

DISCUSSION CIRCLE: SADC REGION 50/50 CAMPAIGN

The members discussed on how women candidates can be identified, resourced, trained and promoted. The discussion focused on the reality of Namibia, a country with over 30% women representation at national and 42% at the local governance level.

In December 2008, senior government officials, parliamentarians, civil society organizations, developmental partners and media met in Johannesburg in a roundtable on the regional strategy for achieving the 50/50 target in politics and decision making in SADC by 2015. This discussion circle aims to follow up on the implementation of this strategy by inviting contributions from each country: Is the 50/50 target achievable by 2015? What needs to be done to achieve the target? How can women candidates be identified, resourced, trained and promoted?

Summary

Achieving the 50/50 representation target in Namibia by 2015

An interesting contribution in the discussion came from Sarry, who shared an experience from Namibia. Sarry: "Namibia at the moment stands at over 30% women representation and 42% at the local governance level. We are excelling at 42% because most of the issues that are addressed at the local level are bread and butter issues. It is easier for the countries in SADC to reach 50% in local governance because of the role that women play in politics and democracy. In Namibia, the process of training potential candidates, campaign managers and political campaign strategists is underway. As a gender and media practitioner, I am training these women and men. Although the exercise is not that easy because of the lack of knowledge of the women in rural areas, they are eager to start. What can be done? What have other candidates done in this regard so that we, in Namibia can accelerate the learning curve? The strategic meeting in Johannesburg is coming out with means to bring more women aboard decision-making. In the SADC there are only four out of 14 countries that have reached the 30% SADC target: South Africa, Tanzania, Mozambique and Namibia. Now, if ten are lagging behind, is this target realistic for 2015? Should we not want to accelerate those that have not yet reached the 30%?"
