



Carleton
UNIVERSITY

Canada's Capital University

Women's Access to Leadership in Public Life

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- Women's global level of representation in national parliaments is 19.3%. Substantial regional variations exist with Nordic countries at 42.1% and Arab states at 10.9%.
- Women hold 20% of Cabinet positions worldwide and are twice as likely to hold a social portfolio as an economic portfolio.
- Countries with 'first past the post' electoral systems and without quotas will not reach a level of 40% legislative participation by women until near the end of the 21st century

Reforms can reverse women's political underrepresentation:

26 countries have met or surpassed 30% women's legislative participation; 21 of those countries have some form of proportional representation; 13 of the 26 use either legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats for women

Policies to create 'women-friendly' parliaments can increase women's political participation

Other important strategies include campaign schools for women candidates and financing for women's electoral campaigns

- Women account for 27% of judges worldwide
- Women's participation in law schools globally equals that of men – problem lies with demand, not supply
- Attitudinal barriers and appointment processes explain women's underrepresentation
- Affirmative actions such as quotas are difficult to implement due to concerns over merit-based appointments, judicial legitimacy and autonomy
- Need for judicial appointment commissions; support for national bar associations and groups such as International Association of Women Judges

- Affirmative action targets, leadership programs, mentoring opportunities and gender-sensitivity training increased levels of women in the highest ranks of many civil services
- Despite numerical advancements, however, women tend to occupy senior positions in ministries without key economic functions (socio-cultural portfolios)
- Canadian women constitute 42.6% of the executive level of the federal public service due to Employment Equity legislation