrimination against women.<sup>1</sup> The introduction of TSMs in a country's national legal framework is often the result of a long journey bolstered by sustained policy reform campaigns.

TSMs are enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and State Parties that have ratified CEDAW are required under article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to adopt and implement TSMs that aim to accelerate the equal participation of women in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.<sup>2</sup> To date (August 2023), 189 countries have ratified CEDAW, and not a single country among the signatories has entered a reservation to article 4<sup>3</sup> on TSMs. In many places, well-designed TSMs in election processes have effectively promoted the enjoyment and exercise of political rights for women. As a result, we have seen more representative and inclusive parliaments, which are vital for sustainable human development.<sup>4</sup>

This guidance note deals with TSMs adopted in political life and, more specifically, in election processes. It focuses on how UNDP can engage in advocacy for TSMs and includes lessons learned and insights gained from advocacy campaigns and other activities aimed at creating or improving access for women to elected offices. It builds upon the UN Systemwide Note and Key Messages On the use of Temporary Special Measures, including quotas, to fast track women's equal participation in decision-making and complements and fits into broader advocacy efforts across the UN system on women's political participation and the need for system wide coordination, in particular with the UN Resident Coordinators Office (RCO) at country level. The guidance note also draws on and complements the UN Policy Directive on Promoting Women's Electoral and Political Participation through UN Electoral Assistance<sup>5</sup>

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- 1 General recommendation No. 25, on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on temporary special measures, paragraph 15.
  - 2 General recommendation No. 25, on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on temporary special measures, paragraph 18.
  - 3 Declarations, reservations, objections and notifications of withdrawal of reservations relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW/SP/2006/2, available on: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/309/97/PDF/N0630997.pdf?OpenElement>
  - 4 <https://www.ipu.org/news/press-releases/2022-03/new-ipu-report-more-women-in-parliament-and-more-countries-with-gender-parity>
  - 5 See Policy Directive, 24 December 2013, Available through the link: [https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/ead\\_pd\\_promoting\\_womens\\_electoral\\_political\\_participation\\_through\\_un\\_ea\\_20131224\\_e.pdf](https://dppa.un.org/sites/default/files/ead_pd_promoting_womens_electoral_political_participation_through_un_ea_20131224_e.pdf)

as well as other UN-wide policies on electoral assistance,<sup>6</sup> and is intended for UNDP Country Offices. The guidance also hopes to be a helpful source of inspiration to other UN field presences seeking to advance women's participation in political, social and economic life.

The guidance note provides examples of good practices and lessons learned on advocacy for TSMs and draws on a range of resources, particularly from UNDP and UN Women, gathered from desk research and interviews with UNDP staff and partners. The guidance note is also informed by three extensive country case studies, Lebanon, Ethiopia and Georgia, that provide a deeper dive into how UNDP Country Offices have engaged in the promotion of TSMs, generally as components of UNDP electoral assistance projects. The case studies, which can be accessed at this [link](#), provide practical insights into the various entry points and activities the Country Office supported, the important partnerships and the reasons behind the success or failure of efforts to introduce TSMs.

- ◆ The **Lebanon** case study illustrates UNDP's continuous efforts to conduct advocacy campaigns for the adoption of a TSM in a country characterized by complex political and social structures. Advocacy strategies focused on multi-actor coalitions to pressure and influence political parties and decision-makers. The campaigning is yet to result in a TSM but the case study includes important strategies and lessons.
- ◆ The **Ethiopia** case study is instructive. While advocacy efforts are yet to result in legislated candidate or reserved seat quotas, some political parties voluntarily adopted policies. The case study illustrates the importance of political will and the need for an enabling environment for women's political participation and representation in elected offices. It also provides insights into the complementarity of UNDP and UN Women efforts.
- ◆ In **Georgia**, the purpose of the advocacy campaign is two-fold: to advocate for the gender quotas previously enshrined in a 2020 electoral law and to advocate for political parties to consider adopting internal normative and policy frameworks for gender equality. The case of Georgia is interesting as it illustrates long term advocacy efforts, involving planning and organization on different scales built on a comprehensive understanding of the political and social dynamics and the opportunities to exercise influence to achieve change.

## A focus on advocacy

In this guidance note, advocacy is defined as a set of organized activities designed to influence and support decision-makers who have the formal authority to promote and fulfil the political rights of women (duty bearers such as parliaments, political parties, electoral management bodies, etc...) to adopt, improve or implement TSMs to increase women's representation in elected offices, at both national and sub-national levels. In this context, advocacy activities are broad and diverse, ranging from identifying gaps, collecting evidence and facts on the underrepresentation of women in politics, conducting consultations with women active in politics, building coalitions and networks to conduct the advocacy strategy, lobbying decision-makers to generate political support for the change from inside, to building public awareness and support to put pressure on the relevant decision-makers (directly

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6 See <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>

or through other stakeholders), producing communication tools that can persuade, policy-makers to champion and advance / change in law and practices, etc.

Advocacy is an important tool towards enacting change. On electoral matters, such efforts should be carefully calibrated, and advocacy should be distinguished from advisory services; the latter includes advice on how to assess, design or reform electoral frameworks, including electoral systems. Providing detailed, context specific and substantive advice on how a measure could be implemented and what the specific approach is required would likely constitute electoral assistance and be subject to the UN electoral assistance framework. This would include any direct provision of technical assistance/ advice related to the country's electoral process (and electoral system), including legal, operational and logistics assistance as well as capacity building to develop or improve electoral laws, processes and institutions. Where there is uncertainty on whether or not an activity or engagement may be considered electoral assistance, it is advisable to consult the UNDP BPPS at [bpps.elections@undp.org](mailto:bpps.elections@undp.org).

## UN Electoral Assistance Framework

Working closely with UN Women and DPPA, UNDP promotes women's political participation and leadership, reforming laws and constitutions, strengthening public sector capabilities, working with civil society and expanding access to justice for women. UNDP promotes legislative and constitutional reforms to ensure women's access to political spheres – as voters, candidates, elected officials and civil service members. While promoting and advocating for such reform does not necessarily constitute electoral assistance, any support to or advice on an electoral process, such as drafting of the laws, including related to the electoral system, capacity building of Electoral Management Bodies and other stakeholders (observers, candidates and civil society organizations) would be considered “assistance” and as such, be subject to the UN framework for electoral assistance.

As the leading provider of electoral assistance globally, UNDP follows the established UN framework for electoral assistance. This framework serves to guide all UN electoral assistance to Member States, including related to women's electoral participation. The framework, established by GA resolutions and decisions of the Secretary-General, foresees that UN electoral assistance (or advice) is provided only by formal request of the Member State concerned or by a General Assembly or Security Council mandate. The decision and parameters of UN electoral assistance are decided by the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs who serves as the UN system-wide Focal Point for electoral assistance matters.

The decision and type of electoral assistance is based upon an electoral needs assessment, led by DPPA's Electoral Assistance Division. The needs assessment outlines the appropriateness and parameters of UN assistance as well as to analyze the risk, benefits and advisability of the UN providing electoral assistance. This includes an analysis of the political and electoral participation of women, and where appropriate, assessments incorporate dedicated recommendations on TSMs, including with regard to electoral quotas.

The implementation of electoral assistance is guided by UN electoral policy in consultation with the UN entities engaged in electoral support. Based on the needs assessment, UN electoral assistance projects often contain components on promoting the political and electoral participation of women. In many countries where the UN works to increase the political participation of women, the consideration of such measures among national stakeholders is often supported by UN entities combining technical assistance with tailored advocacy.<sup>7</sup>

Where the UN does not provide electoral assistance, engaging in advocacy around women's political participation, including for the consideration of TSMs may stimulate discussion and, depending on the context and in consultation with EAD/DPPA, contribute towards a possible request by a Member State for UN electoral assistance.<sup>8</sup>

UN electoral assistance is provided in an impartial and independent manner, with due respect for national ownership and sovereignty of the electoral process.

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7 See applicable guidance/policy on UN electoral assistance: Principles and Types of UN Electoral Assistance, Promoting Women's Electoral and Political Participation through UN Electoral Assistance; and UN Support to Electoral System Design and Reform, among others. UN electoral assistance policies are available at: <https://dppa.un.org/en/elections>

8 Advocating generally for TSMs and women's political participation would not constitute electoral technical assistance nor is organizing an event on issues of political participation and TSMs. Providing direct support (resources, training, etc) to design a advocacy campaign may be considered electoral technical assistance. Providing advice on electoral law reform is electoral technical assistance.



# STATUS OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

Even though many formal barriers to women holding political office have been removed in most countries, gender gaps in political representation remain high. The barriers are significant including entrenched social norms and gender bias. A UNDP report published in 2023 holds that nearly half the world's population believe that men make better political leaders than women do.<sup>9</sup> In 2023, only 9.8 per cent of countries had women Heads of Government, compared to a decade ago when the figure stood at 7.3 per cent. Women today represent 22.8 per cent of Cabinet Ministers and only 13 countries have gender-equal cabinets.<sup>10</sup> The year 2023 also registered the slowest rate of progress in gender parity in women's political representation in six years, growing a mere 0.4 percentage points. As women attained only 26.5 percent of members of parliaments globally, the Inter-Parliamentary Union's (IPU) report on the Women in parliament in 2022, concluded that at this rate, parity will not be achieved for more than 80 years.<sup>11</sup>

The effect of increased women's representation in national parliaments is well documented worldwide. According to a recent survey of 65 countries, women's presence in politics restores trust in government. It increases the amount of attention political bodies pay to social welfare, legal protection, and government and business transparency.<sup>12</sup> Increased women's representation in the legislature is robustly associated with reduced infant and child mortality as well as greater spending on health.<sup>13</sup> When at least 35 percent of a country's legislature are women, the risk of conflict relapse is close to zero, and when women are unrepresented in parliaments, the risk of relapse increases over time.<sup>14</sup> Recent research in Europe and Central Asia has shown that increasing the proportion of women in parliament promotes economic growth. For example, a 10 percent increase in women's representation in parliament leads to a 0.74 percent increase in GDP growth.<sup>15</sup>

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9 See 2023 Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI): Breaking down gender biases: Shifting social norms towards gender equality (June 2023): [2023 Gender Social Norms Index \(GSNI\) | Human Development Reports \(undp.org\)](https://www.undp.org/publications/2023-gender-social-norms-index-gsni)

10 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/news/2023/09/human-rights-council-hears-special-procedures-have-achieved-gender-parity-first-time>

11 See IPU *Women in Parliament in 2022: The Year in Review*. <https://www.ipu.org/resources/publications/reports/2023-03/women-in-parliament-2022>

12 Hudson et al; Inter-Parliamentary Union.

13 Valeriya Mechkova and Ruth Carlitz, University of Gothenburg.

14 DeMeritt et al.

15 Ziroat Mirziyoyeva and Raufhon Salahodjaev "Does representation of women in parliament promote economic growth? Considering evidence from Europe and Central Asia" April 2023. <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpos.2023.1120287/full>

According to the [UN gender quota portal](#), less than half of the countries worldwide have adopted legislated gender quotas for their national parliament. There are only 93 countries with gender quotas out of 193 countries.<sup>16</sup> TSMs at the local level are less well documented. UN Women's database on women in local government indicates that as of January 1st, 2023, there are 88 countries that have introduced legislated gender quotas for local elections. As of 1 January 2023, with the exception of Cuba, all the countries with gender parity (or a greater share of women than men) in their lower or single house of parliament had adopted some form of gender quota.<sup>17</sup>

## 2024: A key year for advocating for 50/50 gender parity

In its Sixty-fifth session, focussed on Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, the Commission on the Status of Women affirmed the global normative target of 50/50 in elected positions.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the CEDAW Committee is developing a new General Recommendation (GR) on women's equal and inclusive representation in decision-making systems. One key message of the GR will be to recommend parity in all decision-making systems. In recommendations following recent country reviews, the Committee has already recommended that states take measures to reach parity. The new GR is expected to be adopted in the fall of 2024 with the final goal of equal representation *in decision-making systems*, i.e. not only representation in candidate lists.

In anticipation of this, UNDP should explicitly underscore the target of 50/50 representation of women and men and advocate for bold targets for each context to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender parity in elected positions through the application of TSMs in electoral processes”.

As the UN Secretary General's notes in the report *Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing periodic and genuine elections*, [What we do: Leadership and political participation | UN Women – Headquarters](#) [What we do: Leadership and political participation | UN Women – Headquarters](#) accelerating women's full and effective participation in public life remains a priority for the UN, but it requires a renewed commitment to achieve a 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected position and to prevent violence against women in politics. Such measures should be designed to achieve the goal of a 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected positions.<sup>19</sup>

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16 See <https://genderquota.org/>

17 See <https://genderquota.org/>

18 The internationally agreed conclusions of the 2021 Commission on the Status of Women include encouraging the implementation of measures and mechanisms, including appropriate mechanisms to track progress, to achieve the goal of 50/50 gender balance at all levels of elected positions. See [N2107907.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

19 See the UN Secretary General's report *Strengthening the role of the United Nations in enhancing periodic and genuine elections and the promotion of democratization* (2021). <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N21/215/29/PDF/N2121529.pdf?OpenElement> [What we do: Leadership and political participation | UN Women – Headquarters](#) [What we do: Leadership and political participation | UN Women – Headquarters](#)





# UNDP'S COMMITMENT TO PROMOTE WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

As a close and trusted partner for governments and with an extensive network of partnerships, UNDP is uniquely positioned to undertake TSM advocacy efforts through multi-stakeholder approaches. UNDP is one of the largest deliverers of governance assistance in the UN system and works across a broad spectrum of governance systems, providing governance-specific policy support and programming. As the UN's technical lead agency on electoral assistance, UNDP strengthened its efforts for inclusive political processes that enable women to participate on equal terms—across 42 countries assisted by UNDP electoral work, the share of all voters registered who were women increased from 47 to 50 percent since 2017. A recently published stocktaking of UNDP-supported projects and programmes that seek to advance women's political participation mapped 73 projects across 54 countries.<sup>20</sup> In the last two years, UNDP through electoral assistance projects has assisted more than 20 countries focused on introducing TSMs to ensure women's participation and representation in elected office.

## UN Secretary General's *Call to Action for Human Rights*

The UN Secretary-General's *Call to Action for Human Rights* identifies Gender Equality and Equal Rights of Women as one of seven thematic priority areas of action. It requires UNDP, as well as all other UN entities, to engage with and support Member States, civil society and other stakeholders on policies and legislation that promote gender equality and equal rights for women as well as on laws that support women's equal representation and participation in all spheres.<sup>21</sup> The *Call to Action* is the Secretary-General's transformative vision for human rights and identifies overarching guiding principles and action areas. A key action area with specific UN commitments is to engage with and support Member States on policies and legislation that promote gender equality and equal rights for women, including, in particular, repealing discriminatory laws and enacting laws, eliminating violence against women and girls in all spheres, ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights, and striving for women's equal representation and participation in all spheres. Under the *Call to Action*, alongside dismantling discriminatory laws, the UN System identified the increased use of TSMs as another strategic intervention.<sup>22</sup> These two strategic interventions are both advanced by a task team chaired by UN Women that includes UNDP, DPPA, DPO, EPSG, and OHCHR to strengthen the UN's systematic advocacy for and support of efforts toward the equal rights of women and girls.

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20 See [Strengthening Women's Political Participation: A Snapshot of UNDP-supported Projects Across the Globe | United Nations Development Programme](#)

21 See [https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/index.shtml#:~:text=Focusing percent20on percent20seven percent20thematic percent20areas,robust percent20civic percent20space percent20for percent20everybody percent3B](https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/index.shtml#:~:text=Focusing%20on%20seven%20thematic%20areas,robust%20civic%20space%20for%20everybody%20)

22 See <https://www.un.org/en/content/action-for-human-rights/assets/pdf/info%20sheet%20-%20gender.pdf#:~:text=A%20notable%20deliverable%20of%20the%20Task%20Team%20is,measures%20to%20accelerate%20the%20inclusion%20of%20women%20across>



UNDP's gender equality strategy 2022-2025 affirms UN Women as the main partner in the UN system on gender equality and women's empowerment. Indeed, UN Women has a universal mandate to lead, promote and coordinate efforts to fully realize women's rights and opportunities with global normative, coordination and operational activities and functions. Regarding women's political participation, UN Women works on measures across the electoral cycle, including through coordinated efforts with UN system partners. One primary focus is the adoption and implementation of TSMs to increase the number of women in politics.<sup>23</sup>

UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025,<sup>24</sup> gender equality strategy 2022-2025<sup>25</sup> and UNDP's Global Programme, Governance for People and Planet,<sup>26</sup> reflect that UNDP's governance commitments under Signature Solution 2 of the Strategic Plan commit UNDP to advancing gender equality and women's political empowerment with bolder approaches and initiatives. The Gender Equality Strategy also prioritizes changing harmful social norms and investing in evidence and analysis, such as *UNDP's Gender and Social Norms Index*,<sup>27</sup> to advocate policies to tackle deep-seated negative norms and harmful gender stereotypes and practices.

The **UN Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace**<sup>28</sup> (July 2023) affirms the need to dismantle patriarchy and oppressive power structures and transform gendered power dynamics in peace and security. It recognizes that there is a context of growing backlash against women's rights, which requires that governments, the UN and all segments of society take concrete action to challenge and transform gender norms, value systems and institutional structures that perpetuate exclusion or the status quo, and calls for supporting the introduction of concrete measures including quotas, targets and incentives with robust accountability frameworks with clear milestones towards achieving women's equal participation.

Another important strategic commitment for advancing women's political participation is UNDP's 10-Point Action Agenda for Advancing Gender Equality in Crisis Settings (10PAA), which is central to UNDP's new Crisis Offer and the Gender Equality Strategy 2022-2025. Strengthening women's participation is a crucial priority of the roadmap, and the action agenda includes specific commitments to support women's agency as leaders of peace processes and political institutions.

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23 See <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation>


24 See <https://strategicplan.undp.org/>

25 See <https://genderequalitystrategy.undp.org/>

26 See UNDP's Global Programme, Governance for People and Planet (G4PP) is one of the programmatic mechanisms for delivery of UNDP's integrated governance offer to deliver Signature Solution 2 on governance of UNDP's Strategic Plan 2022-2025. It is primarily designed to respond to country needs, mobilise and utilise UNDP's internal expertise at the country, regional (particularly through the regional hubs) and global levels, as well as relevant partner organisations. See <https://www.undp.org/governance/publications/global-programme-project-document-governance-people-and-planet>

27 See <https://hdr.undp.org/content/2023-gender-social-norms-index-gsni>

28 See <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/our-common-agenda-policy-brief-new-agenda-for-peace-en.pdf>



# HOW CAN UNDP COUNTRY OFFICES GENERATE SUPPORT FOR THE INTRODUCTION OF TSMS IN ELECTION PROCESSES?

How can UNDP Country Offices generate support for the introduction of TSMS in election processes? Strengthening the inclusiveness and representativeness of institutions and processes is at the heart of UNDP's mandate. Moreover, UNDP is tasked with helping countries accelerate progress on gender equality and women's empowerment as a global priority. In many countries, UNDP supports and advocates for the introduction of TSMS by working with electoral management bodies, policymakers and women and women's rights organisations active in politics. Moreover, in many countries, UNDP has supported and advised on the introduction and implementation of TSMS through, for example, providing technical assistance to the parliaments and EMBs in drafting the legislation, rules and procedures, or capacity building of relevant stakeholders. These types of support and advice, including related to changes of the electoral system are considered electoral assistance and, as such is governed by the above-mentioned UN-wide framework. Any reform affecting participation in the election process is an opportunity to consider advocating for TSMS. UNDP Country Offices should be on the lookout for these opportunities and be ready to identify entry points to engage.

## Building an enabling environment for the introduction and sustainability of TSMS

The effort to support the introduction of TSMS in the election process is best anchored in long-term women's leadership and political participation programming. All programmes aimed at overcoming obstacles to women's political participation and leadership, whether at the individual or structural levels (e.g., programmes to change discriminatory legal frameworks), are important catalysts and enablers for efforts to introduce and maintain TSMS. While electoral assistance projects (UNDP supports on average 30+ projects each year) and parliamentary development programmes (UNDP supports parliamentary strengthening initiatives in 60+ countries) are important intervention areas, other entry points that build fertile ground for gender-sensitive political and electoral reforms and TSMS include:

- ◆ Advocacy campaigns to address discriminatory laws affecting women's lives;
- ◆ Efforts to change public perception on the status of women in society are essential for building a critical mass of women active in the public sphere and the amplification of women's voices in public spaces;

- ◆ Programmes to support governments translate their commitments under UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (the “women, peace and security agenda”) into national action plans<sup>29</sup> and
- ◆ The development of national gender equality strategies.

Taking a systemic approach to strengthening women’s political participation supporting and leveraging linkages across programme intervention areas requires UNDP Country Offices to strengthen and enhance integrated delivery across multiple teams.

TSMs create the opportunity to increase the numbers of women elected to office. However, if they are not sustained, with ongoing advocacy on the importance of women’s role and contribution as well as through programmes to sustain and support women in politics especially measures targeting gender-based violence and disinformation, backsliding and backlashes are likely to happen.

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29 1325 National Action Plans – An initiative of the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom ([peacewomen.org](http://peacewomen.org))



## UNDP supported policy advocacy for the adoption of a TSM at the local government level in the Maldives

Women's empowerment and gender equality has always been high on UNDP Maldives' agenda. Most notably, UNDP supported amending the Decentralization Act that included successful advocacy for introducing a 33% quota for women in local councils. The adoption of the amended Decentralization Act in December 2019<sup>30</sup> meant a significant increase in the number of women represented in the local councils.<sup>31</sup>

### Key milestones in the adoption of a TSM at the local level

- ◆ In late 2018, following the Presidential Election, UNDP supported the development of the new administration's Strategic Action Plan (<https://presidency.gov.mv/SAP/>) which provided UNDP the opportunity to engage in policy reform with the government. With this, UNDP, the Local Government Authority and the President's Office began discussions on amendments to the Decentralization Act including the proposed TSM.
- ◆ In early 2019, a task force to work on the Decentralization Act amendment was formed with the representation of the President's Office, Local Government Authority, Attorney General's Office and the Ministry of Home Affairs (the Minister to whom the Local Government Authority reports and chairs its board). Discussions were held with key stakeholders on TSMs and other key amendments to the Act. Potential areas for amendments were proposed to the President.
- ◆ In mid-2019, UNDP together with the President's Office, Local Government Authority and the Attorney General's Office (responsible for law making in the Maldives) held consultations with key stakeholders and local communities on the proposed amendments.
- ◆ In late 2019, proposed amendments were submitted to the parliament. Transparency Maldives, the local chapter for Transparency International, lobbied for the amendments at the parliament including the proposed quota on behalf of the agencies. Political will was a critical factor in getting the Bill through Parliament. The landmark 33% quota was passed by the Parliament and the President ratified it.<sup>32</sup>
- ◆ In April 2021, the long-awaited local council elections took place. 39% of the seats were won by women.

UNDP's work on women's political leadership in 2020 saw skills-building of 108 women candidates contesting for local council seats and Women's Development Committees from three atolls. In order to ensure the successful implementation of the quota, UNDP continued its work on women's empowerment and leadership to ensure that more women had the capacity and opportunity to take up leadership positions in the local councils, the government and other agencies.<sup>33</sup> The trainings were designed to target different audiences including women's wings of political parties, members of women's development committees, women who were interested in leadership and young girls.

30 See <https://edition.mv/edition/13806>

31 The Local council elections in April 2021 rendered 370 seats to women. <https://www.iri.org/news/gains-for-women-and-democracy-in-the-local-council-elections-in-the-maldives/>

32 See <https://presidency.gov.mv/Press/Article/22835>; <https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/landmark-changes-ratified-to-decentralisation-law-149641>

33 See <https://www.undp.org/maldives/news/undp-commences-work-helping-strengthen-role-women-within-political-parties>

## When is the right moment for UNDP to advocate for and support the introduction of TSMs in election processes?

A campaign to build the momentum for the adoption of TSMs needs to be planned around the electoral cycle (pre, during and post-election periods). Different forms of TSMs will have different timing implications. To plan and execute a successful TSM campaign, it is critical to know when key decisions and actions need to take place.

In line with global best practice, electoral reform (including introduction of TSMs) should be concluded at least one year prior to the election. Consequently, advocacy campaigns for the consideration of TSMs in the legal framework for elections should be planned as far in advance of an electoral event as possible. At different stages of the electoral cycle, UNDP should seize the momentum around certain national policy milestones to advocate for the introduction of TSMs.

Regardless of the timing to build the momentum for the adoption of TSMs, UNDP Resident Representatives should consistently underline and raise awareness about the positive impact of increased women's participation in law and policy-making and the demonstrated correlation between the achievement of women's rights and progress on the sustainable development goals. For this purpose, the UN System wide *Note and Key Messages On the use of Temporary Special Measures, including quotas, to fast track women's equal participation in decision-making* provides important guidance.<sup>34</sup>

### Pre-election phase

The rules related to the election process are determined by the legal framework for elections which, depending on each country, may stem from the constitution, the electoral law and other laws that affect elections, such as laws on political parties, candidate registration etc. Every reform that affects one of these legal instruments and relates to participation in political processes offers an opportunity to advocate for adopting TSMs to increase women's representation in elected office. Opportunities to advocate for introducing TSMs in these legal instruments must be planned in the pre-election and post-election phases and lead to TSM implementation during the election.

In the aftermath of political crises or peace agreements, the governance reforms that occur provide an opportunity to strengthen women's rights and representation in governance processes. Constitutional revisions and constitutional building processes to reform the electoral law and the political party law can create momentum to build accountability for women's rights and advocate for gender-responsive legislation and policies, including TSMs. As UN Women notes, post-conflict constitutional and transitional negotiations present an entry point for the introduction of electoral gender quotas as it is a moment in time when constitutional and legislative reforms are ongoing and the political and other costs of accepting new measures can be lower, since the status quo is already disrupted.

A successful advocacy campaign to bring about a TSM takes time. Therefore, it is crucial to launch it as soon as possible in the negotiation of a settlement to the crisis or in aftermath of conflict or political

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34 See the UN Systemwide Note and Key Messages On the use of Temporary Special Measures, including quotas, to fast track women's equal participation in decision-making, UN (May 2021).

crisis, once negotiations start on governance and legal reforms within the framework of the transition to democracy.

Around the world, women's civil society groups and gender equality advocates have asserted their demands for participation and representation in post-conflict elections and/or transitional constitutional reviews. From the earliest possible moment, the UNDP Country Office, drawing on its strategic and comparative advantages, may actively look for ways to support gender equality advocates and women's civil society groups in their advocacy efforts.

## **Post-election phase**

Legislative and constitutional reforms related to participation in political processes may occur in the post-election phase as a fulfilment of electoral pledges or to respond to political parties' or other national actors' demands to strengthen democracy and improve governance.

The post-election phase may be more ideal for adopting TSMs or strengthening existing ones if national or local elections result in an important increase in the number of elected women. This success can bolster cooperation between elected women, women's groups and gender equality advocates on gender equality issues, such as adopting TSMs to increase women's representation in elected offices. The opposite can also be true. If few women were elected in the electoral process or there was a decrease in the number of women, this can mobilize women's organizations and other stakeholders to change the electoral law. When advocacy campaigns are initiated in the post-election phase, advocacy activities can take place over a longer period, namely over the duration of the parliamentary mandate. A good starting point in informing these and providing momentum are post-elections audits and evaluations.

## **Considerations for the adoption of TSMs by political parties**

The right moment to advocate for the adoption, by political parties, of TSMs to help increase women's representation in elected parliaments is either in the pre-election phase or in the post-election phase including around the timing and process of party conferences and meetings.

In the pre-electoral period, advocacy might focus on efforts to influence political parties to adopt TSMs applicable for just that election. Although the impact of this approach may seem limited, often with sustained advocacy efforts, political parties ended up integrating them into their internal rules. Incremental progress is critical for advocacy work.





In **Lebanon**, thanks to UNDP's policy advocacy campaign with UN Women to support the introduction of TSMs, the Progressive Socialist Party, which has never nominated women candidates, included several women on its lists for the 2022 national elections. Although women were not put in winnable positions, this set a precedent from which the UN can build to encourage future advocacy and reforms.

In the post-electoral period, the advocacy should focus on influencing political parties to conduct gender-sensitive internal governance reviews to take effect in the election phase. The post-election phase can be more suitable for adopting TSMs or strengthening existing ones if national or local elections result in an important increase in the number of elected women. This success can be built on in terms of building a critical mass and stronger voice of support among elected women for the adoption of TSMs in the political party rules.<sup>35</sup>

## Political parties and TSMs

Actions that political parties can take to promote legislated gender quotas include:

- ◆ Galvanizing party support for candidate quotas and incorporating these quotas into party statutes;
- ◆ Establishing guidelines for candidate recruitment in party-nomination committees;
- ◆ Ensuring implementation and placement of women candidates in winnable seats;
- ◆ Working with civil society organizations to oversee the implementation of quotas;
- ◆ Cultivating strategic alliances with men, since men play a critical role in building internal party support for these kinds of policies;
- ◆ Expanding the pool of women candidates and training those candidates; and
- ◆ Encouraging multilateral relations and sharing experiences across countries and regions.

Source: *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation* (UNDP/NDI 2012). <https://www.undp.org/publications/empowering-women-stronger-political-parties>

35 See *Empowering Women for Stronger Political Parties A Guidebook to Promote Women's Political Participation* (UNDP/NDI 2012). <https://www.undp.org/publications/empowering-women-stronger-political-parties>

## National policy milestones to consider

The development of a national strategy and national action plans on gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as the development of a national strategy on women's political empowerment, are crucial moments for advocating the introduction of TSMs to increase women's representation in elected offices. Governments' adoption of Agenda 2030 and commitments to achieving SDG 5 on gender equality and women's empowerment, as well as SDG 16 on peaceful and just societies are also vital entry points. SDG 16.7, in particular commits member states to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels. This extends to ensuring that the legislature reflects the composition of the country's general population.<sup>36</sup>

The development of the National Action Plan (NAP) on the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 'Women, Peace and Security' is also a significant opportunity to advocate for the introduction of TSMs.

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36 SDG indicator 16.7.1 provides "proportions of positions in national and local institutions, including (a) the legislatures; (b) the public service; and (c) the judiciary, compared to national distributions, by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups".





# CONSIDERATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE TSM ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

**“In an advocacy effort, in between the place where you begin and the goal you are trying to achieve, lies a path filled with obstacles to be overcome, opportunities to be seized and most especially a set of complex actors and institutions you need to engage in different ways.”**

*Fulfilling the Promises: A Practical Guide for UN Advocacy to Promote Implementation of the 2030 Agenda*<sup>37</sup>

To ensure the effectiveness of a policy advocacy campaign, several key elements must be present:

- ◆ The campaign should be led by a robust national institution or institutions. These institutions should be inclusive, have a stellar reputation, and boast a mix of skills and influential networks;
- ◆ The campaign's objective should be attainable;
- ◆ A deep understanding of the political context should underpin the campaign;
- ◆ The campaign should prioritize locally proposed and contextualized strategies or TSMs;
- ◆ Planning should be meticulous, with a clear avoidance of improvisation;
- ◆ Advocacy messaging should be impactful, and the selection of messengers should be strategic.

In **Ethiopia**, UNDP and UN Women advocated for TSMs based on the following facts and ground realities:

- ◆ Men and women political actors consider that affirmative action undermines the principle of merit-based competition;
- ◆ There is limited political will among political parties to consider TSMs both in their internal processes as well as in the general electoral processes. Specifically, opposition party leaders believe that TSMs will disadvantage them as women are not encouraged to join opposition parties;
- ◆ There was very limited understanding and appreciation of the value addition of adopting TSMs by political parties;
- ◆ Women members of political parties have limited impact within their respective political parties, and lack the capacities to drive the needed changes within parties;
- ◆ Women members of political parties have limited access to financial resources needed to conduct a successful campaign and most political parties are reluctant to provide adequate funding for women candidates.

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<sup>37</sup> See [https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy\\_report\\_web.pdf](https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/Advocacy_report_web.pdf)



## **1. The campaign is conducted by an inclusive campaign team, has a good reputation and possesses complementary skills and circles of influence**

The principle of national ownership should guide UNDP's policy advocacy work at the country level in terms of advocacy campaign design and implementation. National ownership is the primary condition for the sustainability of the policy change to be achieved. UNDP is often asked by various national actors to provide practical and financial support for their advocacy efforts. However, UNDP can also contribute by convening different stakeholders. While successful campaigns are most often the result of organizations effectively working together towards a common goal, every advocacy campaign is led, guided, and implemented by an organization or coalition of organizations.

The organization or coalition of organizations partnering with UNDP for the advocacy campaign must meet several criteria, including but not limited to:

- ◆ Being recognized for quality analysis and advice on legal and regulatory frameworks pertaining to women's political participation and representation;
- ◆ Possessing the essential skills to lead the campaign credibly;
- ◆ Maintaining contacts with key decision-makers, ensuring access and credibility;
- ◆ Holding the trust of, demonstrating sensitivity towards, and connecting with women in political parties, women in politics at large, and other women active in political spheres; and
- ◆ Demonstrating a daily commitment to the campaign's objectives.

UNDP should also support building a broader network of advocates for adopting TSMs. This process of coalition building among women CSOs (natural allies) and others such as media outlets, current and former men politicians, and men champions (unusual allies) is crucial for the success of the advocacy campaign. It is recommended that UNDP puts emphasis on it. Indeed, it helps to demonstrate broad and diverse support for the advocacy campaign, which is likely to influence the decision-makers who have the authority to adopt TSMs. In addition, it enables the diversification of expertise and resources, expands the circle of mobilization and influence, and reduces risks through solidarity between partners.





In **Georgia** the Task Force on women's political participation was co-chaired by UNDP and NDI. It is a temporary, informal coalition, created in 2014 with the goal to increase women's political participation, including by advocating for mandatory gender quotas. When formed, the coalition included more than 20 local and international organizations and it has pushed since then for the adoption of legislative gender quotas. The Task Force established a supporters group that consisted of representatives from legislative and executive authorities as well as parliamentary and non-parliamentary political parties who support the idea of increasing women's political participation in Georgia.

## 2. The campaign has a feasible objective

Efforts to affect the policy making process are determined by three main factors:<sup>38</sup>

What are the challenges or obstacles to moving the policy making process in the desired direction?

What is the leverage to push the process in the desired direction?

How far can you expect the process to move as a result?

Obstacles to the adoption of TSMs in the election process vary according to country contexts. Yet, backsliding and pushback against gender equality and women's rights are common, sometimes in the context of a broader democratic backsliding.<sup>39</sup> In other contexts, backsliding on gender equality and women's rights occurred relatively soon after the enshrinement of women's rights. Media and information contexts that are increasingly marked with high levels of gendered misinformation and hate speech fuel backlash on gender equality.

Leverage is essentially what a stakeholder can bring to the policy debate together with the opportunities that a stakeholder can capitalize on to address the challenges and start the process moving.<sup>40</sup> A good understanding of obstacles and leverage allows you to make informed and realistic decisions on the approach to advocacy efforts you will adopt.<sup>41</sup>

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38 See <https://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org/33-the-core-strategic-focus-of-your-campaign>

39 See Democracy, gender equality and democratic backsliding <https://theloop.ecpr.eu/democracy-gender-equality-and-democratic-backsliding/> and the UN Women, discussion paper, "Democratic backsliding and the backlash against women's rights: Understanding the current challenges for feminist politics" (2020). <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/06/discussion-paper-democratic-backsliding-and-the-backlash-against-womens-rights>

40 See <https://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org/33-the-core-strategic-focus-of-your-campaign>

41 See [Understanding Resistance to Inclusive Peace Processes | United States Institute of Peace \(usip.org\)](#)

Country	Examples of obstacles to change	Examples of leverage	Result
<b>Lebanon</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only political party leaders make decisions</li> <li>Lack of clarity in the electoral calendar regarding whether national elections should be held or not.</li> <li>Misunderstanding the concept of TSM (it violates the principle of equality between women and men)</li> <li>Political parties believe women generally receive fewer votes than men candidates</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women were at the heart of and played a paramount role in the Lebanese October 17 popular uprising in 2019, which increased significantly women's presence in the public sphere.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption of voluntary gender quota by a number of political parties for the national and most likely for the municipal elections to come</li> </ul>
<b>Ethiopia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Men and women political actors consider that affirmative actions undermine the principle of merit-based competition;</li> <li>Women members of political parties have limited impact within their respective political parties;</li> <li>There is a very limited understanding and appreciation by political parties of what they will gain by adopting TSMs.</li> <li>Opposition party leaders believe that TSMs will disadvantage them as women are not encouraged to join opposition parties.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ruling party which has the absolute majority of seats has adopted voluntary gender quotas.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption by the parliament of a law provision stating that the number of women candidates is one of the factors to be considered when determining the allotted campaign airtime for each political party</li> <li>Adoption in the election law of gender-targeted public funding for political parties</li> </ul>
<b>Georgia</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Women should not need quotas if they have relevant skills.</li> <li>Women members of political parties have limited impact within their respective political parties;</li> <li>Political parties do not have clearly defined rules for attracting, recruiting, engaging and promoting women candidates, which hinders the inclusion of more women in political life.</li> <li>Political parties do not have internal regulation or mechanism for prohibiting sexual harassment in the workplace.</li> <li>Political parties did not develop and implement a professional development system for party members, which creates an unequal environment, especially for women.</li> <li>In times of political polarization, gender equality is de-prioritized.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The change in public opinion according to National Democratic Institute (NDI) 's 2021 public attitude survey showed that about half of the population supports an equal representation of women and men in Parliament.</li> <li>According to the International Republican Institute (IRI) 2022 public opinion survey, more people would support a woman candidate vs. man candidate, if a woman and man candidate were running for office with equal qualifications.<sup>42</sup></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adoption by the parliament of Georgia of legislative gender quotas until 2032 for the parliamentary elections with enforcement measures.</li> <li>Adoption by the parliament of Georgia of legislative gender quotas for the Local Self-Government Elections until 2028 with enforcement measures.</li> <li>Adoption by the parliament of Georgia of an amendment to extend the duration of the legislative gender quotas for the parliamentary elections.</li> </ul>

42 See [https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/IRI-Poll-Presentation-Georgia-September2022\\_Final.pdf](https://www.iri.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/IRI-Poll-Presentation-Georgia-September2022_Final.pdf)

### 3. The campaign is based on an in-depth understanding of the political context

To be able to determine the best type of campaign to undertake, it is necessary to conduct a broad mapping exercise to uncover relevant contextual factors such as:

- ◆ The vital political actors who have the authority to support and help adopt TSMs, which are likely to include political parties, parliament and electoral management bodies;
- ◆ The specific opinions, positions, interests, hopes, and fears of the various stakeholders;
- ◆ The level of interest of the players identified in addressing the issue of underrepresentation of women in elected offices (how important is it?);
- ◆ The non-governmental actors who are allies, supporters and opponents in the advocacy efforts; and
- ◆ The politically opportune timing to launch the advocacy campaign.

Identifying who has the formal authority to adopt TSMs in elections processes is of critical importance. These actors can be persons and/or institutions. The entire policy advocacy strategy will aim at getting these players to adopt the TSMs. Many actors support gender equality in principle but have little impetus for reforms. It is essential to understand the issue from their perspective to be able to design and develop an advocacy campaign that responds, to the extent possible, to their fears and hopes.

#### Examples of common negative misconceptions towards TSMs with responses<sup>43</sup>

**Misconception:** It is not fair to introduce measures which are discriminatory, and temporary special measures would discriminate against men.

**Response:** Statistics show that it is actually women who already face systemic exclusion from the political arena through longstanding bias and discrimination. This existing and prevalent problem needs to be urgently tackled. Thus, special measures are tackling discrimination and promoting equality. Short-term affirmative action measures have long been seen as a measure to tackle other issues, such as discrimination based on race, caste or age. The focus should be on equality of outcomes. Over time, when the playing field has been evened out, special measures can be removed.

**Misconception:** Quotas are undemocratic. People should be able to vote for who they want to and not be forced to vote for women (in reserved seats).

**Response:** One of the most fundamental principles of democracy is that men and women should have equal rights. Women should have the right to be involved in the political decisions that affect their lives. A wider range of different voices will be heard and will inform the law/policy-making process, thereby enriching democracy.

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43 See [iKnow Politics resource booklet\\_undp\\_pacific\\_part2.pdf](#) ([iknowpolitics.org](http://iknowpolitics.org))

**Misconception:** Temporary special measures result in people getting elected because of their gender, not their qualifications.

**Response:** Women can be just as qualified as men to represent the community, but women's qualifications are often downgraded or dismissed. In any case, research shows quotas do not lead to unqualified women getting elected. Members of parliament are qualified in a range of different ways – through their education, professional history and life experiences. Numerous studies have found that gender quotas do not produce unqualified women candidates and may even increase candidate quality. Indeed, quotas improve the overall quality of office holders by displacing “mediocre men” with better qualified women (Besley et al. 2017).<sup>44</sup>

**Misconception:** Women should be elected to parliament on merit. If women are not required to compete in open elections, then the “best people” will not necessarily be elected. The focus should be on the “best candidates”, not special measures for women candidates.

**Response:** The definition of what makes a “good” politician is highly subjective. Bias towards the status quo means that the qualities of those who have been in power historically (ethnic majority elite men) set the bar for all candidates. *Quotas are essential to a meritocratic system for they open up politics to everyone.* Recruitment without gender quotas is not meritocratic. Instead, it is based on (male) gender, privilege, and an uneven playing field. A ‘meritorious’ government is undoubtedly one that genuinely represents and reflects the views of all members of society and which brings the perspectives, skills and experiences of both men and women to the policy-making function.

**Misconception:** If women are given special help, then other groups will also want to be given particular preference to join the legislature.

**Response:** It is up to each country to decide what balance of representation they need in the country to ensure meaningful representative democracy.

**Misconception:** Women should not compete for other political seats when already they have reserve seats or allocated quotas.

**Response:** The number of women in competitive seats may dwindle following the introduction of reserve seats. This can be the result of deliberate campaigns spread by anti-quota interests. Even where there is an increase in the number of women in non-reserved seats, the existence of TSMs will still be an important measure towards attaining 50/50 gender parity in the parliament.

Likewise, it is crucial to identify allies among these actors because they can influence other actors who have the authority to adopt TSMs, and in doing so, political support is created, and the policy change becomes achievable.

Knowing the levers or actors who can influence the decision-makers with the authority to adopt TSMs throughout the policy process is critical. These levers can be journalists, academics, associations, family members, NGO leaders, political donors or others. Knowing the circle of advisors around a decision-maker is also crucial. “It is often said that decision-makers set the agenda, but advisors and bureaucrats are the ones who elaborate the alternatives on an agenda issue.”<sup>45</sup> Levers identified in the case studies as having greater influence on those who have formal authority to adopt TSMs, include journalists, media outlets (traditional and new social media), women's associations and NGO leaders. Other allies with influence included development partners such as donors.

44 Aldrich and Daniel 2019; Allen, Cutts, and Campbell 2014; Baltrunaite et al. 2014; Besley et al. 2017; Franceschet and Piscopo 2012; Murray, 2010b, 2014; Nugent and Krook 2015; O'Brien 2012; Schwindt-Bayer 2011; Weeks and Baldez 2015.

45 See <https://advocacyguide.icpolicyadvocacy.org/431-decisionmakers-advisors-and-institutions-inside-government>

## Identifying levels of interest

Identifying the level of interest of the actors identified in the issue of the underrepresentation of women in elected offices is essential. The table below identifies possible roles and approaches for UNDP when levels of interest are limited.

Identifying interest		
Interest level	Possible roles and approaches for UNDP	Comment
No existing interest from those who have the authority to make the policy change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The UN resident coordinator, UNDP resident representative, and a team of programme staff can help shape the initial thinking</li> <li>• Coordinate with other UN entities that may be engaged in advocacy, e.g. UN Women</li> <li>• UNDP CO can map actors who are working to address the issue of underrepresentation of women in elected offices (CSOs, gender equality advocates, etc...)</li> <li>• UNDP CO can support identified actors to create the type of discussion that puts pressure on those who have authority to get the issue of underrepresentation of women on their policy agenda (Building community support)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP can start by building community support, which may later generate political support.</li> </ul>
Some interest exists from those who have the authority to make the policy change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UNDP CO can map and engage with political allies of the change</li> <li>• UNDP CO can map and engage with supportive political actors (women members of political parties or women members of parliament, or supportive men parliamentarians and supportive men political leaders by building political support)</li> <li>• UNDP CO can map and engage with the actors who are working to address the issue of underrepresentation of women in elected offices (CSOs, gender equality advocates, development partners)</li> <li>• UNDP CO can support and provide a platform for the design and implementation of the advocacy strategy by the national organization or the coalition of organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political support and community support are mutually supportive.</li> <li>• UNDP is more likely to succeed but needs to undertake good planning.</li> </ul>



## Building community support for TSMs in the election process

Community support for TSMs increases the chances of advocacy campaign success. When policymakers receive one consistent, coherent message, they will more likely support it. Therefore, supporting opinion change among target groups that can put pressure on the policymakers who have the decision to adopt TSMs is an essential pillar of the advocacy campaign for the organization or the coalition of organizations implementing the advocacy campaign. Community support can be built through various activities that UNDP can support. This includes media campaigning and community forums, meetings, networking events, and awareness raising activities to draw attention to the under representation of women in elected offices and expose the proposed TSMs.

### Identification of allies, supporters and opponents

It is of utmost importance to identify allies, supporters and opponents of TSMs in the election processes. Successful campaigns are not those that convince people who oppose change but those that empower and encourage potential allies, that is, people who are neither active supporters nor active opponents. A frequent mistake made by campaigning teams is to focus only on the most vocal advocates who are already onboard or antagonists who have voiced their opinion in public and are therefore unlikely to shift it. UNDP should provide the organization or coalition of organizations leading the advocacy campaign with the support (technical expertise but not only) needed to identify allies, supporters and opponents of TSMs.

- ◆ Natural allies can range from national women's NGOs to networks of women's organizations or coalitions of women's NGOs supporting women's political participation and representation, women's wings in political parties and others.
- ◆ Supporters can range from civil society organizations working on domestic observations to research institutions, journalists or media outlets, or supportive men political leaders as well as development partners, including donors.
- ◆ Opponents are those who oppose TSMs because they consider they will be impacted negatively by the changes advocated (e.g. losing seats) or because of disagreement about gender equality and the roles of women and men in society. They might be, among others, political leaders, community leaders, religious leaders and media outlets (newspapers, TV, radio, including a range of social media users on Facebook, Twitter or blogs).

The mapping and identification of allies, supporters, and opponents is crucial as it will impact the activities to be designed and implemented within the framework of the advocacy campaign. For example, this mapping will affect the following activities:

- ◆ Activities to build alliances among natural allies and supporters;
- ◆ Activities to increase the influence of some allies over the decision-makers who have the decision to adopt TSMs (e.g. women's wings in political parties, women aspirant candidates); and
- ◆ Activities to influence opponents or to reduce their influence.

### Identifying an opportune timing to launch the advocacy campaign

- ◆ The right timing will result from an in-depth understanding of the following:
- ◆ Policy actors who have the formal authority to adopt TSMs;
- ◆ Political context and evolving public perceptions; and
- ◆ Processes that the decision to adopt TSMs has to go through.



In the case study examples, the timing of launching the campaign was connected to national and municipal elections. But there can be other specific events or processes that can be taken advantage of, including constitutional making process, constitutional review, legislative reform, a change in the leadership of a political party, and political party conferences.

#### 4. The campaign is based on locally proposed and contextualized TSMs

The mapping exercise should be accompanied by activities to put forward local contextualized proposals of TSMs to increase women's representation in elected offices.

In **Lebanon**, the advocacy campaign was initiated through the UNDP electoral assistance project, by commissioning policy research to identify the best possible scenarios to implement a gender quota or any other alternative TSM in Lebanon and preparing draft legal provisions to amend the Election Law No. 44/2017. The policy research and the draft legal provisions were devised by 3 Lebanese experts (2 men and one woman) selected among prominent university teachers and civil society activists who are not seen as supporting any political party or sectarian group. The draft legal provisions proposed the introduction of a gender quota which takes into account the sectarian distribution of seats within the parliament without changing it.

In **Ethiopia**, UNDP and UN Women commissioned a gender analysis of the draft 'Ethiopian Election, Political Parties Registration, and Election Ethics' proclamation. The latter was conducted in collaboration with the National Election Board of Ethiopia (EMB). The findings of the gender assessment were presented in a forum that brought together the Chairperson of the National Election Board of Ethiopia as well as members of the Democratic Institutions Working Group that were tasked with drafting the proclamation. The advocacy efforts supported by UNDP and UN Women, as well as other advocacy efforts supported by national actors such as women's organizations and by the EU and the *International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES)*, led to the adoption of several TSMs in the final version of the election law.

In **Georgia**, the UNDP and NDI, through the Task Force on Women's Political Participation and specifically through the affiliated national women's organizations supporting gender equality in Georgia, engaged with the working group under the Georgian Parliament which was established to come up with recommendations to amend the electoral code. The Task Force's Group of Supporters (see above) also played an important role in pushing the inclusion of legislated gender quotas in the recommendations for the reform of the electoral code.

#### 5. The campaign is based on careful planning and avoids improvisation

Successful policy advocacy work requires financial resources, personnel and expertise. All advocacy interventions have some type of risk. Sometimes, organizations implementing the advocacy campaign fail to carry out their assigned roles or planned actions. These are internal risks to consider. The political mapping exercise highlights external risks. Other risks will emerge during the implementation of the advocacy campaign. External threats should also be considered and addressed. The organization or coalition of organizations implementing the advocacy campaign should also think and develop answers to predictable challenges and reactions from opponents. UNDP and UN Women can support them to discuss and elaborate a mitigation plan to minimize any risk impacts—including shifts in specific roles and responsibilities to keep moving forward—if a crisis arises.

Monitoring and evaluation are essential elements for all advocacy campaigns supported by UNDP and UN Women. UNDP should help the organization or coalition of organizations implementing the advocacy campaign to include a monitoring and evaluation section in the advocacy campaign strategy. For example, UNDP and UN Women should support the organization of regular internal meetings where campaign team members come together to discuss the lessons learned from the implemented actions and any corrective actions. They may also support the monitoring of media's attention to the issue of under-representation, the monitoring of the audience and interest in the media's programmes promoting TSMs, or the monitoring of public awareness of TSMs reflected in social media, etc.

Reviewing the progress made at regular points will not only help to hold the organization or coalition of organizations leading the advocacy campaign accountable for planned actions but will also reveal whether or not the planned interventions are accomplishing the desired goals. If the campaign is not making progress, it is necessary to reassess and adjust plans.

## 6. The campaign is based on good tactics

Advocacy tactics are the actions or activities implemented to push toward the desired policy change. Decisions on the activities and actions to be conducted to move decision-makers towards adopting TSMs in election processes are strategic decisions that have to be made based on several factors, including timing, risk, resources and the political context stemming from the mapping exercise. Tactics should be discussed among and defined by the members of the organization or coalition of organizations implementing the advocacy campaign. The latter will guarantee the delineation of bold and innovative contextualized activities and approaches. Women members of political parties and women involved in politics should be part of this brainstorming to avoid interventions that might have perverse effects on the advocacy campaign or on them directly. UNDP can play an essential role in coordinating and supporting these efforts.

There is a large variety of actions which can be implemented and that UNDP can support, including:

- ◆ Supporting coalition building among different types of civil society organizations;
- ◆ Producing policy briefs and policy research;
- ◆ Organizing conferences, presentations and workshops;
- ◆ Lobbying with political party leaders and men members of parliament;
- ◆ Engaging women members of political parties (and any men “gender champions”) so that they put pressure on their political party leaders;
- ◆ Fostering shifts in attitudes, behaviours and norms through activities with the media, academia, community members and religious leaders so that they put pressure on the policymaking process;
- ◆ Producing documentary videos on the journeys and achievements of women leaders to put pressure on policy-makers;
- ◆ Supporting opinion-editorial articles in newspapers to inspire actions from policy-makers;
- ◆ Supporting TV programme and radio programmes; and
- ◆ Supporting the development of an advocacy webpage.

Efforts need to take into consideration the lessons from past advocacy initiatives. Actions and activities should also be implemented over an appropriate period of time.

## 7. The campaign is based on effective advocacy messaging and effective selection of messengers

Thinking strategically about the best possible messenger is as essential as strategically crafting the message. While the advocacy campaign is designed and implemented by a national organization or coalition of organizations, UNDP can support the latter to develop specific contextualized advocacy messages for each target group of the advocacy campaign, such as:

- ◆ Political party leaders;
- ◆ Members of parliament;
- ◆ Electoral management body; and/or
- ◆ General public or religious or community leaders or others who can exercise influence over the decision-makers with the formal authority to adopt TSMs.

For example, UNDP can help organize focus groups or polling to help identify the most effective messages. Selecting a limited set of messages (2 or 3 messages, no more) is important. Delivering a limited set of messages many times is more effective than sending a multitude of different messages.

Messages should generally contain the following:<sup>46</sup>

- ◆ A short problem statement about what you want to change and why;
- ◆ A few key attention-grabbing facts that illustrate the problem or potential solution;
- ◆ A specific action that the audience can take to help; and
- ◆ A human story that highlights how the issue has impacted individuals (This is optional but can be quite effective).

### Examples of messages used in Lebanon

- ◆ Women are present every day and everywhere, and they fulfil all their duties; why don't they enjoy all their rights?
- ◆ We need 100 years to reach equality if we don't take any measures. We will not wait 100 years.
- ◆ We are tired of discrimination; we want to participate in decision-making.

To reach the targeted audience most effectively, UNDP can support the advocacy team in identifying individuals or groups that can legitimately and convincingly amplify the key messages. Different “messengers” or champions can be used for further waves of an advocacy campaign. Ideally, these messengers should have a strong network to draw on, be influential in making policy change happen and have strong communication and interpersonal skills.

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46 See [https://www.grsproadsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/Elements-of-a-Policy-Advocacy-Campaign\\_Full-Version.pdf](https://www.grsproadsafety.org/wp-content/uploads/Elements-of-a-Policy-Advocacy-Campaign_Full-Version.pdf)



# ANNEX 1: DEFINITION AND TYPES OF LEGISLATED TSMS

## Definition of TSMS

Article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) defines Temporary Special Measures as measures to accelerate de facto equality between men and women. They shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved. The convention stipulates that TSMS are not considered discrimination as defined in the Convention.

The terms "temporary special measures" and "quotas" have sometimes been used interchangeably. Quota mechanisms are one type of TSM related to a country's electoral system or candidate selection processes intended to guarantee or promote the representation of women or other underrepresented groups in an elected body. There are TSMS other than quotas that aim at increasing women's political participation and that encompass "a wide variety of legislative, executive, administrative and other regulatory instruments, policies and practices, such as outreach or support programmes; allocation and/or reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion; numerical goals connected with time frames; and quota systems."<sup>47</sup> TSMS are also temporary in character, with an intention to discontinue them when their desired results have been achieved and sustained for some time.

## Types of TSMS adopted for election processes and their effectiveness

In electoral systems and processes, TSMS are policies aimed at overcoming the structural barriers stemming from men's dominance in society and politics. They attempt to change the status quo and level the playing field for women by increasing women's participation and representation in elected office. They encompass a wide range of measures, including:

- ◆ various modalities of gender quotas;
- ◆ gender-targeted public funding for political parties;
- ◆ waivers of nomination fees;
- ◆ access to public media, access to public resources;
- ◆ Incentivisation of political parties with women candidates;
- ◆ sanctions on non-complying political parties.

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<sup>47</sup> General recommendation No. 25, on article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, on temporary special measures.

Adopting and compliance with gender quota legislation is the main policy intervention that has improved women's participation in national and local decision-making. However, of the 67 countries with legislation on candidate quotas at the national level, only 15 have targets of 50 percent representation for either sex and 10 have targets of over 40 percent. No country using reserved seats has a 50 percent target for women's representation, and the proportion of seats reserved for women ranges from 5 to 30 percent. Increasing quota legislation targets to 50 percent for each gender would strengthen efforts to fast-track gender parity and the equal representation of women.<sup>48</sup>

These TSMs are mutually reinforcing; if they are used cumulatively, they should have a greater impact on women's representation in elected offices. Taken individually, legislated gender quotas are the most effective type of TSMs in terms of promoting and sustaining women's representation in elected offices and sustaining women in politics.

The following table describes different TSMs and some important considerations related to their implementation and effectiveness.

Type of gender quota	How it works	Important considerations
Legislated candidate quotas require that a minimum number of women candidates are on the ballot in legislatures/parliaments and national and/or sub-national level councils.	These quotas are provided for in constitutions and/or electoral/party laws. Or parity laws. Suggest adding: <a href="https://genderquota.org/quota-analysis">https://genderquota.org/quota-analysis</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislated candidate quotas can be most effective in Proportional Representation electoral systems with closed/blocked lists and with rules specifying the placement of the women and men candidates on the list.</li> <li>Legislated candidate quotas are effective when there are sanctions against the failure to comply with the quota obligation (E.g. automatic invalidation of lists, financial sanctions).</li> <li>There is often a gap between the stated law and the outcome for candidate quotas. It is therefore important that countries aim for 50-50 gender parity. Further, research indicates that the percent threshold is the most important thing that makes these quotas more effective at increasing women's numbers.<sup>49</sup></li> </ul>

48 Report of the Secretary-General, Commission on the Status of Women Sixty-fifth session 15–26 March 2021 *Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*. N2037781.pdf (un.org)

49 Paxton and Hughes (2015). [https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lsq.12079?casa\\_token=bn201qfB728AAAAA:J6XqCs\\_9CzzGHADBHTGU0gPN3DiichpUpdDVUliinfAhH3JTLzdJP\\_eddod5vTr0MzsQ5Cy0XejAQuc](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/lsq.12079?casa_token=bn201qfB728AAAAA:J6XqCs_9CzzGHADBHTGU0gPN3DiichpUpdDVUliinfAhH3JTLzdJP_eddod5vTr0MzsQ5Cy0XejAQuc)

Type of gender quota	How it works	Important considerations
Legislated reserved seats stipulate the number of women to be elected in a legislature/parliament.	<p>There are a variety of ways this measure can function, but options include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Special nation-wide tier for women candidates only</li> <li>• The election of a set number of women from districts designed for electing women parliamentarians only</li> <li>• A separate tier of women MPs directly elected in single-member districts</li> <li>• A separate tier reserved for women to be elected from special all-women national lists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reserved seats are the least-used quota type globally but are increasingly used in Africa and South-East Asia.<sup>50</sup></li> <li>• Reserved seats should be subject to competitive election among several women candidates, where the elected women have their power base/constituency.<sup>51</sup></li> <li>• Adopting reserved seats does not exclude women from competing for open seats. In some countries, women may only be elected one or two times on reserved seats before participating in open competition.</li> </ul>
Voluntary candidate quotas are nonbinding targets pledged by political parties in lower and/or upper houses and/or sub-national level councils	<p>There are a variety of ways this measure can apply to political party lists, but options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promoting a target of 50/50 for women and men</li> <li>• Alternating between men and women candidates across candidate lists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary candidate quotas should be complemented by ranking-order provisions to ensure women are in winnable positions and provided for in political parties' bylaws and internal regulations</li> <li>• Sustained support from party leadership to voluntary quotas can be important to ensure they are implemented</li> <li>• Parties of any size – whether large, ruling parties or smaller opposition parties, can apply voluntary quotas – Political parties can adopt voluntary candidate quotas even when legislated quotas are adopted. Such quotas can be impactful when the party quota has a higher threshold than the threshold mandated by national law.</li> </ul>

Other vital considerations and lessons learned related to enhancing the effectiveness of gender quotas include ranking order rules and enforcement measures.

<sup>50</sup> See <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge2/ge22/gender-quotas-in-elections/legislated-candidate-quotas>

<sup>51</sup> See <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge2/ge22/gender-quotas-in-elections/legislated-candidate-quotas>

## Ranking order rules and placement mandates<sup>52</sup>

Ranking order rules for candidate quotas are adopted to prevent quota rules from becoming merely symbolic, with only a few women getting elected because political parties have placed most of the women candidates at the bottom of the lists (vertical placement of the women and men candidates on the electoral list) or in unwinnable constituencies (horizontal distribution of men and women candidates within the constituencies).

Ranking order rules enhance gender quotas' effectiveness. In all electoral systems (and with legislated and voluntary candidate quotas), the quota provisions should include rules about the gendered rank order. Ranking order rules that result in 50-50 gender balance and the ideal should be promoted. Vertical rank-order rules should affect the entire list, starting at the first position. Examples of vertical rank-order rules for the distribution of women and men candidates are:

- ◆ Zebra or zipper systems: alternating women and men candidates throughout the lists
- ◆ A requirement that the top two candidates are not of the same sex
- ◆ 40:60 ratio for every five posts on the list
- ◆ One out of every group of three candidates must be a woman.

## Enforcement measures for gender quotas

Enforcement measures and sanction mechanisms are needed to ensure the effective implementation of gender quotas. One kind of enforcement measure is to tie the validation of the electoral party list to compliance with the gender quota. In doing so, party lists that do not comply with the gender quota after having been given at least one opportunity to correct unbalanced lists will be invalidated, and the political party will not be able to compete in the election.

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52 International IDEA, Inter-Parliamentary Union and Stockholm University (2013). <https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ge/ge2/ge22/gender-quotas-in-elections/ranking-order-rules-and-placement-mandates-in>

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