

Paths to power

Advancing women in government





# Executive summary

When it comes to women's advancement, few achievements can compare with the rising role of women in government. The move to achieving full gender parity may be slow and uneven, but women are increasingly being elected and appointed to positions of power. This governmental evolution has the potential to pave the way for women to make further gains in the public and private sectors, helping to bring their voice and talent to the issues that shape national economies and societies.

Deloitte developed this report to gain a deeper understanding of how women advance in government and to explore the growing impact—and importance—of women in senior, decision-making roles in the public sector.

Among the key findings of this report are:

## **Women are a critical national resource for economic growth**

If talent is the most important natural resource a nation can possess, then continuing to nurture and advance the most worthy, diverse talent—including high-potential women—to upper-echelon, decision-making levels can have a significant impact on the economy. This is critical to staying competitive. In the 21st century economy, knowledge is the most valuable currency, and in many parts of the world, women are rapidly matching or overtaking men in terms of education. This report spotlights the critical need to harness and continue to mine the wealth of global female talent, both in the public and private sectors, to ensure continued growth and success. Not tapping into this resource means both wasting a wellspring of knowledge, competence, and unique perspectives and forgoing the return on investment that comes from the fact that women reinvest their wealth in their families and communities.

## **Progress in the public sector serves as a model for the private sector**

Women in government set the stage for the advancement of women in the public and private sectors, and ultimately for women as a force in the economy. Countries where efforts to include women at the highest levels of government have been most successful have reaped rewards in the private sector as well. The public sector has been quicker to recognize and reward talented women; in fact, the private sector may have much to learn from governments around the world about attracting and retaining female talent.

## **A critical mass of women in leadership begets more women in leadership**

Simply put, without women in charge, there won't be more women in charge. Evidence suggests that once female representation reaches critical mass—commonly cited figures hover around one-third as the tipping point—their shared interests as women emerge.<sup>1</sup> This critical mass also paves the way for still more women to ascend to the highest levels of the public sector, as they assuage lingering cultural and institutional concerns about women's competency and provide valuable mentorship and networking opportunities for newer female talent.

## **Women in leadership pursue different paths to power**

In the process of writing this report, senior women around the world who have made their careers in the public sector were invited to share their stories and perspectives. Each of these women was chosen for her unique achievements and significant societal contributions. And each pursued a different path to power—whether serving in an elected capacity, appointed to a ministerial position, working one's way up the ladder through a career in the public sector, scaling the ranks of the military or affecting policy change via a role outside of formal government. The diverse career paths of these accomplished women demonstrate the many ways women's talent can be harnessed in the public sector, but also demonstrate that, despite the differences in their experience, the leadership qualities that enabled them to lead successful careers translates across borders and governments.

## **Cultural and organizational change accelerates the retention and advancement of women**

Developing countries are currently seeing a "brain drain" where the educated women are emigrating at alarming rates in search of advancement and fulfilling work. Not only does this deprive those societies of their talent, it also squanders the significant investment made in these women in terms of publicly financed education and training. Institutions in the developed world are experiencing a similar flight of talent when opportunities are lacking. In both circumstances, an organization-wide culture shift is required to nurture an environment that is friendly to women and encourages their advancement. Those organizations that have taken a systemic approach to the issue have reaped the rewards in greater growth and higher returns.

# Foreword

Debates on the values of diversity and the empowerment and advancement of women have raged for decades. The move to gender equality and representation of women at the leadership levels of business and government has sparked protests, litigation, legislation, and ultimately far-reaching change. The work that began in the late 20th century to push back against the male-dominated model for career success and to ensure no employee has to choose between a family and career advancement led to changes that benefited women, men, and their public and private sector employers.

The “Paths to Power” point of view suggests the greater the number of women in leadership the more substantive and beneficial those changes—including greater financial rewards for those organizations with at least three women on their boards. A look at the employers recognized as “best places to work” also shows this to be a case in point. Deloitte has seen the benefits of advancing women to leadership since 1993, when the United States member firm launched its Initiative for the Retention and Advancement of Women and member firms around the globe followed with initiatives for greater inclusion.

Efforts to promote the retention and advancement of women leveled the playing field on the development, succession planning, and partner admission processes. Frequently Deloitte crossed paths with women in government and the public sector as we held ourselves accountable for progress toward the proportionate representation of women at the top of the organization. Lynn Martin, former Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor from 1991-1993, for example, chaired the Deloitte U.S. Council for the Advancement of Women.

As women moved into leadership positions, the next generation of women found role models and saw there was more than one path to success. More women’s voices were heard. Networking and mentoring events supported efforts to empower girls and women in the communities in which Deloitte does business and helped women to build the skills and gain the resources needed—from an interview suit to interview skills—to find employment. As more women moved into decision-making roles, the way Deloitte worked changed. Women and men opened up

about the challenges of managing a high-performance workplace and a personal life. This new focus on the need to integrate work and life led to the introduction of formal and informal flexible work options, and ultimately the roll-out of the Mass Career Customization (MCC) framework for career-life fit.

In 2007, Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu leadership formed the Global Retention of Women (GROW) Council to drive a worldwide effort to increase the representation of women in leadership positions as a first step toward creating a more inclusive workplace. Today, 108 of the 140 countries in the Deloitte organization have formal and informal diversity and inclusion initiatives, and Deloitte is invited to discuss—with business, civil society, academic, labor, government, and entertainment luminaries—strategies for empowering women worldwide. As signatories to the UN Global Compact, Deloitte is called upon for insights on economic equity for and preventing violence against women and contributed to the crafting of UNIFEM’s and the UN Global Compact’s “Women’s Empowerment Principles - Equality Means Business”. In roundtables at the World Economic Forum, our perspectives are sought on diversity, sustainability, and outlawing the trafficking in women and children, among other pressing economic and human rights issues.

When the advancement of women became a business imperative for Deloitte, governments were no longer just our clients, they became our partners in addressing the barriers to true gender equality. The empowerment and advancement of women, ensuring they are represented and their voices heard when corporate and economic policies are shaped is as much a human rights issue as a workplace issue, and businesses and governments are obligated to work together to create positive change.



**James H. Wall**  
Chief Diversity Officer  
Global Managing Director, Talent  
Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu



## Women and influence: social benefits, economic rewards

When it comes to gender equality, few achievements can compare with the rising role of women in government. Full gender parity may still be elusive, but women are increasingly being elected and appointed to positions of power, whether as heads of state, ministers and cabinet members, or legislators. This governmental evolution has the potential to pave the way for women to make further gains in the public and private sectors, helping to bring their voice and talent to the issues that shape national economies.

While parity has been achieved in some countries—the Nordic nations, for example—there is still a long march ahead in much of the world. Yet even while progress has been slow and somewhat uneven, women around the world are building to a critical mass in the public sector that can help them affect change in places where a decade or two ago they were never even represented.<sup>2</sup>

Consider what happened in Kenya. Ambassador Amina Chawahir Mohamed, the permanent secretary and chief executive officer, Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Kenya, remembered a particularly powerful example of women in Kenya's government coming together to affect real change.

"Ten women won parliamentary seats. Before that, with issues related to combating domestic violence or sexual assault, you wouldn't see much support in years past. But now, with ten women, we were able to push legislation through," Ambassador Mohamed said. "I can tell you for sure it wouldn't have happened without that critical mass. Ten women were able to convince and lobby 200 men in parliament to support and pass a law we wanted to protect women."<sup>3</sup>

### *Public sector leading the way*

Women in government set the stage for the advancement of women in both the public and private sectors, and ultimately for women as a force in the economy and society. Countries where efforts to include women at the highest levels of government have been most successful have reaped rewards in the private sector as well. Often, advancement in the public sector leads the way, serving as a model or precursor to growth in the private sphere.

"The public sector has been more open to women. I think it has led the way and the private sector has lagged behind," said Diane Rath, former chairperson and commissioner of the Texas Workforce Commission in the U.S. "You need to have women represented to understand the world at large. The inclusion of women in the workforce is critically important to the economy. Research has shown that if you have women in leadership in a company, it performs much better and the companies reap economic rewards. The same is true for the public sector."<sup>4</sup>

"This past decade, recruitment and retention are issues across the board," agreed Ruby DeMesme, former assistant secretary, U.S. Air Force, current Director of Human Capital Market Innovative Strategy, Deloitte Consulting LLP United States. "Companies and government discuss that in order to compete, they need to increase diversity."<sup>5</sup>

Women overall have fared better in the public sector. Almost 10% of the members of the United Nations have female heads of state, compared to the 3% of the top 1000 multinational companies that have a woman president or CEO.<sup>6</sup> Women comprise nearly 20% of parliamentary seats worldwide—a proportion still significantly shy of equality, yet account for only 13.5% of women executive officers of the top 500 U.S. companies.<sup>7</sup>



### *It's about talent*

The struggle of women to reach senior levels cannot be seen as simply a “women’s issue,” but rather one of talent; women’s progress has vital implications for the health and growth of governments, companies, and nations. As Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn document in *Half the Sky: Turning Oppression into Opportunity for Women Worldwide*, investing in women’s advancement results in economic and social improvement for entire families and communities. In 2008, former U.S. Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice said, “If I could focus on one thing in developing countries it would be the empowerment of women.”<sup>8,9</sup> And current U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has created a position- ambassador at large for global women’s issues – to do just that.

Already, in many parts of the world women are rapidly matching or overtaking men in terms of education. And with knowledge being the most valuable currency in the 21st century economy, not tapping into this resource means both wasting a wellspring of knowledge, competence, and unique perspectives, and forgoing the return on investment that comes from the fact that women reinvest their wealth in their families and communities. If talent is the most important natural resource a nation can possess, then continuing to nurture and advance the most worthy, diverse talent—including high-potential women—to upper-echelon, decision-making levels can have a significant impact on the economy.

“When we look at states in the U.S. that are growing, it’s the states that embrace diversity,” said Rath. “You have to have all parts of the population involved, and you have to have a dynamic and diverse workforce. It’s absolutely critical to the future of a community and a state.”<sup>10</sup>

Put simply, utilizing the “best and brightest” remains impossible if a country isn’t tapping into half of its population. Even in societies where women are gaining more education—generally at publicly financed institutions—this investment is often lost without opportunities in the workplace, whether public or private. In Africa alone, 27.1% of females with tertiary educations emigrate—10% more than men.<sup>11</sup> This scenario is playing out the world over: with the exception of North America, women with education are emigrating in greater numbers than men. (UNIFEM). And as the world grows ever more interconnected, talent is becoming increasingly mobile. Those who fail to draw on the talents of women may fall behind.

In government, the economic – and social benefits of enabling women to achieve parity are vast. Norway, which has been perhaps the most successful in attaining female representation at the highest levels of government and the public sector, has repeatedly been ranked year after year by the United Nations as the best place in the world to live. Following the success of policies regarding its public sector, Norway also mandated in 2002 that 40% of all corporate boards of companies listed on the Oslo stock exchange had to be held by women, bringing the private sector up to parity as well. It should be noted that Norway has weathered the economic crisis fairly well.

In the private sector as well, participation by women in senior roles has been shown to translate into greater financial rewards: the top 500 multinational firms who had at least three women on their boards saw a 16.7% return on equity; average companies saw just 11.5%. The greater the number of women, the greater the difference; those with the greatest number of women on their boards had 53% greater return on equity than those with the fewest.<sup>12</sup>

## Women at the very top

### Heads of State

- As of July 2009, 16 female presidents, prime ministers and chancellors currently serve as heads of state, constituting 8% of the of the nations that are members of U.N.<sup>13</sup>
- In February 2010, Costa Rica elected a woman president.

### Ministers and Cabinet Members

- Seventeen countries have reached at least 30% representation in ministerial posts, while 93 have 15% or lower; 13 of those nations have no women in ministerial positions.<sup>14</sup>
- Top countries remain the Nordics.
  - Finland and Norway comprise two of the three countries in which women hold more than half of ministerial appointments.
  - All but one of the Nordic countries rank in the top 10 for gross national income per capita.<sup>15</sup>
- Other countries achieving parity in the cabinet include Grenada, France, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland and Chile, all of which report female representation at the ministerial level of at least 40%. France, Spain and Switzerland also boast top-25 GDPs.<sup>16</sup>

**“The more you are successful, the more latitude you have to succeed. But to exploit that latitude you can’t always pursue a linear career progression - you have to go off into left field, take some risks and see where it takes you.”**

**Heather Hancock**, Lead Partner for London 2012 and Managing Partner for Innovation & Brand at Deloitte United Kingdom, former Private Secretary to three Home Secretaries and former member of the Senior Civil Service



# Her Excellency Maha Khatib

Minister of Tourism and Antiquities for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

## At a glance:

- Director General of the Jordan River Foundation, a Jordanian non-profit, non-governmental organization chaired by Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah (2000-2007)
- Director and Partner of the Management and Development Group
- Director of the Public Sector Reform Program
- National Program Director of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
- National Project Manager for the Women in Development Project of the German Technical Cooperation Agency

## Incubating women's entrepreneurial spirit

All fledgling ideas need room and space to grow. When Her Excellency Maha Khatib began work as the National Program Director of UNIFEM in 1994, she worked to ensure that women who were starting their own businesses had that space —as well as access to the basic resources that are so crucial to a venture's success, but often just out of reach for entrepreneurs.

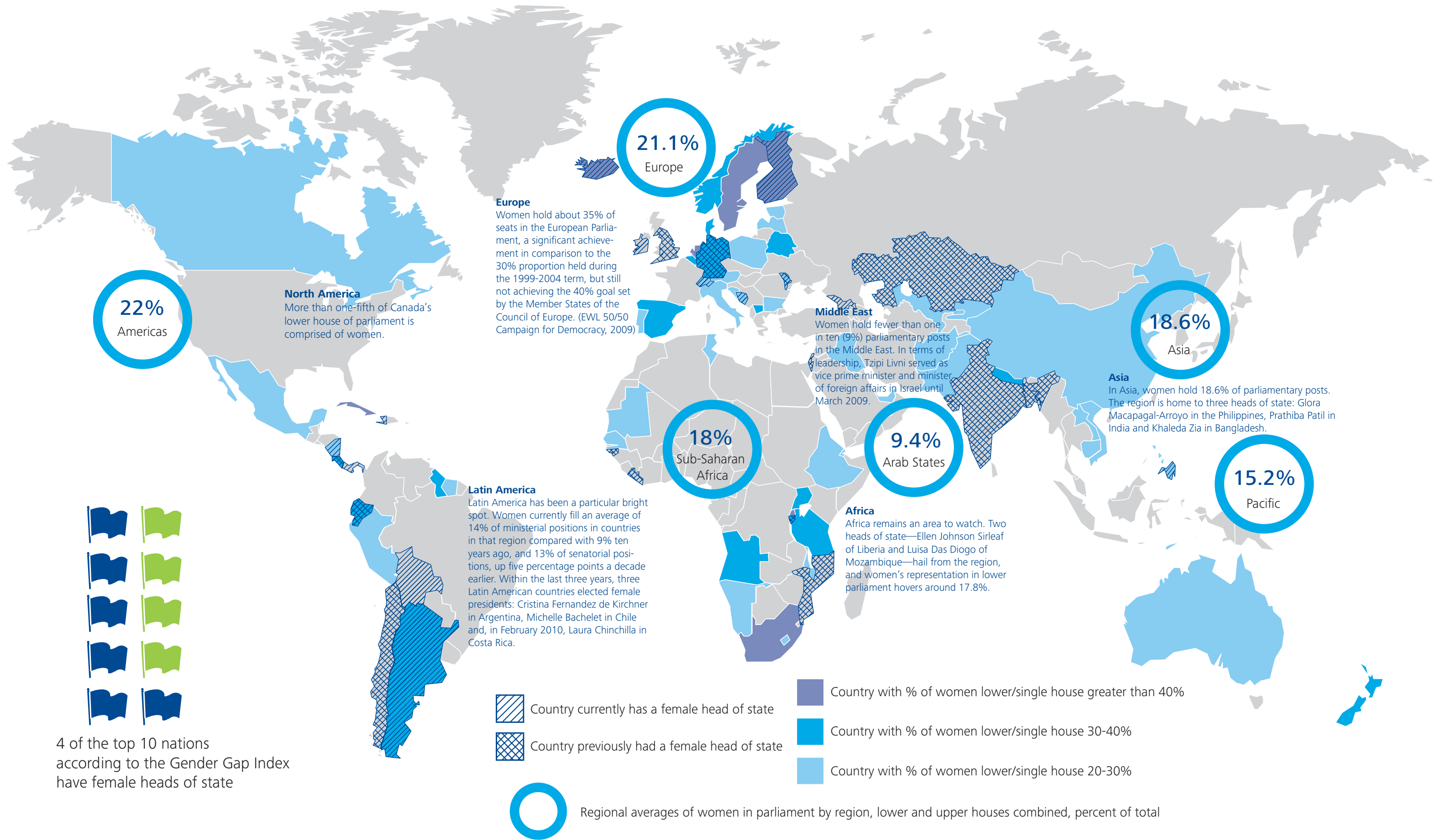
At UNIFEM, she worked to develop and establish business incubators – centers where micro-business owners could have access to computers, phones, fax machines, accounting and networking services and opportunities, small business consulting and secretarial services, graphic design equipment and other essential business resources. Intended to provide services micro-business owners could often ill-afford, these incubators represented a simple, elegant solution to a common problem: the lack of business resources available to women. The incubators also included the added benefit of providing unemployed women the information and experience necessary to start a business.

“Women's businesses face different issues than those owned by men. Through the business incubators, we enabled them to reach more women and to reach new markets,” said HE Maha Khatib. “It is a simple model. It can be designed in a very local manner. Jordan was the first country in the Arab world to establish an incubator for women's small and micro-enterprises. The whole concept was not familiar. And now our programs have been replicated throughout the Arab world.”

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“Having women in high levels of government is important, but what's more important is having women who can make a difference.”

# Female heads of state and percentage of representation of women in lower houses





# Women in leadership: evolving from then to now

In 1975, proclaiming it the “Decade of Women” the United Nations held the first world congress devoted to improving the status of women. But 20 years later, little progress had been made. From 1975 to 1995, the proportion of women in national parliaments had increased less than half a percentage point from 10.9% to 11.3%<sup>17</sup>. Eight women served as either an elected or appointed head of state or government in 1995, up from three in 1975.

In response to this lack of significant progress for women, attendees at 1995’s Fourth World Conference for Women developed a comprehensive action plan for advancing the status of women worldwide. Dubbed the Beijing Platform for Action, the watershed program featured a sweeping, 12-pronged platform identifying critical areas of concern for improving the conditions of women around the globe, including their role in government. The political prong, Women in Power and Decision-Making, focused on ensuring women equal access to—and participation in—decision making, and increasing their opportunities to become leaders. The program set a goal for women to achieve “parity”—defined as at least 40% representation—by 2025.

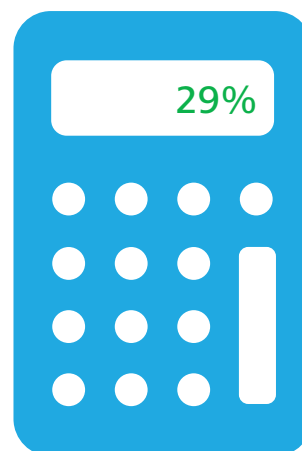
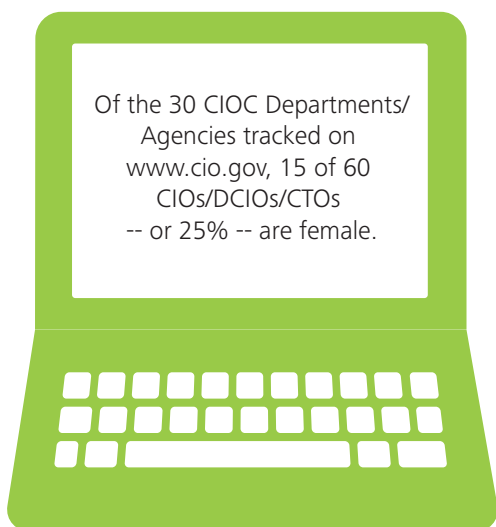
The efforts of the Beijing Platform have made some impact. Women’s participation (via election, career advancement or appointment) in national government has nearly doubled since 1995. By 2005, the proportion of women members of upper and lower houses of parliament worldwide hit 16.3%<sup>18</sup>; by 2008, that figure climbed to 18.4%.<sup>19</sup> Between 1995 and 2009, 35 women were elected or appointed heads of government. The most recent additions include Laura Chinchilla President of Costa Rica, Jadranka Kossor, Johanna Siguroardottir and Hasina Wazed, serve as prime ministers in Croatia, Iceland and Bangladesh, respectively. Yet a report published by the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in advance of March 2010’s Beijing +15 notes that “Improvements in women’s access to power have generally been rather slow and uneven and women continue to be strongly underrepresented in all areas of decision-making in most countries.”<sup>20</sup>

## Quality as well as quantity

Over the years, there have been numerous initiatives and commitments to improving women’s participation at all levels of government. Substantial efforts— including quota systems, training programs, and other initiatives — have allowed for noteworthy advancement. Women now hold roles of significant importance in dozens of nations around the world. Moreover, women are making some headway in the lower houses of parliament—thanks in large part to quota systems—with the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) seating the highest percentage of females.

But what looks like progress may actually be deceptive. This increased female participation in the lower houses of government does not necessarily translate into more women in decision making roles. In many cases, women are relegated to simply filling positions on the lower rungs of government, where there may be little opportunity to advance, affect change, or influence policy. For example, while women fill more than half of Rwanda’s parliamentary seats, ranking it first in the world, it ties for 36th in number of ministerial posts filled by women. In Afghanistan, quotas mandate that one-third of parliament members must be women, but they have little influence and are clearly excluded from the decision-making process.<sup>21</sup> In other words, in many situations promising numbers mask continued marginalization.

The fact remains that today, women’s roles remain disproportionately small in all areas of the political sphere, in almost every country in the world. They continue to face substantial hurdles to participation and in many areas of the world still have little or no control over the decisions that affect most aspects of their daily lives. The challenge today is to accelerate both quantitative and qualitative progress so that women are full participants in the public and private sectors around the world.



Of the 26 CFOC Departments/  
Agencies tracked on www.cfo.gov,  
15 of 52 CFOs/DCFOs—or 29%—are female.

# The barriers to power



Women at the uppermost echelons of government often find themselves alone, and may still encounter resistance from other global leaders who may hold a more patriarchal mindset. “In our country...it’s no big deal, having a woman do the job,” said U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton in a recent profile in *American Vogue*. “But in much of the rest of the world there is a strong message. You can go to some countries and *there’s not a woman in the room*.”<sup>22</sup>

But it’s not just women at the top facing this issue. There are many entry barriers for women when it comes to participating in all areas—and levels—of the public and private sector. These include a full menu of cultural and financial concerns, such as a lingering prejudice toward women, cultural perceptions of gender roles in society, lack of education and support networks, a dearth of female role models already in office, and a lack of time and financial resources.

### *Lack of female role models*

Often it is the presence of other females that shows women that a position in government as a possibilities. “When women don’t see other women, they think it’s something that they can’t do, or that they don’t understand,” said Marie Wilson, founder and president of The White House Project, an American organization dedicated to advancing women’s leadership in the U.S. through training and recruitment.<sup>23</sup>

Decades ago, when women’s role in the workplace was even less accepted, fewer women were able to build careers in the public sector. The ripple effects of that are still being felt today. “There are a lot of skill sets that women have that are not being tapped into, but I believe that’s partly a reflection of how long it takes to get to the top of your field, and how relatively few women there were a few decades ago going into these areas,” said Heather Hancock, Lead Partner for London 2012 and Managing Partner for Innovation & Brand at Deloitte United Kingdom. “In some areas, there is simply not yet the population to have made that transformational shift.”<sup>24</sup>

### *Cultural pressures*

In many regions around the world the most vulnerable of women face a double challenge: being female and being part of a lower caste or social rung, making it even more difficult for them to have a voice. They also “carry a disproportionately high burden of poverty,”<sup>25</sup> and not just in the material sense, but in the ephemeral as well. They often find themselves politically and culturally marginalized, leaving them few avenues to influence political, economic or cultural processes. Absence of education, low literacy and lifelong unequal status also diminish confidence in one’s ability to seek and hold public office.

“Personal confidence is extremely important. As soon as you get a star by your name you start to suffer from the ‘imposter theory’- the worry that ‘I’m not good enough.’”

**Dame Sue Street DCB**, the former Permanent Secretary at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, U.K and Strategic Advisor to Deloitte



Photo courtesy of Governing Magazine

## Crit Luallen

Auditor of public accounts for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, U.S.

### At a glance:

- Secretary of the Executive Cabinet, chief operating officer of Kentucky
- State Budget Director
- Secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet
- Secretary of the Kentucky Tourism Cabinet
- Commissioner of the Kentucky Department of the Arts
- Special Assistant to the Governor
- Named a Public Official of the Year by Governing Magazine, 2009
- Recipient of the National Excellence in Leadership Award by Women Executives in State Government, 2001

### Myths about women, talent, and elected office

It's true that barriers exist for women seeking elected office or hoping to climb the ladder in the public sector. But it's possible that those barriers are not as high as many assume, or may not even exist at all. "There are a lot of myths about women running for office," said Crit Luallen, currently the only female elected state official in Kentucky.

"One of those myths is that women can't raise money successfully. But if you are confident and present a clear message for why people should support you, and can articulate that well and ask confidently for a donation, people will support you financially no matter what your gender is. It's very hard to do. It's a full-time job. But you can do it."

"Another myth is the very basic one, that women aren't strong enough, they don't have the strength to lead and deal with challenges. Every time a woman successfully leads, it helps to break down that barrier."

"The third myth is that women can't give their full attention to public policy matters due to all the other demands on their time."

Luallen pointed to another experience all too common—and detrimental—to women seeking public office. Rather than allowing the candidate's qualifications, competency, and talent to shine, women often find themselves shoehorned into a male version of themselves. "Many advisers surrounding a female candidate will spend their time trying to have her look like a man instead of talking substantively about real issues. I think as I watch women in leadership now, what I see women doing today...I think we've gotten over the trying to look like a man, sound like a man, talk like a man, and instead we're talking competently about the real issues."

"Because of the myths that women aren't tough enough, you have to really work hard to develop more competence. I don't ever want to take lightly that I am the only elected woman in the statewide office. For every speaking engagement, for every panel, for every forum or interview I have, I prepare extensively. I feel like I have a responsibility to other women to have something of substance to say and to be the smartest person at the table. If I don't do that, I feel like I've let other women down—the women coming up behind me, the women who elected me. To be able to speak competently about any issue with thoughtfulness and complexity is important."

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"It's not trying to fit into some role of what you think people want to see. It's just being knowledgeable about the issues and how to approach them."

### *A male-centric system*

Inherent in many government-related institutions is a de facto discrimination against women. As female participation in government is a relatively new phenomenon in many areas of the world, most governments are designed in a way that suits male participants best. They fail to accommodate the many challenges women often face in terms of their roles within the family and the home. Women who want to seek a role in government lack accessible childcare or other support networks.

### *Financial challenges*

In many areas of the world women simply have less access to money—either they are not allowed to have or keep any of their own, or have no means of earning it. In the strictest sense, money prevents women from exerting any effect on the political sphere. Without funding, they cannot run for office, and many do not know how to fundraise or even, in many cases, that they may be entitled to public funding. While countries such as the U.S. offer public funding to candidates, women in other nations must find other ways outside of the establishment to obtain money, through their own fundraising or other grassroots efforts.

### *The demands of dual roles*

Frequently, women shoulder domestic and caregiving duties along with the responsibility of being a breadwinner, making it difficult for them to find the time to take on a role in the public sphere as well.

“There are so many issues related to the double role that women play, especially when they are mothers and wives. They have too many responsibilities, too many things they need to do. The opportunities that women have are different than men, especially in the Arab world where there are strict gender roles,” said Her Excellency Maha Khatib, minister of tourism and antiquities for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. “It’s the same in politics and in business. We talk about women’s low participation rate, but the fact is that they can’t take part in government to the same degree. It’s just not practical. Women simply do not have enough time, neither for business nor for politics. It’s not a matter of capacity. It’s time. It’s all about time.”<sup>26</sup>

At the same time, when women – and men – feel they can make a difference, they are more willing to invest their time. In the United States, voting rates among African-Americans have been low, but they came out in record numbers – often waiting for hours in long lines, to vote for President Obama.

### *The marginalization factor*

Even when women make it into government, when it comes to political appointments, women frequently fill roles seen as possessing “feminine” characteristics. Female minister and cabinet members are heavily concentrated in social and cultural areas of responsibility, while men generally dominate more quantitative or conflict-laden roles.

A 2008 survey by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) found that the top portfolios for female ministers were social affairs (91), family/children/youth/elderly/disabled (84), women’s affairs and gender equality (72) and education (70). At the bottom of the list were defense (6), human rights (15) and finance (17).<sup>27</sup>

However, this is beginning to change. “Women do end up going into portfolios that have historically been seen as ‘women’s issues,’” said Laura Liswood, secretary general of the Council of Women World Leaders. “But I think we’re starting to see a little bit of stretch as governments commit to having 50% men and 50% women in their cabinets. You start to see women moving into other areas: immigration, economics, finance. Not as much as you’d like to see, but it is happening.”<sup>28</sup>

One such example is Spain, where in 2008 Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero’s government made gender equality a top priority and assembled a cabinet that included eight men and nine women, including Carme Chacón, the first female Minister of Defense in the country’s history—who happened to be seven-months pregnant at the time of her appointment.

The other side of this coin is to elevate the importance of the traditionally female portfolios given the importance of women’s issues to the country as a whole.

## Overcoming financial challenges

Organizations around the world are helping women surmount the financial hurdles that may prevent them from running for office. These include not only grassroots organizations, but political parties seeking to increase representation by female membership as well.

- **Grassroots:** Founded in the U.S. in 1985, EMILY’s List takes its name from the acronym “Early Money is Like Yeast, because it helps to raise the dough.” The group has outposts in Australia and the U.K., and raises money for female candidates who fit the group’s ideology.

- **Political Parties:** During recent elections in Nigeria, the People’s Democratic Party offered women the opportunity to fill out a nomination form free of charge; typically, filling out the paperwork to seek the nomination for party primary elections came with a high fee. By waiving the costs, many women who otherwise could not have afforded the entry costs were able to secure a slot on the ballot for the primaries.



## Turning the tide: where talent trumps bias

The mindset about women's ability to serve and lead appears to be changing, even in areas of the world that are the most traditionally patriarchal—and plenty of efforts are in place to involve more women in the political process, from quotas to initiatives by political parties. In reality, the most significant barriers to entry into government may not be bias against female candidates vs. their male counterparts in an election, but rather overcoming all the financial and cultural hurdles to get women to run for office in the first place.

### *Europe*

Europe remains the global leader in moving toward gender equality in government. Once women have made it onto the ballot in the European Union, evidence suggests that they have as much of a chance of winning as men. Just 5% of female voters in the European Union say that gender is the most important factor in deciding whom to vote for; 3% of men say the same.<sup>29</sup>

### *The United States*

Nearly all Americans—94%—are comfortable with a female serving as a member of Congress, while 92% say the same about having a female secretary of state, and 89% support having a female speaker of the house. Three-quarters of Americans feel comfortable with having a woman president.<sup>30</sup> The markedly higher levels of comfort for women filling positions they have already successfully executed suggests that once the barrier to a new position is broken for the first time, it becomes far easier for other women to attain that role.

### *Africa*

Ambassador Mohamed noted a similar effect in Kenya, where women who blazed a trail by running for elected office had made the process easier for those who followed in their wake. "There was a time in this country where, if a woman was running for office against four or five men, often she would be beaten up or even sexually assaulted," she noted. "But now there are enough women in office that you don't see that so much anymore."<sup>31</sup>

### *Latin America*

Despite its reputation for a machismo culture, three Latin American countries—Chile, Costa Rica and Argentina—elected women as heads of state in the last three years. Besides these two leaders, six other women have been heads of state in the region since 1980. Polling by Gallup in nine Latin American countries suggests a significant level of comfort with female leaders—and, in fact, a higher regard for female leaders than for their male counterparts. Fully 61% of women agreed with the statement "Women in politics have done a better job than men;" nearly half of men (47%) said the same.<sup>32</sup>

In Chile, conditions for women have improved markedly under President Bachelet, who enacted numerous social programs to address children's education and support for mothers and currently enjoys a 70% approval rating, largely due to her focus on women. Experts in the country note that Bachelet's tenure in office has galvanized women, who feel that her successful presidency proves women's capability.<sup>33</sup>

**"I took on assignments that other people didn't... each one helped me move to the next level."**

**JoAnn Boutelle**, Partner, Deloitte United States (Deloitte & Touche LLP), Lead Client Service Partner for the US Department of Defense (DoD) accounts and Former Deputy CFO of the U.S. Department of Defense

*Middle East*

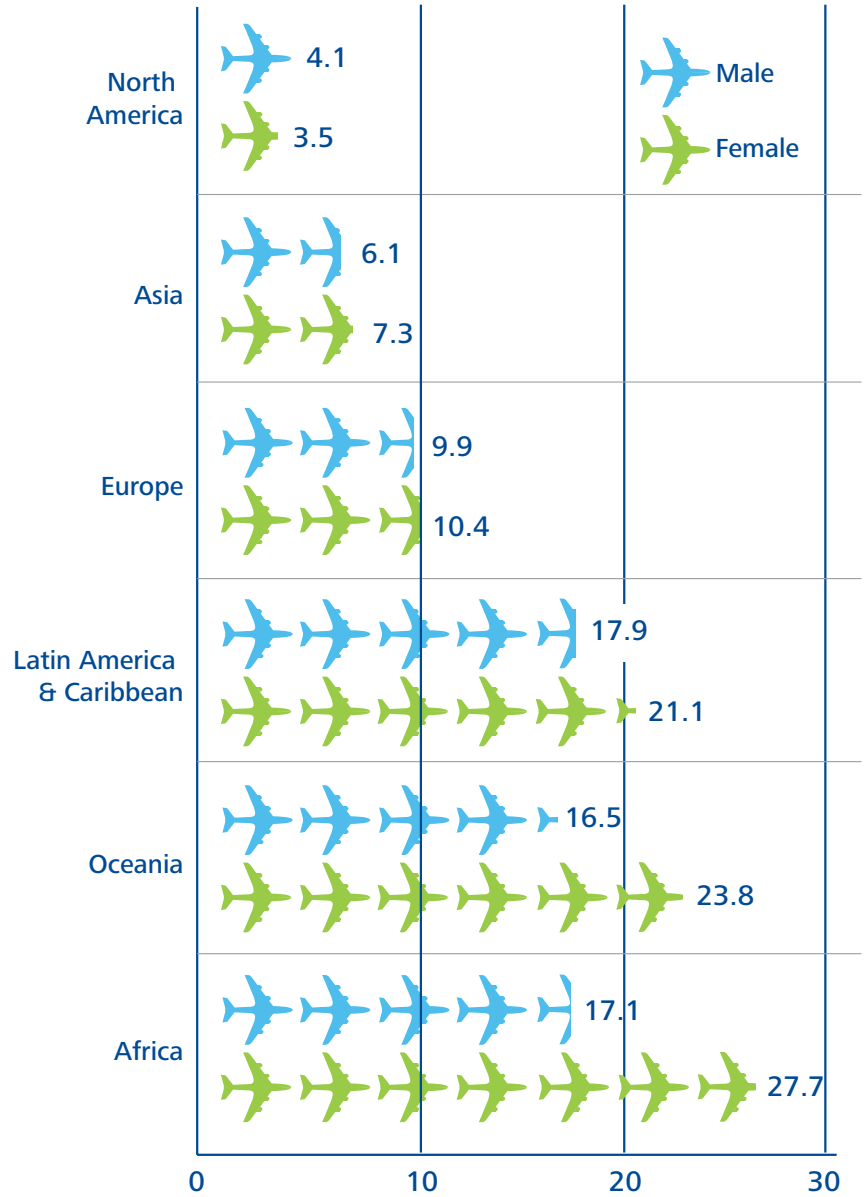
Traditionally the home to patriarchal cultures, the Middle East holds some surprises. A 2007 Gallup poll of Iranian citizens found that 77% of respondents—86% of women and 68% of men—believed that women should be allowed to hold leadership positions in the cabinet and national council, a view that differed little between urban and rural respondents.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise, two-thirds of Saudi Arabian women and more than half of men (52%) believed that women should be able to hold leadership positions in the cabinet and national council. Given Saudi Arabia’s conservative stance on women—and the fact that women will obtain suffrage for the first time in 2010—these findings suggest a building support for equality in government.<sup>35</sup> In December 2009 Noor Al-Fayez became the first woman appointed to the council of ministers, where she serves as the deputy minister for women’s education.

In Egypt, 68% of women support women’s right to hold high-level government positions, while just 44% of men say the same.<sup>36</sup> These results are particularly interesting in light of a 2006 fatwa issued by the Grand Mufti of Egypt affirming women’s right to become heads of state under Islamic law; even with this support, women face significant challenges overcoming deeply-entrenched cultural norms.

The changing mindsets in many areas of the world where women most traditionally find themselves marginalized suggest that women may be poised to attain unprecedented influence in the decision-making process. At the same time, women still have a long road ahead of them in achieving true parity. The threats and intimidation women still face around the world when choosing to stand for office are not to be overlooked, and still occur even in areas where female representation is high. For example, during the 2007 Kenyan general elections, some female candidates were subject to brutal violence, even as the number of women running soared to record levels.

**Migration rates of people with tertiary education**



Migration rates of people with tertiary education, UNIFEM

*“You have to be comfortable sometimes being the lone voice. You cannot be afraid to speak up.”*

**Mary Corrado**, former Chief Financial Officer of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and a Director in the Department of Defense/Intelligence Practice at Deloitte



# Ambassador Amina Chawahir Mohamed

Permanent Secretary and Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs of the Republic of Kenya

## At a glance:

- Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kenya to the World Trade Organization and the United Nations (2000-2006)
- Ambassador to the Conference on Disarmament, where she held the rotating Presidency of the Conference on Disarmament
- Chairman of The General Council of the World Trade Organization (2005-2006)\*
- Chairman of the Dispute Settlement Body of the WTO (2004)\*
- Chairman of the Trade Policy Review Body of the WTO (2003)
- Chairman of the Council for the International Organization for Migration (2002)\*†

\*First woman to be elected to this role

†First African to be elected to this role

## The importance of education

“I was very, very lucky to get educated, to have access to education,” said Ambassador Amina Chawahir Mohamed. “I grew up very disadvantaged. I was one of nine children. My mother took us through school. She did not have a formal education, but that was never an excuse. She was very achievement-focused, and I wanted to make her proud.”

Ambassador Mohamed’s commitment to women’s education—and her belief in education as a key ingredient for women’s success in any sphere—is borne out in her own impressive, 23-year career.

As the only girl in her community in Kenya to go on to a university, Ambassador Mohamed’s educational path took her around the world, from the Center for International Relations, International Law and International Trade Law of Kiev State University in Ukraine, and the University of Oxford in the U.K., to the U.S., where she was an International Law Fellow at the UNITAR. Her background prepared her for her varied experiences in the public sector, where she has worked extensively and in multiple capacities with the World Trade Organization, the United Nations and the Kenyan Parliament – and solidified her belief in the importance of education in not only helping women rise to the highest levels of public and private sector professions, but helping countries improve their economies.

“Education is really the key to rising out of this trap of poverty, to engaging with others, to participating in life in the three key areas: politically, economically and socially,” said Ambassador Mohamed, noting that the number of women enrolled in schools in Kenya continues to grow, and that there are more women taking degrees at the University of Nairobi than men. “Education is key to being able to communicate better, and it allows you to make use of facilities, and of technology to improve the lives of others around you.”

Indeed, Ambassador Mohamed voiced the firm conviction that educating just one woman has a ripple effect, improving not only her life, but the lives of those around her as well.

“If you educate a man,” she said, “you educate an individual. If you educate a woman, you educate a community.”

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“If you educate a woman, you educate a community.”

# Support for women: A rising tide lifts all boats



Above it all, the one thing that is most important for ensuring continued—and increased—involvement of women in the decision-making process now and in the future is numbers. The more women in office, the more women who can ascend in the public sphere in the future. Continued efforts to get them there and keep them there is crucial.

## *Building a base*

Without women participating and taking leadership roles in government, there is little hope for future growth in this area. Simply put, without women in charge, there won't be more women in charge. Without women spearheading and influencing policy decisions that help other women, it is simply less likely that other women will ever be able to overcome the barriers around them and stand for elections, leaving societal inequalities unchallenged.<sup>37</sup>

A lack of presence in the political sphere perpetuates the cycle; once elected to office, women have been shown to concentrate overwhelmingly on affecting change and enacting policy around women's interests and promote equality of women, keeping women's concerns on the front burner of policy decisions for all government decision-makers – not just the females.

Evidence suggests that once female representation goes beyond just a few or token women in the room, their shared interests as women emerge. For example, in the U.K., when women's representation increased to more than 18%, women's issues became much more prevalent in the political dialogue.<sup>38</sup>

"You just cannot do it on your own. You need a group of women who can support each other. In 2007, there were four women in the cabinet together. Three of us were able to join together and push women-sensitive issues," said HE Maha Khatib. "We were able to stop all decisions taken by government related to pardoning of prisoners and vacating sentences for those serving time for honor killings. We made it a rule that we would not pardon a single person accused of this. The first time it was very difficult to convince the men of this, but after that they stopped even considering pardoning these prisoners."<sup>39</sup>

Strength in numbers rules the day; with just one or two females present, women are much less likely to lobby for women's issues. "If you're the only 'O' in a room full of 'X's,

it's going to be really hard," said Liswood of the Council of Women World Leaders who was referencing an assertion by Harvard Business School Professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter. "The 'O' is going to try to shift and adapt its identity to become more like an 'X'."<sup>40</sup>

DeMesme agreed. "Society used to feel that if we had one woman at the table that was enough to show we were open to women. But now they recognize that women have different opinions and views, and having just one woman does not mean they are all represented."<sup>41</sup>

Chilean President Michelle Bachelet has made strengthening women's rights a key part of her agenda and her focus on women's issues has translated into provisions for increased childcare for low-income women, and other policies improving gender equality in Chile. Likewise, in Rwanda, the Forum of Rwandan Women Parliamentarians provides a way for female legislators in that country to unite, network and reach across party lines to other women, fostering more cooperation and collaboration within government. In South Africa, the multiparty Parliamentary Women's Caucus, launched in 2008, serves a similar role.

## *Networking*

Ask any woman who's managed to climb to the top of her profession, either in the private or the public sphere, one key ingredient to their success, and the answer she gives always includes networking. Whether it's connecting with other women in their field or senior-level men who are important to know, women at the upper echelons cast the net far and wide. This is particularly important in the public sector, where politics play a crucial factor in promotions and appointments – even in non-elected positions. To that end, many women join organized groups or are simply very proactive about reaching out to people they may not know.

"It is critically important to build your network, both internally and externally," said Mary Corrado, former chief financial officer of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and current director in Deloitte's Department of Defense Intelligence Practice. "Politics are often more important than what you know or could do. There are a lot of smart people. What differentiates those who make it to the top is that they had a network of people to champion them. If there's a pool of people and they are all equally qualified, you're going to gravitate toward the person you know."<sup>42</sup>



### *Mentorship and cross-mentorship*

The importance of female mentors to help fellow women navigate the difficult waters of government and the public sector is well documented. As more women filter into government and fill decision-making roles, they seek out networks of other women, as well as senior-level female mentors, to share experiences, seek refuge from the difficulties of the job, learn the ropes, get advice and strategize.

But the relative dearth of women in senior-level political positions makes it difficult for these individuals to develop one-on-one relationships with all the women who need them. "If you're one of the few women at the uppermost level, you're being asked to do a tremendous amount of things," noted Liswood. "Mentorship isn't always possible."<sup>43</sup>

Thus, the inclusion of men is essential to guiding up-and-coming women through the beginning of their government careers. In part, it's a numbers game; more men hold senior-level government positions, so there are simply more expert mentors to go around. "If you are in a male-dominated area, your mentor is male," said DeMesme. "Because he's where you want to be."<sup>44</sup>

But at the same time, cross-mentoring brings a variety of advantages. It allows women just beginning their government careers access to a network they otherwise might not have had. And involving men in the process also prevents them from viewing the situation as "a women's problem," separate from them and their own interests. In this way, they begin to see the involvement of women in government as very much a shared, societal issue.

Cross-mentorship also provides the added benefit of helping men see the value of greater gender equality in politics. As men in government develop professional bonds with up-and-coming women, they can see a woman's competency firsthand and offer their own perspective, as well as build a personal interest in the mentee's continued growth – ensuring that they continue to offer support, advice and help as the woman's career advances.

"It's important for men to mentor women. It's essential, because both are experiencing the world differently and can provide valuable lessons. And with mentoring and cross-mentoring, the mentor feels a connection to the mentee and wants to bring them along," said Liswood.

In fact, many successful senior women leaders in government credit male mentors with helping them grow their careers. "I was very lucky to join government at such an exciting time, and while my superiors were all men they all gave me the chance to go off and do things," said Hancock. "The meritocracy is alive and well, and it is an empowering place to be. If you have an idea and you're willing to pursue it, there are no limits to what you can do."<sup>45</sup>

### *Involving the men*

Increasing women's participation in government is not just about supporting and educating women. Involving men in the process of gender equality in government is crucial. If women are to succeed in the political sphere and achieve parity in the long-term, men's views need to be taken into account, and men need to have a vested interest in seeing women succeed. As the Catalyst report on *Engaging Men in Gender Initiatives* states, "[w]ithout the avid support of men, who are arguably the most powerful stakeholder group in most large corporations, significant progress toward ending gender disparities is unlikely."<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, gaining male support for increasing women's role in government remains a challenge in many areas, just as it remains a challenge for men in many cultures to accept gender equality in general. The Shriver Report, published in October 2009, points to the perception of a "zero-sum game" – if women gain some measure of progress, men must lose some; any victory for women is seen as a loss for men.<sup>47</sup> Demonstrating to men that an increase in the presence of women in government will not result in a loss of influence, but may even result in improved equality for all, is an important priority.

"Yes, it's true that women can't be themselves in government. But neither can men until there are more women at the table," said Wilson. "Sitting alongside each other at the table, we all have something to learn."<sup>48</sup>

## 40% of the workforce is women





## Diane Rath

Former Chairperson and Commissioner, Texas Workforce Commission

### At a glance:

- Senior Vice President, ResCare Domestic Workforce Services
- Senior Vice President of Arbor Education & Training; Chief Operations Officer, Eastern Division (2008-2009)
- Chairperson and commissioner of the Texas Workforce Commission, U.S. (1996-2008)
- Chair of the Texas Workforce and Economic Competitiveness Council
- Senior Director of Public Affairs for Kinetic Concepts Inc.

### Setting a career course through cross-mentorship

Diane Rath has seen firsthand how women can attain senior leadership roles in both the public and private sectors. In her twelve years as chairperson and commissioner of the Texas Workforce Commission, Rath also became known as a national leader in workforce development, overseeing complex projects such as the consolidation of 28 programs from ten different state agencies into one federal body. This \$1.1 billion entity maintained responsibility for services involving federal programs from the U.S. Departments of Labor and Human Services and four other federal agencies. The successful completion of the project represented to Rath the key qualities for leadership: open communication, swift action, and being decisive.

But it's quite possible that none of these accomplishments would have been possible without cross-mentorship. When Rath began her career in the public sector, she found that men at the senior-most levels of leadership were the most welcoming. "I had men who were very open and very responsive to teaching me what I could do," she said. "To see how inclusive they were and to see the opportunities were tremendously important."

Indeed, by seeking out only other women as mentors, women may be limiting themselves and forgoing a valuable network. In addition to professional advice, cross-mentorship can also be instrumental in helping women find out about opportunities that may exist, opportunities that may not be apparent without a more senior mentor showing the way.

"A major barrier is women not having an awareness of opportunities that are out there," said Rath. "Mentorship is very important in terms of helping to educate women as to the choices and opportunities that are out there. You really set the course for your work-life by how you start."

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“The inclusion of women in the workforce is critically important to the economy. Research has shown that if you have women in leadership in a company, it performs better. The same is true for the public sector.”

# More than one path to the top



Focusing solely on women in the top echelons of government belies the progress they are making elsewhere in the political sphere. There are more ways to participate in decision making and affect change than just seeking national office, such as voting, serving in a local capacity and involving oneself with NGOs and grassroots organizations -- and women are using those tools to affect change and significantly impact policy.

## *Voting and local involvement*

One of the most potent tools women have is the most elemental: their vote. Almost every country currently allows women to vote; just six nations deny women universal suffrage. One of these holdouts, the United Arab Emirates, plans to extend voting rights to women in 2010; however, women can run for public office there and several did so in the 2006 elections.

Women are often seen as a single voting bloc, and they tend to vote along ideological lines. These ideologies are hardly consistent—in the U.S. women have a higher propensity for left-leaning candidates by 7-10 percentage points, while in Australia, women tend to favor more conservative issues and candidates. Women also exercise their voting privileges more than men. In the U.S., the number of women voting outnumbers the number of men, and the gap has increased every year since 1980.<sup>49</sup>

These tendencies create the perception of a “women’s vote,” a powerful bargaining chip that candidates must appeal to in order to win and remain in office. As a result, political parties develop platforms embracing issues of interest to women, and, in many cases, increased female membership and leadership. In this way, women exercise their power to influence policy and gender parity simply through their vote.

Women can also exercise influence on the local level, where their presence in local politics often mirrors national proportions. But women are finding lower barriers to entry, and local efforts allow them to enact changes that directly affect their everyday lives more quickly and directly. As a result, in many cases organizations focus on training women for leadership roles encourage them to participate on the local level. In India, panchayats (local village councils) have strong female representation due to quotas; women there have been instrumental in affecting change that impacts their daily lives, from getting roads paved to increasing access to plumbing and clean drinking water.

## *Appointments and career positions*

Women can build a career in government without placing their name on a ballot or winning an election – and in the process, can often find themselves with more opportunities to achieve a seat at the decision-making table. “We still have very low levels of women running for public office in our state,” said Crit Luallen, auditor of public accounts for the Commonwealth of Kentucky in the U.S. “We still are not seeing a lot of women having success in this area. But in appointed and career positions, we are seeing a lot of women. I’ve seen tremendous changes in my career. The door is really open.”<sup>50</sup>

## Quotas

One of the most effective and widely employed methods for improving female representation in the political sphere is the quota. Quotas can be legally mandated by the constitution or can be voluntary, and set aside a certain percentage of parliamentary seats or a certain percentage of slots on the ballot during an election for women. Political parties may also have quotas to encourage greater participation by female members.

Countries with the highest proportions of female elected officials overwhelmingly owe their status to the employment of quotas. As of 2008, 18 of the 22 countries that had reached the 30% threshold for women in national parliament used quota of some type.<sup>51</sup> (UNIFEM website) Currently, 46 countries use some form of quota mandated by constitutional or electoral law; average female representation is 21.9%,

compared with 15.3% of those who do not use quotas.<sup>52</sup> (UNIFEM, 2008)

While quotas aren’t perfect, without them the picture for women would look much bleaker. UNIFEM estimates that countries that use quotas to improve female representation will likely reach parity in 18 to 22 years – compared with 72 years for governments that do not use these tactics.<sup>53</sup> (UNIFEM website)

Interestingly, women in some regions appear ambivalent about quotas, preferring that the path to parity occur organically. Just 10% of European women believe that mandatory quotas are the best way to increase the proportion of women members of European Parliament; 53% believe the best way is simply to encourage more women to participate in politics.<sup>54</sup> (Gallup Hungary, 2009)



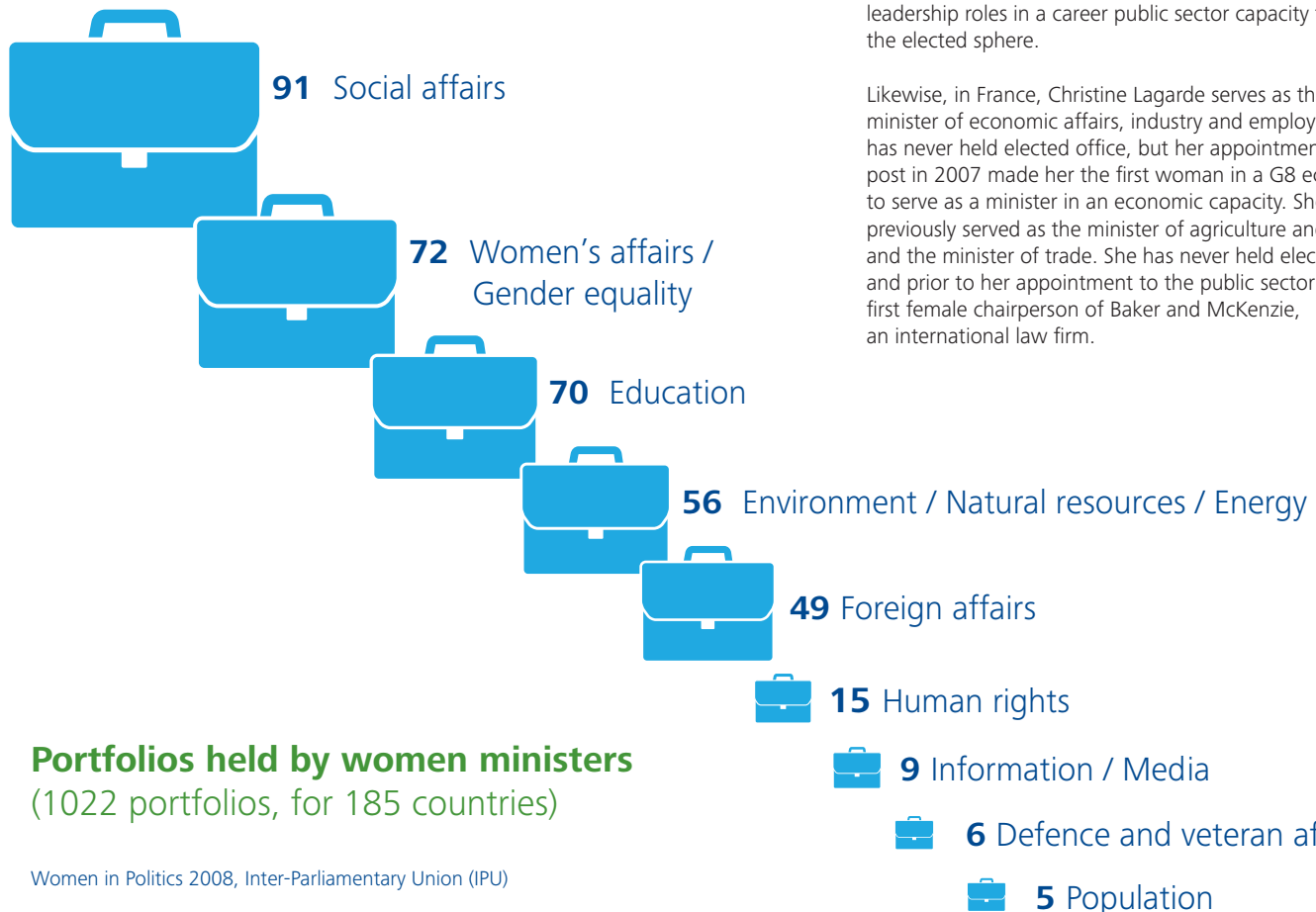
Working one's way up the ladder in career government can also allow women more access to other roles traditionally seen as "masculine," such as finance, taxation and defense – roles that women in ministerial positions are less likely to fill than their male counterparts. It also provides a wider variety of government opportunities in the fields of health care, science, agriculture, education, public welfare, technology and other areas. "The first female general was appointed in 1970," noted U.S. Army Major General (Retired) Marilyn Quagliotti. "This was way ahead of the corporate world."<sup>55</sup>

In the U.S., both the Central Intelligence Agency and the Department of Defense have had women serving as CFO and Deputy CFO, respectively, and the CIO and CFO at the Office of the Director for National Intelligence are both women. The CIA has also made other efforts to increase the number of women at the top in recent years, while the British intelligence agency MI-5 fielded the first female director of an intelligence agency.<sup>56</sup> In the U.S., 25% of CIOs and 29% of CFOs in public sector agencies are female, a significantly larger proportion than in the private sector, where less than 14% of c-level executives at the top 500 companies are women.<sup>57, 58, 59</sup>

Around the world women are becoming more involved in the public sector across all areas; Germany began allowing women into the Bundeswehr, its armed forces, on a voluntary basis in 2001, while in the U.K., which promoted its first female head of a naval base in 2004, women comprise 9.1% of the armed forces and 11.2% of its officers.<sup>60</sup> In Kenya, a female serves as Commissioner of Customs Services, one of the six commissioners to lead the Kenya Revenue Authority. A career customs officer, she rose through the ranks after joining the Ministry of Finance in 1984.

Many of the most powerful decision-makers and leaders hold non-elected offices, such as Sheila Bair, the chairwoman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation in the U.S., or Linda Stiff, who served as the acting head of the Internal Revenue Service in the U.S. Both women wield considerable influence over economic issues. Indeed, noted Joni Swedlund, Principal, and segment leader for Deloitte United States' Federal Financial Services practice at Deloitte Consulting LLP, in many ways women serve in more senior leadership roles in a career public sector capacity than in the elected sphere.

Likewise, in France, Christine Lagarde serves as the current minister of economic affairs, industry and employment. She has never held elected office, but her appointment to this post in 2007 made her the first woman in a G8 economy to serve as a minister in an economic capacity. She also previously served as the minister of agriculture and fishing and the minister of trade. She has never held elected office, and prior to her appointment to the public sector was the first female chairperson of Baker and McKenzie, an international law firm.



**Portfolios held by women ministers**  
(1022 portfolios, for 185 countries)

Women in Politics 2008, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

# Women in local government

- *Europe:* Women's representation at the mayoral level in Europe is highest in Sweden, at 29%; the Nordic country also reports the highest percentage of female municipal council membership, at 45%.<sup>61</sup> Recent breakthroughs in local government include Yordanka Fandukova, who won a landslide victory in November 2009 to become the first female mayor of Sofia, the 130-year-old capital of Bulgaria.
- *Asia Pacific:* New Zealand, the first country in the world to grant women universal suffrage, reported during its most recent elections in 2007 that 579 women were elected to local positions, constituting 32% of total local government membership -- up from 25% two decades ago.<sup>62</sup>
- *Americas:* In the U.S., eight of the fifty governors are women, as are 16.9% of mayors in cities with 300,000 or more inhabitants, a proportion similar to their representation in Congress. Notably, women account for nearly one-quarter of elected state legislative seats, a significantly higher proportion than experienced at the national level.<sup>63</sup>

## Other ways to effect change

"Having women in high levels of government is important, but what's more important is having women who can make a difference," said HE Maha Khatib. "It's how much you can really affect the world around you."<sup>64</sup>

While growth within the elected or public sector spheres represent a powerful way for women to make an impact within government, they are not the only paths to power for women in impacting government and policy. The presence of advocates in non-elected positions is particularly crucial in raising awareness, mobilizing interested parties and driving demand for higher levels of investment. Some notable areas outside the public sector that offer the opportunity for women's growth include:

- *Political parties:* Political parties set the agenda during elections and determine the main issues to address; through these groups, candidates are nominated, funded, rallied and supported. Thus, women's participation in political parties is crucial to ensuring their issues and concerns are priorities. Even within political parties, women form sub-groups to consolidate their voice, constituting a powerful voting bloc that dictates party policy toward mandating gender quotas in candidacy endorsement, planks in the group platform and training.

- *Non-governmental organizations:* NGOs are a strong force for advancing women's involvement in government, particularly at the decision-making level, through efforts that ran the gamut from local all the way to multinational. Such groups are effective on their own, but often partner together with other organizations, political parties and governments to exert an even more powerful force for change.
- *Women's movements:* These organized, non-governmental groups have challenged intolerant or authoritarian governments in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Nepal, Peru and the Philippines and have been a force for peace in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Uganda, Sudan, Burundi, Timor-Lester and the Balkans<sup>65</sup>, and have pushed governments to face issues such as genital mutilation, marital rights, issues of female inheritance and domestic violence.

**11%** of the 195 nations have female heads of state

**3%** of CEOs of top 1000 multinational companies are women

"In the military there is a real shared sense of purpose. If someone is blocking you from accomplishing your mission, sometimes you just have to move them out of your way."

**Major General Marilyn Quagliotti**, former Vice Director of the U.S. Defense Information Systems Agency

# Stretching beyond the comfort zone

In addition to the support, training, mentorship and informal networks of other decision-making females, what's most important is making that first crucial step: the decision to run for higher office—and having the confidence to know that they can do it regardless of whether or not they have years of training and experience. “What we find is that women shoot too low,” said Wilson. “They come in at the local level, when they could run for state legislature.”<sup>51</sup>

The key factor toward guaranteeing women's continued and increasing participation in government is the ability to take a risk, and make the first leap. Women recounting their rise to the top in the public sector agree that the key to their success is taking risks and being willing to move into areas where they might be less comfortable, being bold, and not letting fears or worries of failure—or what they “should” be doing—hold them back.

“A lot of it is confidence right out of the gate. I'd like to see more women say, ‘I've had some very strong leadership experience, maybe not all that I need, but I'm going to run for governor, and I'm just going to get out there,’” said Liswood. “I think our reach should exceed our grasp.”<sup>52</sup>

## Training the next crop of female leaders

As important as encouraging women to vote and run for elected office is showing them how. Many women around the world are unaware of their rights and the opportunities they have to affect change within their government, and building their capacity for leadership remains a crucial focus for many organizations, who organize efforts to build community networks for women and connect them with women who have successfully made the transition to the public sector—and to public office

- *Philippines:* Oxfam offers training programs aimed at changing the mindsets of women who accept societal gender roles, and works to help them understand the properties of a “good leader.” Women receiving leadership training were also offered free childcare.
- *Africa:* In Sierra Leone, Oxfam educates women about their voting rights, while the Inter-Parliamentary Union works to connect female voters and build their capacity for leadership.
- *U.S.:* The White House Project offers training and actively recruits women to run for local and national office, encouraging them with multiple

programs, including panels where attendees can see other women like them who have run for office.

- *Honduras:* The country offers initiatives to educate women about changes in legislation, voting rights and other issues, along with efforts to extend quotas to include more female candidates in elections, and women receiving leadership training were also offered free childcare.
- *U.K.:* Oxfam scheduled leadership training programs to coincide favorably with the school day, enabling mothers to learn without affecting their other duties or public benefits.

Marie Wilson, founder and president of the White House Project, noted this approach often produces the best results. “We don't tell women they have to run,” she said. “We show them panel after panel of women that look like them. Seeing another woman do it has an enormous effect on women. We show them they can do it.” (Wilson, 2009)

“Women have different opinions and views, and having just one woman does not mean all are represented.”

**The Honorable Ruby Butler DeMesme**, former assistant secretary, U.S. Air Force, current Director of Human Capital Market Innovative Strategy, Deloitte Consulting LLP United States



## Teri Takai

Chief Information Officer for the State of California, U.S.

### At a glance:

- Director of the Michigan Department of Information Technology (MDIT) (2003-2007)
- Chief Information Officer for the State of Michigan (2003-2007)
- Managing Director, EDS Corporation (2000-2002)
- Ford Motor Company, led the development of the company's information technology strategic plan (1970-2000)
- Practitioner Chair of the Harvard Policy Group on Network-Enabled Services and Government (Present)
- Past-President of the National Association of State Chief Information Officers

### Social media and women in government

Even without running for and serving in public office, women can provide a powerful mechanism for holding elected officials accountable. Educating oneself on the issues that each candidate stands for, and then holding them responsible for improving conditions for women, is an important way to maintain a voice in government without having to overcome the significant barriers of securing funding, getting leadership training, and running for office – and may represent one of the fastest, most efficient ways for women to increase their power in politics while paving the way for more future female leaders.

Social media is a particularly powerful tool in this regard, as it allows women to get their message out, affect change and amass a wider audience—across a wider geography—quickly and with minimal financial investment.

As the chief information officer for the eighth-largest economy in the world—the State of California— Teri Takai has harnessed the power of social media to speak directly to residents and voters about key issues – particularly those that affect women and families.















“Social media allows the government to interact with people in a much more personal way,” said Takai. “It’s going to be the predominant tool to interact with government. We’re using it more and more to collect input. We’re trying not to communicate just via the website, but through blogs and Twitter to allow feedback, comments and suggestions.”

Takai noted that California is developing its own social media policy; in many ways the state leads the way, most notably in its outreach to women. First Lady Maria Shriver makes the empowerment of women a strong priority and has developed WE Connect, a website and social media tool meant to connect with women and working families and inform them of statewide programs, services and resources; it also provides assistance registering for programs and opportunities.

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“With many women coming up in government now, it’s really important to give them the mentorship they need to grow their careers.”

## Gender balance on social networking sites

			%	M*
equality	LinkedIn		50	
	YouTube		50	
	deviantART		50	
	del.icio.us		52	
matriarchy	hi5		54	2.4
	flickr		55	6.0
	friendfeed		55	0.2
	twitter		57	7.7
	facebook		57	46
	Ning		59	2.5
	gaia ONLINE		61	0.3
	classmates.com		64	2.2
	myspace		64	27
	BUZZnet		64	1.4
	TAGGED		64	3.6
	bebo		68	3.2
patriarchy	digg		64	4.7

\* M = million more monthly female or male visitors

US gender figures, Worldwide traffic figures  
source: BrianSolis.com, Google Ad Planner



# From vicious circle to virtuous cycle: an organizational approach to advancing women



No organization, whether public or private, can afford to waste the significant investment they are making in recruiting and training women only to see them walk out the door or stall in their careers. This vicious cycle has been dubbed a global brain drain and is why it has been so hard to increase the number of women in public and private sector leadership. While women have employed individual strategies to achieve their ambitions, advancing women into positions of leadership in government is going to require more. It's going to require organizational strategies. The good news: it is possible to turn the vicious circle into a virtuous cycle when organizations focus on women's advancement.

### *An organizational wake-up call*

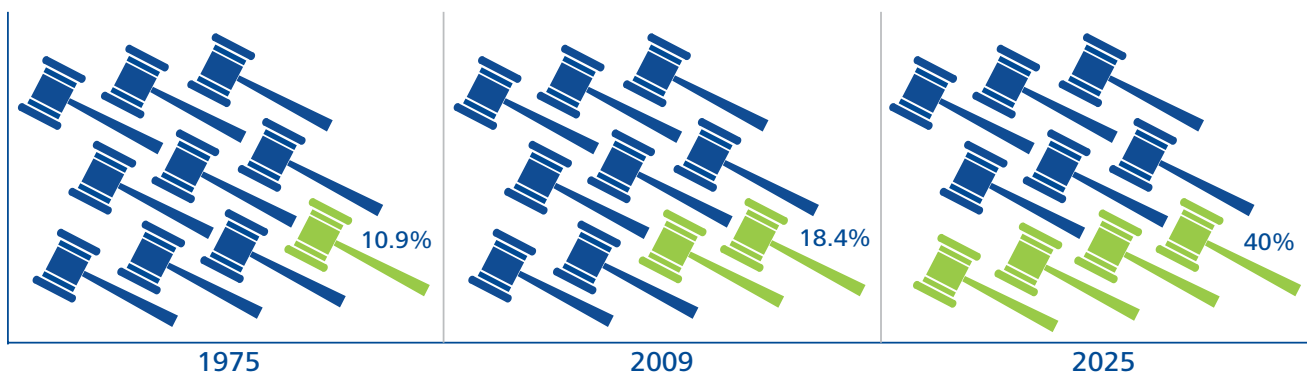
Deloitte United States has learned this lesson and today boasts over 1000 women partners, principals and directors- the very top positions in the firm. But it wasn't always this way. In 1991, only 4 of the 50 candidates for partner were women, even though the firm had been hiring men and women in roughly equal numbers since 1980. The reason for the paucity of women at the top was the

turnover rate for women, which was significantly higher than for men. Even more startling was the fact that these women were not leaving to raise families, as many had assumed. A majority were leaving to go to other jobs.

In a talent-driven profession, the fact that so many of Deloitte's women were leaving—and taking all that training and experience with them—was disturbing. It was apparent that something about Deloitte's culture—whether overt or not—was discouraging to women. To identify and remedy what was prompting women to seek opportunities elsewhere, Deloitte created the Initiative for the Advancement of Women (WIN).

Spearheaded by top leaders, the initiative made a strong business case for retaining and advancing women and aggressively pushed the message out to all levels of management—and held those same managers accountable for progress. It was an effort that would yield a sea-change throughout the entire organization that benefited everyone, including the women.

## Percentage of women in national parliaments



1995 Fourth World Conference for Women "Beijing Platform for Action" political prong, Women in Power and Decision Making, set out a goal for women to achieve parity defined as at least 40% representation by 2025.

### *Changing cultures, changing priorities*

Deloitte's experience in retaining and advancing women shows that when this goal is a priority, it can be attained. It also demonstrates, though, that a concerted, conscious, and system-wide effort is ultimately needed to create a "virtuous cycle" of developing women that moves them into positions of leadership. It won't happen by itself or from quotas or recruitment targets alone. To change the culture, Deloitte followed certain key principles that should guide any organization's efforts to stem the flight of female talent:

*Make a fact-based case for change.* There are powerful reasons for retaining and developing women. To begin with, the investment made in recruiting and training female employees is wasted time and money once a woman leaves; what's worse, that investment may benefit a competitor who hires her. Given that women account for roughly 40% of the college-educated population globally, the chances are high that the woman who just left will be replaced with another woman, who may in turn leave. Hence, the vicious circle. Government agencies should analyze their talent marketplace as well as their internal turnover and advancement trends, to determine their exposure and the cost associated with turnover. For example, turnover among teachers in America's public primary and secondary schools is costing school districts at least \$7.2 billion annually.

But investing in women's development and advancement is not just about reducing the costs of turnover. It's also about creating stronger, more vibrant organizations that both reflect and understand their constituents. Given the evidence that investing in women yields a higher return, governments that understand how to make those investments wisely are in a better position to capitalize on this gender dividend.

Most importantly, with women accounting for half the workforce—and a majority of the college-educated population—the war for talent will be won only by those organizations that make women's retention and advancement a priority.

*Senior leadership support must be visible and communicated often.* Ideally, the head of an organization or agency will lead any effort to promote the retention and advancement of women. True cultural change must start from the top—with leadership providing clear directives and holding managers at all levels accountable for advancing women. As part of this effort, metrics must be established to track progress: recruitment rates, promotion rates, turnover rates, assignment and leadership appointments, are some of the key metrics.

*A focus on career development:* Women's movement in and out of the workforce and across organizations often has as much to do with career development issues as with work-life issues. Building a culture that ensures women are given plenty of opportunities and the conditions and resources to succeed is key to advancing women into leadership.

Often assignments and opportunities that lead to advancement, as well as lessons on the 'unwritten rules' of work are transmitted through informal networks—and research shows that women have less access to those informal networks than men.<sup>2</sup> Formal career and leadership development programs for women can transmit many of the lessons that are learned by men through those same informal networks.

*Promote work-life integration:* Flexibility needs to be more than just a policy. By openly promoting flexibility and assuring that those who take advantage of flexible work options are not permanently derailed in terms of career advancement, an organization can ensure that employees—both men and women—are able to integrate work with outside commitments. At Deloitte, the recent implementation of Mass Career Customization (MCC)<sup>TM</sup> has allowed employees to customize career paths to better fit the ebb and flow of other factors in their lives (e.g., children, education). MCC encourages individuals to work with their managers to determine their desired pace, workload, location/schedule, and role so that options are created that work for both the individual and the organization.

Both public sector and private sector organizations have much to gain by focusing on the development and advancement of women within their own organizations – creating their internal virtuous cycles. But what if they reached across the sector divide – and started to work together to achieve this virtuous cycle for their countries? What if companies started to invest in women's education, health and security and governments started to invest in women's professional development and work-life support?

While the challenges are great, the possibilities are even greater.

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“I think our reach should exceed our grasp.”

**Laura Liswood**, secretary general of the Council of Women World Leaders

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