



Milestones

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CEDAW turns 30!

The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, which was established by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to monitor the implementation of the Convention by States parties, held its first session in October 1982. This year the Committee is celebrating 30 years of dedicated work in assisting States parties in complying with their international treaty obligations under the Convention to protect and promote women's rights. To mark this important occasion, the Committee held a panel discussion on "Women's Political Participation and Leadership", during its 52nd session.

For three decades, the 23-member Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women has worked to bring the landmark Women's Convention to life. In response to the Committee's review and recommendations, governments have changed their laws, policies and approaches to women in line with international gender equality goals. As a result their work has opened up opportunities for women across the world, whether to own land, run for parliament or access healthcare.

The event gave a particular focus to women's political participation and leadership. Speaking at the event, UN Women Executive Director Michelle Bachelet commended the members

of the committee for their dedication. She was joined by senior UN and CEDAW staff, and by Ms. Eleonora Menicucci de Oliveira, Brazil's Minister of Policies for Women (on behalf of president Dilma Rouseff), and Ms. Shanthi Dairiam, Founder of the International Women's Rights, Action Watch Asia Pacific (IWRAP-AP).

Although celebrating the leaps made in women's political participation over the past 30 years, Ms. Bachelet stressed there is work yet to be done. She spoke of the power of temporary special measures, such as quotas or parity laws, to close this gap. "Women constitute 51 per cent of the world's population, yet they are under-represented in the allegedly representative bodies that make key decisions affecting their lives," she said, noting that the global average for women parliamentarians stands at just 19.5 per cent.

Of the 33 countries with 30 per cent or more women in parliament today, 26 have quotas in place that helped to ensure this outcome. In the panel discussion that followed, three dynamic political experts discussed the political opportunities for women in their countries, and the success and challenges of the quota systems used in each.

Source: <http://www.unwomen.org/2012/07/bringing-cedaw-to-life-the-committee-for-the-elimination-of-discrimination-against-women-turns-30/> 