

# **GENDER EQUALITY CHALLENGES IN KENYA AND AFRICA**

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**DURING THE EVENT: GENDER EQUALITY: INTERNATIONAL  
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## **1. Introduction**

### **a) Women rights at pre-independence**

Kenya is situated in Eastern part of Africa having attained its independence on December 12, 1963. The independent Republic was formed in 1964 and was ruled as a de facto one party state. It was formerly a British Colony.

A reflection on the *Mau Mau* movement<sup>1</sup> gives the role women played. In his book *Facing Mount Kenya*, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, the first President of Kenya, gives an anthropological literature and an invaluable structure of African Society. He notes albeit paraphrased that women in *Mau Mau* movement played a large role in helping men to hide from the British army, gave them food, and some fought side by side with the men.

During the Lancaster Conference when Kenya negotiated the independence constitution in 1962, one woman accompanied the team of 5 men. This was one Mama Priscilla Ingasiani Abwao. The governor had picked her as the first African woman to sit in the Legislative Council (Legco). She was a principled woman and an advocate for women's rights. This history is important to trace how far women got to participate in decision-making.

The first constitution of Kenya discriminated women in favour of personal laws. Section 82(4) of the former constitution of Kenya prohibited discrimination except in respect of non-citizens and in respect of adoption, marriage, divorce, burial, and devolution of property on death or matters of personal law.

### **b) Recognizing women rights as human rights: The 2010 Constitutional Framework**

On 27<sup>th</sup> August 2010, Kenya promulgated a new constitutional dispensation. This was hailed as the 'second republic'. It ended the 20 years old struggle by Kenyan's clamoring for new constitutional order. It among other things brought in recognition women's rights as human rights. The Constitution 2010 recognizes dignity, economic, social and cultural rights including the right to education, housing and right to health including reproductive health care. The principle of equality and non-discrimination is established as a core value of leadership. The national values and principles of

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<sup>1</sup> The Mau Mau uprising also known as the Mau Mau rebellion was a military conflict that took place in British Kenya between 1952 and 1960. The Kikuyu armed themselves and took to the forests to fight the European settlers. The attacks increased and a state of emergency was declared leading to detention of the members including the founding President Jomo Kenyatta.

governance include human dignity, equity, social justice, inclusiveness, equality, human rights, non-discrimination and protection of marginalized groups among others.<sup>2</sup> For the first time in the last 5 decades (since independence), Kenyan women are enabled to give citizenship to children born outside Kenya with non-Kenyan men and also to their foreign spouses<sup>3</sup>

Chapter four of the Kenyan Constitution is the Bill of Rights. Every person is equal before the law and has the rights to equal protection and benefit of the law. Women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social sphere. Both direct and indirect discrimination is forbidden. The State is expected to take legislative and other measures, including affirmative action programmes and policies designed to redress any disadvantage suffered by individuals or groups because of past discrimination. The provision further states:

*...in addition to the measures contemplated in clause ...6., the State shall take legislative and other measures to implement the principle that not more than two thirds of members of elective bodies shall be of the same gender.*

The decentralization of power created **47 County Governments**. This has revolutionized leadership at the lower level, bringing many women into public leadership space.

Other additional gains for women from the 2010 Constitution include:

- Equality in leadership with 33% as the critical mass preferred for women leadership
- Equality in marriage
- Equality in employment
- Equality in access to education
- All discriminatory customary practices are prohibited
- Matrimonial property is protected
- Women rights to inheritance and to own land is guaranteed
- Equal parental responsibility
- Requirement for both public and private entities to comply with the inclusion principles and gender, among others

Indeed, Kenya has made strides in realizing gender equality but a lot more needs to be done to make the legal framework a reality.

## **2. Supportive Legal Framework**

The Kenya Constitution has been hailed as one of the most progressive constitutions in the world. It has very progressive articles that indicate the commitment with the international and regional obligations arising from treaties and conventions and other commitments signed and or ratified. The Convention on Elimination of All forms of discrimination against women and the Protocol to the African Charter on human and

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<sup>2</sup> see the constitution of Kenya on citizenship available at [www.kenyalaws.org](http://www.kenyalaws.org)

<sup>3</sup> See the Constitution

People's Rights of the Right of Women are key treaties promoting women's rights. Kenya has ratified both. The African Call is to have 50:50 gender representation.

In the recent past, the Kenyan parliament has passed enabling legislative frameworks that give implementation impetus to the Constitution. These include: -

- a) Marriage Act (No. 4 of 2014)
- b) Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (No. 21 of 2015)
- c) Basic Education Act
- d) Matrimonial Property Act (No. 49 of 2013)
- e) Micro and Small Enterprises Act (No 55 of 2012)
- f) Employment and Labour Relations Court Act
- g) Treaty making Ratification Act 2012
- h) The prohibition of female Genital Mutilation Act 2011
- i) Counter Trafficking in Persons Act 2010
- j) Sexual offences Act 2006
- k) Citizenship and Immigration Act, 2011
- l) Law of Succession Act 2012
- m) National Gender and Equality Act 2011

The policy framework has also been developed and include among others: -

- a) National Gender and Development Policy 2000 now under review to align it to the new constitution
- b) The Kenya Vision 2030 the government's blue print on the development agenda and its medium Term Plans (2008-2012, 2013-2017 and 2017-2020)
- c) Sessional paper No 2 on gender equality and Development 2006
- d) Kenya Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth Creation (2003-2007)
- e) National Land policy
- f) National Policy for Response to Gender Based Violence
- g) National Policy for the Abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation

### **3. Institutional Framework to promote gender equality and freedom from Discrimination**

In order to facilitate implementation of gender equality and freedom from discrimination, the government has put in place the State Department of Gender under the Ministry of public service, Youth and Gender with the f mandate to:

- i. Institutionalize gender mainstreaming in ministries, departments and agencies as well as in the devolved county level and private sector;
- ii. Promote the development and review of gender policies and legislations
- iii. Promote research, collection and analysis, storage and dissemination of sex disaggregated data to inform programming
- iv. Coordinate programmes for reduction of SGBV
- v. Oversee the implementation of socio-economic empowerment for the benefit of women and youth
- vi. Set standards to build the capacity of National and County level actors, monitor compliance and report on progress.

In ensuring accountability on equality and non-discrimination, the Constitution established an independent commission, **the National Gender and Equality**

## **Commission with the mandate to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination and to hold the government accountable on implementation.**

At parliamentary level, two female parliamentary caucuses are in existence. These are the Kenya Women Parliamentarians Association -KEWOPA and the Kenya Women Senators-KEWOSA. The two contribute to Parliament's work in the area of integrating gender into laws and policies. Similar caucuses are also established in the 47 County Assemblies.

Civil Society Organizations, private sector and religious organizations are also responsible for both implementation and act as accountability bodies in measuring service delivery on the not more than two third gender principle. It would be important to anchor the gender-mainstreaming mandate within a specific parliamentary committee for effectiveness. In the 11<sup>th</sup> parliament the Labour and Social Welfare Committee was charged with the responsibility of gender equality but its engagement was only limited to discussing budgets.

### **4. Empowering women**

The Kenyan poverty levels are very high with women bearing the brunt. Women are unable to access credit that requires collateral which majority do not have. Feminization of poverty is experienced across all regions. Women with disability and women with HIV and AIDs suffer the consequences. The Government of Kenya has put in place various programmes to empower women to overcome poverty, access leadership, begin businesses and live decently. The programmes include gender mainstreaming, affirmative action and gender responsive budgeting. There are special catalytic funds dedicated to women, persons with disabilities and the youth for development programmes. These are: -

- a) **Women Enterprise Fund (WEF)** that provides micro-finance credit and other financial support for women;
- b) The **Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF)** that provides credit for young men and women to enable them establish businesses to earn a living aimed at reducing unemployment;
- c) The **Uwezo fund (Kiswahili word for Ability)** that empowers women, persons with disabilities and youth that give seed money to the special interest groups as startup capital for businesses. It gives up to 5000 USD to one group.
- d) The **Social Protection Fund** is given as credit and cash transfers to older members of society and people with severe disability. The target is for senior citizens beyond age 65 years.
- e) **30% procurement reservation affirmative action to Special Interest Groups (SIG) that include women, persons with disabilities and the youth.** The SIG access 30 % value of all all-public procurement tenders
- f) There is the national **Government Affirmative Action Fund**, established in 2015 administered through female members of parliament to run programs targeting socio-empowerment of women, youth, persons with disabilities, children and elderly persons.

## **5. Women and Education**

The right to education is guaranteed by the constitution as a variable to empowerment of women and girls. Many girls are still out of school due to among other factors customary practices that expose them to early marriages and child pregnancies. Marginalized communities in arid and semi-arid areas have to endure high climatic challenges that keeps the girls out of school to engage in livelihood and domestic chores. HIV and AIDS prevalence among school children has also affected the transition rates. Despite these drawbacks, Kenya performed well on select measures of education in the 2000 MDGS. There is gender parity in enrolment in primary schools with declining transition rates to higher levels-secondary schools, tertiary and universities. A recent study by NGEC indicated that there is increasing neglect of the boy child, a trend that is worrying.

## **6. Women and Health**

The Constitution provides for the right to the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to health care services including reproductive health care. Among other underlying determinants of health there is the right to housing, free from hunger, right to clean and safe water and social security. Kenya has significantly high maternal mortality and morbidity from preventable causes. The Kenya Demographic Health Survey (KDHS 2015) Maternal mortality is estimated at 362 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births, child mortality 39 deaths per 1,000 live births and under-five *mortality* is 52 deaths per 1,000 live births. Kenya performed dismally on most indicators of MDG on maternal health and has recently begun a pathway to reversing the trend. The now broadly provides for relevant goals in SDGs goals 3, 5, 10, 16, 13.

## **7. Sexual Gender Based Violence**

Sexual Gender Based Violence is very rampant in the country despite existence of progressive legal framework with very severe penalties for perpetrators. The law prohibits sexual violence at the family level too. The cost implication for SGBV is enormous for both the family and the health providers. In some cases, women and young girls are subjected to grievous harm and others suffer death. The burden of proof is very high and in most cases perpetrators are acquitted on technicalities.

## **8. Women and Security**

Women are exposed to high insecurity especially during armed conflict. Kenya has signed onto UN Resolution 1325 that provides the framework for engagement and participation of women in conflict resolution. The resolution is now domesticated through a National Action Plan. The Kenyan National Security is charged with the responsibilities of protection against internal and external threats to Kenya. The National security is bound to comply with the constitution, rule of law and human rights. The recruitment of national security organs is expected to reflect the diversity of the Kenyan people. There are three organs of National Security namely the Kenya Defence, the National Intelligence Service and the National Police Service.

Unfortunately, there are very few women in the top leadership rank in the security service. The National Security Council established within the Constitution<sup>4</sup> has a

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<sup>4</sup> See article 240 on composition of the National Security Council that consists of the President of Kenya, the Deputy President, the Cabinet Secretary responsible for Defence, the Cabinet Secretary

membership of 9 with only one woman, This is a violation of the not more than two third gender rule provided for in the constitution . The defence force that comprises of the Kenya Army, the Kenya Air Force and the Kenya Navy are all headed by men. The defence council by the composition provided, has one woman.

At the helm of Intelligence Service of Kenya is a man with 8 directors below him. Only one of the 8 is female.

In the National Police Service that comprises of the Kenya Police and the Administration police services, a man heads with two deputies who are all male after the national Police Service Act was amended to remove the gender requirement at the top leadership.

The low representation of females in the security arms of the government is historical. For a long time, women joined as support service offering secretarial services and managerial services. When the recruitment of security personnel started, there were many restrictions for women especially those wishing to begin families. Therefore, women have not grown into the service to the senior levels. Women have not been given the platform and opportunity to grow. After the promulgation of the constitution in 2010, one of the deputies Inspector General of Police was female by law. When His Excellency the President made the decision to drop her for alleged non-performance, the law was hurriedly changed in parliament to allow a male to be appointed. The NGEC has challenged the law amendment as unconstitutional and the matter is still pending in court.

Service provisions at the police lines do not offer women the sanitary service required. Very poor housing exposes women to vulnerability of non-consideration during recruitment and postings since their male counterparts are preferred since they can share single rooms available. We need to invest a lot to make the stations female friendly for both officers and offenders.

When vacancy arises, the police service commission, the agency responsible for hiring and promotion of police staff has not always applied the gender equation. In the recruitment of 2016, for every 15 men taken one woman was recruited. At that level the numbers required will never be realized. Deliberate efforts need to be made to attract and promote female officers for Kenya to have adequate participation of women in security leadership.

## **9. Women in leadership**

### **a) Women in Politics**

Kenya's record of female leadership has been very poor since attaining independence in 1969. The highest numbers were recorded post 2010 during the 2013 elections. The table below demonstrates female representation <sup>5</sup>.

Year	No of Seats	Men	Women	% Women
2013	349	280	68	19.8%
2007	222	201	22	10%

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responsible for Internal Security, the Attorney General, the Chief of Kenya Defence Forces, the Director General of the National Intelligence Service and the Inspector –General of the Police Service.

<sup>5</sup> From Parliamentary archive records

2002	222	204	18	8.1%
1997	222	214	8	3.6%
1992	200	193	7	3.5%
1988	200	197	3	1.5%
1883	170	167	3	1.8%
1979	170	166	4	2.4%
1974	169	162	7	1.4%
1969	167	165	2	1.2%

Kenya is scheduled to have its general election on 8<sup>th</sup> August 2017. The last election of 2013 did not bring in enough women in compliance with the constitutional provision.<sup>6</sup> Kenya has a bicameral system made of the National Assembly and the Senate. The composition in the National Assembly was enhanced by the quota system that allowed 47 women to be elected on only women seats. Only 16 women were elected out of the 290 open constituency seats available. There was no woman elected as a senator. A total of 18 women came through the quota for women, persons with disabilities and the youth reserved seats by way of nomination. Total female representation in the bicameral parliament in Kenya currently stands at 26%. National Assembly comprises of 19.7% and Senate 26.5 % all made possible because of the affirmative action using both the party quotas and seats reserved for women.

At the County devolved level, there was no women Governor elected and therefore the Council of Governors is a ‘boys club’ consisting of 47 men. In the lower level county assembly, there are only 86 women elected members of the county assemblies out of 1450 seats available for men and women to compete. Over 750 women were nominated in the assemblies to meet the not more than two third gender rule courtesy of the principle in Articles 177 (1) (b) and (c).<sup>7</sup> While the 47 county assemblies were able to meet the not more than two third gender rule, the national assembly and the senate did not.

Currently the scenario may repeat itself since very few women have been cleared by political parties to run for elective seats. The Kenyan electoral system -the -first -past -the- post, has never been known anywhere in the world to deliver gender equality. While many men opted to run as independent candidates, women face barriers that constrain them. These include lack of resources, violence meted to women as candidates and cultural beliefs that undermine women leadership with pastoral communities opting for what they call negotiated democracy that totally locks out women in competitive elective positions.

Below are the current statistics of women as compared to men vying in the August 2017 election:

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<sup>6</sup> See article 81(b) of the Constitution that provides that in the principles of electoral system, not more than two thirds of members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender and in 81(c) fair representation of persons with disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> It provides that a county Assembly consists of (a)... (b) the number of Special seat members necessary to ensure that no more than two thirds of the membership of the assembly are of the same gender and (c) the number of members of marginalized groups including persons with disabilities and the youth prescribed by an act of parliament.

TITTLE	NUMBERS
President	
Female	1
Male	16
TOTAL	17
Governors	
Female	9
Male	211
TOTAL	222
SENATORS	
Male	346
Female	56
TOTAL	402
MEMBER OF COUNTY ASSEMBLY	
Male	9217
Female	880
TOTAL	10097
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT	
Male	1479
Female	120
TOTAL	1599
COUNTY WOMEN	268

#### **b) Women in Judiciary**

At an institutional level, the Kenya Judiciary has made tremendous progress in advancing gender equality. According to their latest institutional demographic survey (2016), out of 4326 employees (Judges, Magistrates, and Staff), 2032 are women. The distribution of men to women is about 53% against 47%. They are tantalizingly close to achieving full parity of 50:50. Further, of the 158 judges, 66 are women while 92 are men. This means that women judges constitute about 42% of the total number of judges in our Superior Courts. In the magistracy, out of a total of 422 magistrates in service today, 214 are male while 208 are women. This means that they have achieved the 50:50 gender parity with the magistracy. However, NGEC has commenced an audit of the judiciary to verify their self –assessment.

#### **c) Women in Highest Public Service**

In the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary out of 22 members, there are only 5 women making 22.7 %. The Principal Secretaries meet the two third gender rule. Out of 42 there are 14 women making 33.3%. The numbers in the other positions are progressively improving.

#### **d) Women on Boards**

The number of women who sit on boards is still very low for both public and private sector. The Commission works with initiatives that are preparing women to be board ready. Some of these initiatives include the Female Futures programme by Federation of Kenya Employers and Women on Boards Network, a private sector initiative that undertakes training of women in corporate governance and helps source relevant vacancies and placements for the qualified women.

## **10. The National Gender and Equality Commission's Initiatives**

The National Gender and Equality Commission is a constitutional Commission with mandate to promote gender equality and freedom from discrimination, to hold the government accountable by undertaking audits to establish levels of compliance with the principles of gender and inclusion. The Commission gives advisories to both public and private entities seeking to enforce compliance by all. The commission is independent and provides its reports to Parliament as the oversight institution though not subject to control of anyone including Parliament or the Executive. It is funded by public funds as a requirement of the constitution and Paris Principles for Human Rights Bodies.

The Commission has adopted several strategies in undertaking its work. The achievements are discussed under the various themes of the first strategic plan.

- a) Creation of a conducive and enabling environment to achieve gender equality in compliance with existing legislative framework where all laws, policies and administrative guidelines to observe gender equality and inclusion.**
  - i. Monitoring compliance in electoral process of 2013 and now 2017. Findings and recommendations are given to respective actors including political parties, IEBC managing elections and other relevant institutions.
  - ii. Holding the government accountable to comply with the two third gender rule and other inclusion principles
  - iii. Provide advisories to the Presidency and ministries calling for compliance of the gender principle.
  - iv. Undertaking Studies and Audits to measure level of compliance in various arms of government and private sector
  - v. An incentive and sanction scheme with private and public bodies to commend offices that comply and shame those that do not make attempts to comply.
  - vi. All public bodies submit performance reports on agreed gender indicators to enable NGEC measure compliance.
  - vii. Coordination of public education on gender equality and inclusion
  - viii. Monitoring legislations and polices for the inclusion principle and making recommendations for integration of the principles
  - ix. Public interest litigation to enforce compliance and to seek advisory opinion from the supreme court of Kenya
  - x. Monitoring State reporting at international and regional level on ratified treaties.
  - xi. Multi -media campaign to promote women leadership as an advocacy tool. The Campaign was launched by the President of the Republic of Kenya in August 2015.
  - xii. Public advocacy on the principles
  - xiii. Prepare numerous training and reference materials on equality an inclusion targeting county and national governments

**b) Promotion of substantive financing for equality and inclusion in programmes**

- i. Working closely with ministry responsible for finance and budget to engender budgets and influence policy and legal framework
- ii. Developed Gender responsive budgeting guidelines for national Government and Parliament.
- iii. Currently developing gender responsive guideline for the county assemblies at the lower levels and County Government and receive reports of performance
- iv. Undertaking annual reviews of county and national budget and provide necessary recommendations
- v. Monitoring implementation of social protective programs designed to caution poor households and individuals from abject poverty including cash transfers
- vi. Development of standards to progressive realization of ECOSOC rights for use by governments in design and funding of affirmative interventions such as universal health care programs
- vii. Monitoring distribution and auditing of admissibility for empowerment catalytic funds targeting women, youth, PWD
- viii. Preparing special reports to parliamentary committees on national strategic interventions to inform scale up and replication for example free maternity programs and 30% preferential reservation procurement
- ix. Auditing capitation in schools, costs of SGBV, and access to education by children with disabilities to inform county and national government programs and budget requirements  
Audit status of children charity institutions, homes for older persons, drug rehabilitation centers to advice government on limitations and opportunities for addressing inequities affecting children, youth and other vulnerable groups

**c) Mitigation of gender based violence through public education and coordination of multi sectoral responses to prevention and management of Gender based Violence.**

- i. Partnership on GBV prevention and response during national and international day events, and with relevant critical stakeholders including witness protection and office of director of prosecutions
- ii. Convenes monthly stakeholder's meetings
- iii. Manages an online GBV platform for rapid response to GBV
- iv. Review relevant policies and legislations, and advocate for their passage in parliament and county assemblies
- v. Conduct of rapid investigations on SGBV related incidences and national public inquiries
- vi. Watching brief on matters of GBV and discrimination in courts
- vii. Launched a three-year campaign dubbed "Keeping the promise end Gender Based Violence" The launch has been replicated in 21 counties out of 47 counties. This is an accountability measure on State responsibility.

- viii. Commissioned studies that costed the economic burden of SGBV on survivors and providers. It is estimated that Kenya spends approximately 46 billion Kenya Shilling equivalent to USD 45 million per year. This is huge investment that would go into the development agenda.
- ix. Launched a national web based monitoring and evaluation framework for SGBV to provide timely data for use in programming, prevention and response to GBV.
- x. Draft model legislation and model policy to guide implementation of the sexual related laws at the county government levels.

**d) Continuous institutional development to increase capacity to deliver on commission's mandate**

- i. The NGEC officers and commissioners undertake routine courses to build their capacities to continuously undertake their role of integrating gender principles in the development agenda.
- ii. NGEC engages with new emerging areas to integrate gender into planning and programming for example the SDGs and the Climate change with the Paris Agreement and planning the implementation framework.
- iii. The commission has a communication and public relations strategy to structure and guide its advocacy and communications program on all matters relating to equality and inclusion

## **11. Comparative analysis with Other African Countries**

When the NGEC was established, it visited Rwanda and South Africa that had established similar bodies for learning missions in Africa. The Commission also visited United Kingdom and Brazil for comparison. The lessons learnt helped shape the agenda of the National Gender and Equality Commission.

In the later days, Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Zambia visited NGEC during their constitutional review process to learn the importance of establishing Gender and Equality Commission as a constitutional body. Tanzania did not succeed but Zimbabwe and Zambia succeeded. Upon its establishment, the Zimbabwe Gender Commission organized a learning mission to Kenya in the year 2016.

### **i. Rwanda**

H.E. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda once had this to say

*The question you have to ponder is simply this: How does a society hope to transform itself in the foot by squandering more than half its capital investment? The truth of the matter is that societies that recognize the real and untapped socio economic, cultural, and political power of women thrive. Those that refuse to value and leverage women's talent, energies, and unique skills remain developmental misfits. It is not difficult to demonstrate this with a growing body of evidence.*

Rwanda leads the world by having 64. % of women in parliament. The upper house has 61% while the lower has 38.5% .<sup>8</sup>The Rwanda constitution provides for the minimum quota of 30% for women in decision- making. From their recent statistics<sup>9</sup>, their data is as below:-

- 61 % female in Parliament
- 40% female ministers
- 50% female judges
- 50% provincial Governors
- 43.6% Female members of District Advisory Councils

The important distinction between Rwanda and Kenya is the electoral system used. Rwanda uses the Proportional Representation that is combined with political good will from the President, H.E Paul Kagame.

At the institutional level, Rwanda has the Ministry of Gender and Family promotion, the Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), the National Women Council and the Forum for women Parliamentarians. The ministry coordinates and advocates for the formulation of gender equality laws, policies and programmes, while the National Women Council organizes and mobilizes and advocates for women participation in National Development. Our counterpart the Gender Monitoring Office, monitors the respect of gender equality, Gender based Violence prevention and response and promotes gender accountability and the Forum or Women Parliamentarians oversees and advocates for the enactment of gender sensitive laws.

## **ii. South Africa**

The Commission of Gender Equality in South Africa (CGE) is established as a constitutional commission. Its mandate includes inequality and discrimination of women and also deals with discrimination against persons with disabilities. It is set up as an accountability body to enforce the provisions of gender and equality in the Constitution and other enabling legislations. It also assesses and provides data on implementation. It collaborates with both public and private entities. In political representation, Rwanda uses the proportional Representation electoral system, the gender equality provisions of the Constitution and the voluntary party quotas initiated by the ruling party ANC. There is no provision of the actual reserved seats for women. The late H.E Nelson Mandela initiated the 50:50 rule that has become the leading principle. Currently statistics show representation at 41% in upper house and 35.2% in lower house.<sup>10</sup>

## **12. Conclusion**

The challenges facing women who aspire to get into leadership is the same across the continents. Legal and policy frameworks must be buttressed with strong political good will to implement the gender equality provisions. The strategies that have worked include:

- i. Affirmative actions like quotas

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<sup>8</sup> Record by the Inter Parliamentary Union available at [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)

<sup>9</sup> From the GMO Report From Victims to leading actors, Rwanda's Gender Dividend 2016 available at [www.gov.rw](http://www.gov.rw)

<sup>10</sup> See inter Parliamentary Union records at [www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org) and the numbers are calculated using the 54 permanent seats and excluding the 36 special rotating seats where delegates are appointed on ad hoc basis.

- ii. Implementable legal and policy frameworks accompanied with gender plans with budgets for implementing
- iii. Training and capacity building for men and women to be gender responsive in management.
- iv. Women must learn to lean in. Sheryl Sandberg the former COO of face book says in her book “Lean in, Women, Work and the Will to Lead” that women must sit at the decision making tables, must be mentors and must work together toward equality among other strategies.
- v. Accountability is key to success. Citizens who are gender responsive must hold governments to account on the commitments made on gender equality at the international, regional and domestic levels. Accountability bodies like Gender and Equality Commissions, National Human Rights Institutions or Ombudsman that exist in different forms globally, should be encouraged to have independence that allows them to hold the government accountable on commitments they make.
- vi. Male involvement is key to success. Men must work side by side with women since they are still in control across the world. The male responsiveness will contribute to the change in the gender agenda.
- vii. We must capture young minds by including gender and gender responsive policies and strategies in school curriculums from Kindergarten. This has been the success story of Norway and other Scandinavian countries.