

Rapid Gender Assessment and Audit of Political Parties in Kenya

The Women Shadow Parliament – Kenya

**The Participation and Representation of Women in Management of
Political Parties:
An Unfinished Agenda in Kenya.**

SUPPORTED BY HIVOS IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE WOMEN'S SHADOW
PARLIAMENT-KENYA.

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Foreword

The Rapid Assessment and Gender Audit of Political Parties in Kenya report on the status of women representation in political parties documents the appalling obstacles that women face within political parties. In the same vein, the audit offers recommendations to redress the marginalization of women in the management of political parties in Kenya.

The possibility for all citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. In the majority of political parties in Kenya, however, the political arena remains largely dominated by men, and is even an exclusively male bastion in some political parties. The current state of affairs in our parties neglects a fundamental principle of democracy, which states that *“the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences.”*

The marginalization of women in the political arena is evident in the past three multi-party general elections (1992, 1997 and 2002) which witnessed a limited presence of women in parliament but also within political parties. On a positive note, however, most policy documents of political parties now enshrine women representation. But unfortunately, in most political parties, this simply remains an ideal. Most political parties have thus far not implemented those ideals. It is in this regard that political parties need to be compelled and sensitized to increase women’s participation, especially in key decision-making organs of the parties.

We are saying that the provision of gender sensitive rules, policies and programs is not enough. The said provisions must be implemented to the letter.

This Rapid Assessment and Gender Audit of Political Parties critically examine the role of women in political parties, especially in key decision-making organs. The audit also provides a roadmap and direction for the WSP-K future programs that have to be implemented if women’s representation in political parties and control of key decision-making organs within parties is to be realized.

Apart from giving women voices a platform, political parties are the pathway for women’s entry into the political arena. It is on this basis that women need to join political parties in large number and also be key decision-makers within parties so as to change the existing institutional and structural discriminatory practices of political parties.

However, joining political parties is not enough. Women need local organizational ability to develop, mobilize and coordinate an agenda, which will not materialize in the absence of concrete plans and strategies. It is on this basis that WSP-K audited political parties to identify gaps that need to be filled and also identify shortcomings of the measures already being undertaken to increase women’s participation in political parties, especially in the key decision-making organs.

Towards this end, the audit offers a number of recommendations, which if implemented, will definitely guarantee increased women’s participation in political parties and governance in general.

1. Introduction

The Women's Shadow Parliament—Kenya (WSP-K) was founded in March 2003. It is a body politic borne out of the Engendering the Political Processes Programmes (EPPP), which has the objective of creating an enabling environment for women's effective participation in Kenya's political process, empowering women as active change agents in public life, and reducing barriers that prevent women's full and equal partnership with men at both the national and local levels. The formation of WSP-K was driven by the desire of the women aspirants 2002 to build solidarity, a collective voice and joint strategies of confronting patriarchal ideologies, structures and other obstacles to equal representation in elective leadership institutions, especially parliament and political parties.

The EPPP had a dual objective of creating an enabling environment for women's effective participation in Kenya's political processes and empowering women as active change agents in public life and reducing barriers that prevent women's full and equal partnership with men at both the national and local levels. 133 women declared interest in running for parliamentary seats only 44 were nominated out of a total of 1,037 candidates competing for 210 seats not because they were unpopular but because of gender discrimination in political parties and systematic exclusion of women in political parties management. At the local authority level 380 women were cleared out of 7008 candidates competing for 2,093 seats. The candidates were concerned at the poor treatment of female political aspirants by political parties ; a continuously hostile environment for women's participation in politics and political processes and weak organizational strategies for female political aspirants. They were further convinced that the legislature and legislative processes play a central role in determining whether or not women at the end of the day will join and benefit from decision making at all levels in the country. During a retreat in Naru – Moru (Kenya) organized by EPPP and for the women parliamentary candidates who had just gone through a traumatised, undemocratic and bad governance process of nominations in the General Elections 2002, a total of 46 women at that time reached a consensus at an evaluation forum in the EPPP that a political platform that is managed by templiers (nothing for us without us) that would work towards the removal of the systematic barriers that impede on their representation and involvement in the legislature and legislative processes that influence the lives of Kenyans be created. WSP was thus founded in March 2003 and its currently represented in 50 constituencies in Kenya and intends to increase the representations to all the 50 constituencies as the Kenyan parliament.

1.2 Vision

The Women's Shadow Parliament – Kenya has a vision of a society in which governments and governance processes are founded on the principles of justice, equality, equity and accountability.

1.3 Mission

The Mission of the Women's Shadow Parliament – Kenya is to emerge as powerful voice and structure in articulating women's agenda of justice, equality, equity and accountability in legislatures and legislative processes.

1.4 Objectives

The objectives of the Women's Shadow Parliament – Kenya are to:

- Provide an enabling framework and environment for women's effective participation in Kenya's legislature, legislative processes and decision-making tables.
- Emerge as the alternative forum for citizen's articulation of their legislative concerns
- Build the capacity of aspiring female candidates to engage in Kenya's electoral and legislative processes.

- Strengthen citizen's involvement in legislative processes that influence their lives.
- Work towards the removal of systematic barriers to women's political empowerment.
- Provide a learning platform for legislative reforms at national, regional and international levels.

1.5 Values and Principles under pinning implementation of WSP

- Independence: Operates freely in its own best judgment without control by authority or persons
- Diversity: In WSP Diversity is the heartbeat: we operate without party, regional or any forms of barriers.
- Feminine approach to politics: Bringing women's style of leadership to politics (Nurturing, peacemaking, consultation and dialogue, flexibility, honesty, accessibility)
- Giving voice to women political leaders: The WSP provides the platform for women leaders to voice their issues of development
- Participation: Promoting participation of citizens in issues that affect their lives
- Equitable distribution of national resources and development initiatives

1.6 Strategic Positi

The Women's Shadow Parliament – Kenya enjoys the following strategic position:

- ◆ **Niche:** It is the only forum in the country whose niche is engendering the legislature, legislative and related processes.
- ◆ **Focus:** It is a non-partisan forum for women in politics; focusing on projecting legislative issues rather than names of organizations or individuals.
- ◆ **Mandate:** All 210 constituencies are WSP mandate on legislative concerns of delivering equal numbers of women to men at national and local levels makes it the only one of its kind in the country.

1.7 Governance

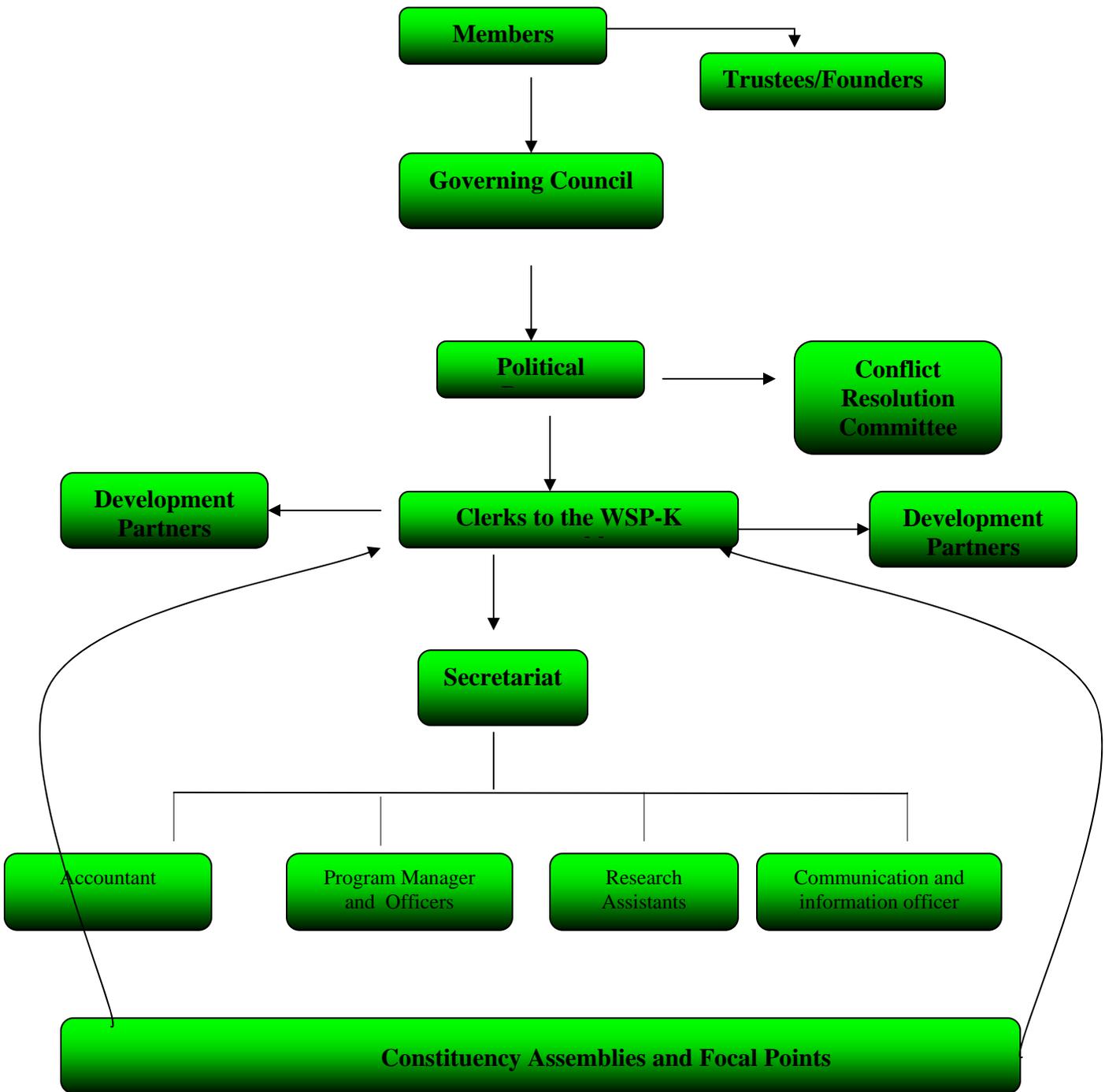
The Women's Shadow Parliament is governed by a steering committee of 8 women leaders who act as the executive arm of the organization. The WSP has a small secretariat of 4 volunteers who manage the day-to-day activities of the Shadow Parliament and in addition, the Deputy chair Speaker and Finance chairperson both act as coordinators.

1.8 Strategies

The WSP upholds the following as its key strategies:

1. **Research, Analysis and Dissemination:** Availing facts and strategic information on legislatures and legislative processes will empower WSP members to speak from informed perspectives. The institution is issue-based. Research therefore constitutes a fundamental component of its Programmes.
2. **Audit of Public Leaders and leadership structures:** It will be a key strategy of the WSP to conduct periodic audit of public leaders and leadership structures to determine their representation, efficiency, accountability and suitability to citizen's needs.
3. **Advocacy:** WSP's advocacy strategies targets the legislature and legislative processes to embrace equal representation and involvement of women in parliamentary processes
4. **Training:** Training WSP members on issue based approach to politics to create a critical mass of leaders who will steer the country towards issue-based politics.
5. **Mentoring and Support for Aspiring Female Parliamentary Candidates:** To ensure increase in the number of women in legislative positions the WSP strategy is to develop mentoring and support Programmes for aspiring female parliamentary candidates.

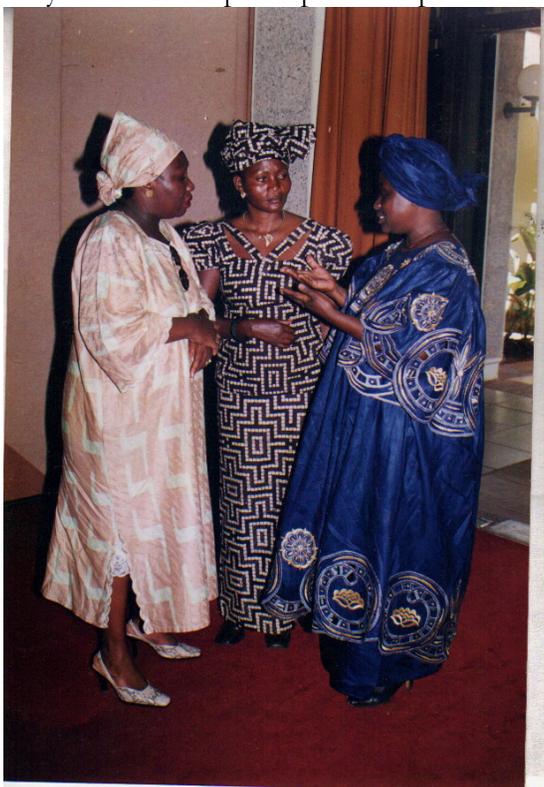
Membership Structure



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.

The Women's Shadow Parliament- Kenya was started by Women who contested elections 2002 due to a number of undemocratic processes they went through during the process of preparing g for General election and the Silent Women's voices witnessed during the process. Our 1st agenda after general elections was to check whether Women are represented in Political parties and at what level within the structures and whether there is equality and equity in their representation and to go deeper to know whether the Women who are their were elected or nominated visa vi Political parties Policy Documents . Therefore the Women's Shadow Parliament targeted 20 Political Parties and only 14 responded

Pursuant of its mission and objectives, WSP-K has undertaken a rapid assessment and gender audit of political parties to establish whether political parties implement gender policies, programs and dynamics stipulated in their various policy documents or simply pay lip service to the same. The WSP-K targeted 20 registered political parties in Kenya and the information provided by the political parties is analyzed in the rest of the document. However, it is important to point out that the audit solely relied on the information provided by the political parties and that not all parties were generous in providing information on how they adhere to gender equity in the governance of political parties. Quite a number of political parties did not respond to most, if not all, of the questions. To be specific, these are: FORD-P, LDP, KANU, KADU, PICK and SDP. At the same time, of the political parties which volunteered useful information, a number of them simply stated what their vision is rather than the reality on the ground. The report is structured as follows: the first part focuses on women representation in party structures; the second part focuses on what the manifestos and constitutions stipulate as well as an assessment of the reality on the ground. The third part of the report analyzes women's participation in political



WSP-K Executive Director (Ms Monica Amolo) consulting with other women leaders.

parties' governance and political parties' strategies for enhancing women's political participation through internal organizational and structural processes. The final part offers recommendation of the measures that Kenyan political parties must undertake to ensure effective and efficient participation of women in the governance of political parties.

The need for such a report is timely as it provides a foundation within which to champion and lobby for the inclusion of women in key positions in political parties so as to influence the entry of more women into party decision-making organs. This in the long run will help in influencing their nominations as the parties' civil, parliamentary and even presidential candidates. The report also comes at a time when many political parties are holding grassroots election and hence can be used to lobby parties to increase the number of women in various structures of the party, to at least, meet a 1/3 representation for women in political parties.

1.1 The Audit: Challenges and Constraints

The audit was conducted within a background of conflictual relationships between political parties which in a way negatively impacted on the audit as most political parties viewed our researchers as spies of their opponents seeking information. Hence, most political parties were scanty with information and what could be analyzed was what they provided by responding to the questionnaires and this, in many cases, could not be authenticated as they did not provide the requisite records. In addition, political parties are mostly run as personal properties and therefore some leaders are not willing to give information freely. This was worsened by the betrayal caused by the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government which was formed as a coalition but once in power the president ignored the other leaders of the coalition.

Financial woes was another problem that dogged the operation. Inadequate funds impeded the capacity of the researchers to visit as many branches as possible of the said political parties to ascertain whether the information provide was authentic. This would have helped us cross-check the actual representation of women in the branches vis-à-vis the figures the party headquarters gave us. In addition, one of the consultants contracted handled the work partially and abandoned the project before its completion.

Despite the above shortcomings, this audit will enable WSP-K enhance the visibility of women in the male-dominated political parties through lobbying political parties especially as they prepare to hold party elections in preparation for the 2007 elections to ensure that women are in a position to influence key decisions of their respective parties. The audit also identifies and develops political parties' strategies to enhance the opportunities for women to actively participate in politics both within and outside the party framework. This will be achieved through dissemination of the contents of this report to other stakeholders and enlisting their support in undertaking civic education within and between political parties as well as lobbying party leaders to ensure increased women representation in the parties.

2. Women's Agenda: Implementation of Manifestos and Constitutions of Political Parties and Women

In broad terms, a party manifesto is a political party's vision of the society it hopes to create if it acquires power. In this regard, the party manifesto, more than the party constitution, is a document that the general public need to have access to if they are to make informed decisions on the leaders they seek to elect to office.

In this section, we first, provide a summary of the vision of various parties relating to women deduced from their party manifestos and programmes, and second, provide an assessment of the vision vis-à-vis the practice of the respective parties.

2.1 KANU

KANU is the oldest party in Kenya having been formed in January 1960. It was the ruling party from 1963-2002. Its manifesto opens with a general commitment of ‘principles of democracy, social justice and sanctity of human life’ and commits the party to ensuring that there is ‘the widest possible participation of the people at all levels of government.’



WSP-K Inducting Constituency Assemblies in Ndhiva Constituency.

Gender issues are addressed in Chapter 7 entitled Welfare and International Perspectives. As is typical of most parties in Kenya, women issues are placed under Welfare, along with Youth and Children. The vision of the party is to encourage full women participation in political affairs of the country while its mission seeks to promote education, welfare and participation of the girl-child in the society.

On economic rights, the party salutes, ‘the tremendous contribution made by women to the development of our country and declares, actually, that women play a dominant role in food and cash crop production.’ But although the party recognizes the role women have played in development, the party has not rewarded their labor either in the party hierarchy or when it was in power with governmental posts commensurate to their contribution.

The party also acknowledges that women are not well represented in its decision-making structures. The party thus observes, in its manifesto, that KANU recognizes the ‘need to increase the number of women in key decision-making process.’ It also promises to enhance gender equity by ensuring increased education and training opportunities for women; consolidate and harmonize laws and customary practices to secure the rights of women to land ownership and inheritance; and to take affirmative action aimed at increasing the number of women in active employment. However, it is unclear from the manifesto how these lofty ideas will be implemented as the party lacks a specific gender policy.

2.2 Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FODR-K)

FORD-K’s manifesto is quite enlightened, at least in rhetoric, on women issues. The party, like KANU, begins by recognizing the role that women have played in the development process. It expresses a commitment to ‘emancipation of women through the eradication of age-old forms of oppression, exploitation and marginalization.’ The party also undertakes, in its manifesto, ‘to review all the discriminatory laws and practices against women in economic, social and cultural spheres.’

More, significantly, the party commits itself to fostering ‘women’s participation in all aspects of national life through affirmative action.’

These statements of intent are superior when compared to what the other political parties have advocated. The party is also well informed of women's needs in general and the hindrances they face within political parties. The party also advocates for the adoption of Affirmative Action and support the education of the girl child and the provision of free pre-and-post-natal health services countrywide.

Currently, the party has two specific women's programmes: an exchange program with the Norwegian Women Party and a women leadership programme on participation of women in politics in collaboration with the National Democratic Institute (NDI). It intends to use these links to help enhance the participation of women in elective politics as well as source for funding for women candidates. However, the party lacks a specific budget line for women activities and intends to formulate one under the women's league programs.

A shortcoming, however, is that the projected goals lack a clear process that can lead to their realization. For example, the section on gender does not provide a link between socially constructed gender roles and the larger economic, social and political issues. It is thus not clear how the party's ideal policies will be actualized to benefit women. The party, for instance, promises to continue implementing Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPS) at the governance level but has no attendant policies for cushioning the losers and other vulnerable groups (which include women) affected by such policies.

2.3 Democratic Party (DP)

The DP's manifesto generally uses a gender responsive language. The party declares in its manifesto that "discriminatory practices in employment, education and access to various institutions have been in practice for too long" and that "DP is committed to make fundamental changes in this area of national life."

Article 18 of the DP constitution provides for full participation of women and youth at all levels of the party hierarchy and substantial representation of women and youth in all party organs.

The DP manifesto also explains exactly how it will promote women's participation. DP seeks to ensure that there is at least one woman MP in each district, and that one-third of nominated councilors are women. A DP government, it is stated, would also have a female vice-president, deputy prime minister, five ministers, and ten assistant ministers.

2.4 Liberal Democratic Party

LDP in its constitution and a position paper on restorative justice declares that its aims and objectives are to support and advance the course of women's emancipation. It therefore asserts that it shall combat sexism and ensure that the voice of women is fully heard in the party in addition to being well represented at all levels. The party also has a women wing, the LDP Women's League whose membership is open to women who are members of LDP.

The LDP notes that some of the negative cultural beliefs and traditional practices and patriarchy have played a major role in the marginalization of women and since they are entrenched, there is need to redress the situation through the constitutional recognition of the equality of men and women. In this regard LDP endeavors to ensure that women are adequately and fairly represented in all decision-making structures. LDP promises to implement a program of affirmative action, including the provision of a quota of at least one-third in all its structures to enable such effective participation.

2.5 Labour Party of Kenya (LPK)

The party's constitution stipulates its commitment to enhance and promote the representation and participation of women in its leadership and activities. Article 3 on aims and objectives seeks to implement the

50:50 ratio men to women gender parity; advocate and promote respect for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against men or women; pursue and promote the full participation of women in the management of public affairs and development of Kenya; and establish women, youth and persons with disabilities congresses and their working committees within the party.

The party envisages a society where women are treated equally and given equal opportunities. Its mission is to improve the quality of women by promoting gender parity and democratic governance. The party also has a specific gender policy of 50:50 ratio as a basis for representation at all levels of the party and believes in the adoption of an Affirmative Action policy to increase the number of women representatives. The women wing enhances and strengthens the position of women in the mainstream party management and promotes their involvement and participation in socio-economic and political development at both the party and national levels of governance.

One of the party's specific programs for women was the women congress conference in December 2005, which is held annually, where they laid down strategies and activities that would enable them enhance their participation in political leadership and governance. At the moment the women congress is developing its strategic plan.

LPK also values women participation in top leadership and management structures of the party and believes that this injects unity, transparency and accountability in the party. The party believes that if women gain entry into key decision-making positions it will gain by injecting a harmonious relationship in the party. The party also states that if women join the party they stand to benefit by increasing their chances of involvement and participation in economic and political development in the country hence enhancing and sustaining their livelihood. This is in line with the party's principles of social democracy. These are the same parties that provide for a 50:50 ratio as a basis for seeking elective positions.

LPK intends to ensure a critical mass of women to participate in elective politics by encouraging women to come up in large numbers by harmonizing on the registration fees and other requirements; slotting training programs for women on political leadership skills and governance; plans to come up with activities for fundraising for the women candidates; and calls for at least five women candidates to stand against three male counterparts during the party nominations. These and other initiatives will be coherently reflected in the Women Congress Strategic Pan 2006-2008;

2.6 Social Democratic Party (SDP)

The SDP's vision is of a country where men and women are free from any kind of oppression and exploitation and enjoy all democratic rights and freedoms. Among its key aims and objectives (Article 2) are promoting greater participation of women in the conduct of political affairs and struggling against gender discrimination at all levels of society.

The composition of national officials (Article 4), however, does not demonstrate sensitivity to women and youth issues and contradicts Article 2. Women and youth leaders are not represented in it, showing that the party does not practice affirmative action. The party does not have a manifesto

The SDP was also the first and the only political party in Kenya so far to field a credible woman presidential candidate. This it did in 1997 with Charity Ngilu as its flag bearer. The other party to field a woman presidential candidate was LPK. However, its presidential candidate, Wangare Maathai, did not elicit interest in the electorate. Since then, women's presence in the decision-making organs and party structures has been weak as a result of defections between 1998 and the 2002 general elections

2.7 *National Party of Kenya (NPK)*

The vision of the NPK is an empowered women leadership for greater and more balanced development. The party endeavors to have women representation at all levels of leadership. However, the party is yet to develop any specific gender policy. The party also did not avail its manifesto which it claims it has thus making it difficult to assess its policies relating to women.

2.8 *National Rainbow Coalition (NARC)*

The mission and vision of the ruling coalition is to try and help promote more women participation in national politics and to achieve one-third representation of elective posts by women by way of civic education. The party's gender policy is that 1/3 of all nominated persons should at a minimum come from each gender. The NARC manifesto endeavors to: ensure adherence to all international conventions on women; establish institutional framework for mainstreaming gender in all sectors of society; facilitate the adoption of the new constitution and make the provisions on women empowerment a reality; and enforce a policy of equal opportunities for women and men—develop affirmative action to address any situation where women have been marginalized. However, the coalition has not developed a constitution yet and hence most of its policies are not developed. Therefore, they lack a specific line budget for women activities.

2.9 *Saba Saba Asili*

The party vision is to formulate and lobby for and promote policies and measures that will enhance women education, participation in business and ownership and security of their property. Its mission is to ensure, through psychological liberation and legislative action, that practices, beliefs, attitudes and relationships that condemn a majority of the women to oppression, servitude and poverty are suitably addressed in order to realize freedom for all.

The women's wing ensures that there is gender sensitivity and justice in the vision, policies, manifesto and activities of the party and brings to the fore women special interests and needs at all levels. The party's constitution provides for women special seats. However, the party has no specific budget line for women activities but organizes workshop for women activities.

2.10 *Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-People (FORD-P)*

The vision of the party on women is a respected women leadership in the management of the affairs of our country while the mission of the party is to increase effective women participation in political governance of the country and the promotion of the girl child education. In the party's resolve to promote social equity, they promise to institute affirmative action in favor of women to address imbalances that have resulted from their historical marginalization. They will push affirmative action legislation to give women an equal opportunity to fully participate in decision-making and governance. The party's specific gender policy calls for reservation of positions for women at every level of the party structures.

2.11 *Forum for the Restoration of Democracy-Asili (FORD-A)*

The vision of the party on gender is women empowerment to enable them make their own decisions and share responsibilities equitably with men. The party constitution stipulates that women shall be represented at every leadership level. However, the party has no specific gender policy as it believes 'we are all equal and all the policies that we have should apply to everyone irrespective of gender.' The party also states that it has a women congress that meets annually where women brainstorm on issues affecting them and how they can be empowered. However, there is no evidence provided to support this assertion. This party is gender neutral

and is not in a position to provide space for shared leadership since it is clear that traditionally and culturally all of us are not equal as they assert.

2.12 Shirikisho Party of Kenya

The vision of the party is to ensure women's effective participation in all decision-making organs of the party and contest for national elections. Their mission is to lobby for affirmative action in education, employment and leadership and the party's specific gender policy stipulates 1/3 representation of either gender in any organ of the party. However, the party's constitution has nothing on the representation and participation of women in the leadership and activities of the party and only provides for a women's wing. The party has not yet developed a manifesto. The party also states that it has women specific programs where women members of the party participate in workshops on women empowerment and recruitment as well as other workshops reflecting on issues to do with women. This is an anomaly because women do not work alone in party workshops.

The party also asserts that it will ensure that 1/3 of their nominated candidates are women, source for funds for women and review their constitution to include 1/3 representation of women in all levels of the party so as to enhance the participation of women in elective politics.

2.13 Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU)

According to the party constitution, Article 6(a)-(f) stipulates that each branch shall have women leaders, each regional committee shall consist of among others a regional women's leaders wing and that it's NEC shall co-opt one woman from each province where women have not been elected. Women members are also allowed to offer themselves for election in any positions of the party.

The vision and mission of the party in matters relating to women is grounded on the socio-economic empowerment and involvement of women in leadership. The women's league encourages and empowers women to stand for civic and parliamentary seats during elections and also encourage education of the girl-child. However, the party lacks a specific gender policy.

2.14 Kenya National Democratic Alliance (KENDA)

The constitution of the party stipulates that women have the freedom and right of leadership, management and participation in local and national elections. The vision of the party for women is to encourage as many women as possible to join the party. The party's mission is to build capacity for women leadership in the party and educate them to fight for their rights politically and socially. However, the party lacks a specified gender policy, specific women programs, a specific budget line for women and does not call for the adoption of Affirmative Action in the party as women are free to participate in the management and leadership of the party and they are not discriminated against.

2.15 PICK

The party encourages more women to enlist as members and contest for leadership positions.

Women's Agenda: An Assessment of Political Parties' Visions vis-à-vis Practice

Women's absence in politics is clearly reflected by the low number of women candidates in the 1997 and 2002 elections. There has thus been no meaningful growth in the female gender participation in politics. If equality and democracy are taken to mean being able to vote, then Kenyan women effectively exercised their

democratic right in these elections. In comparison to the male gender, more women turn out to vote, although very few present themselves as candidates for electoral seats.

All the 14 parties' audited by WSP-K have lofty ideals and visions in so far as the women's agenda is concerned in their parties. In this section, we assess whether they have met the goals that they set out in their manifestoes, constitutions and programmes. As is evident from the preceding section the party manifestos and constitutions of the 14 parties audited by WSP-K shows that a number of parties, for example PICK and FORD-A, do not mention in their programs or policy position papers any clauses or provisions focusing primarily on women, while some parties, for example, SP, KADU and KENDA, have a general paragraph that expresses either of the following: the necessity of giving women equal rights with men, defending women's social rights and relieving them of injustices, or the removal of obstacles facing women so that they may perform their tasks in the family, society building, work, wages and promotion. Only a few parties, for example, FORD-K, LPK, DP and FORD-P have a special provision about women's empowerment in their programs, stating their belief in the necessity of changing women's actual conditions and linking that to social and economic change throughout the country.

Although some party manifestos and constitutions, for example for FORD-K, DP, and FORD-P, have laudable provisions to cater for affirmative action on women positions and responsibilities in political parties, the practice is to the contrary. The under-representation of women in national offices is quite evident. Although many parties make some declarations in their manifestos and constitutions that they are committed to promoting women's participation, very few have policies to ensure that women are in positions of leadership. In most political parties, the few leaders who are women have gained their positions through extraordinary determination and luck rather than because of a conducive party policy environment.

Many political parties, for example DP and FORD-K, who recognize the need for women's representation have in the past either failed to reserve seats for women's participation or for those who have reserved quotas, they have failed to fill these quotas. This has therefore led to the low presence of women in party leadership positions as well as in the number of women who seek parliamentary seats in the general elections. Often, the women's low representation is further hampered by the transfer of women party leaders to the women party wings. This essentially delimits their platforms for participation as well as reduces their capacity to fully engage in frontline party activism. For example, DP has a very progressive gender policies, yet out of the 34 women parliamentary aspirants in the party in 1997, only 3 were nominated. We were, however, unable to assess the DP against their constitution and manifesto as they did not respond to the questionnaire. It is however important to note that the DP NEC after its 2001 elections had one-third of its members as women. But despite this impressive number, women did not greatly influence the decisions of the party. For example, while there were two vice presidents—David Mwiraria and Tabitha Seii—the latter's role in the decision-making process was not visible.

From the audit it is evident that it is only parties that are headed by women, for example, NPK and LPK that strive to achieve a balanced representation of both men and women. In NPK and LPK since the current women leaders took over, 50 per cent of the party leaders at any given time have been women and have held key positions in the party. Furthermore, the programme officer and the administrative secretary in the LPK secretariat are also women.

It is also important to note that due to inadequate internal regulation of political parties in terms of their membership, recruitment or requirements to practice internal democracy, most parties in Kenya hardly conduct elections. This principally locks out the admission of new membership and women in particular. This partly explains the reasons why women take too long to ascend in the party hierarchies. The consequence of these limitations is that women eventually fail to gain the necessary exposure and visibility to present themselves for party nominations or primaries.

Most political parties' manifestos, for example, FORD-P and LDP, and FORD-K, explain exactly how they would promote women's participation. They promise to ensure at least one-third of their representation for women in all elective positions in the party. In addition, they also established women's wings, which endeavor to promote participation of women and mainstream them into political decision-making organs of the party since that ensures this will ensure better representation of women in the party. The audit, however, reveals that the above parties have not enforced the goals they set out.

In addition, most party constitutions do not state how they will function or be organized. It appears that the creation of women's leagues is a deliberate way of keeping women from competing for more challenging positions. For instance, KANU, FORD-P and KENDA have women wings whose purpose is to promote participation of women and mainstream them into political decision-making organs of the party and ensures that women are well represented in the party. Yet these same parties lack specific gender policies and do not provide a mechanism to ensure that women are integrated to the mainstream of the party. It is only FORD-K that intends to link its women candidates with the Norwegian Women Party so as to bolster tier participation in elections and LPK which states that it will ensure that at least five women candidates stand against three male counterparts during the party nominations.

From the audit it is also evident that most political parties give lip service to women empowerment which does not entail democratizing power sharing between men and women. A common trend in all the party manifestos are promises to review repressive laws. And apart from a vague commitment to remove discriminatory gender practices, the parties' management and programmes are devoid of meaningful women involvement.

3. Women Representation in the Party Structures

Kenya has got a Political Government and 52% of the Population are Women, 60% of registered voters are Women, sustainable development cannot be achieved where 50% of its Population are not represented in its Governance structures. Therefore enhanced women representation in party structures is essential if women are to have an impact in the decision-making process of political parties. However, from the audit it is evident that women are poorly represented in political parties. This is despite political parties' stated commitment to affirmative action. This is evident when one looks at the various structures of political parties. In most of the party structures, women have been relegated to women's wings and where women find representation in key decision-making organs their influence is marginal as a result of their low numbers in these organs. This is the case, in for example, FORD-P, FORD-K and KANU.

With the introduction of multi-partyism in 1991, women were not involved in the formation of the parties that came into being and this greatly contributed to their marginalization in party politics. Up to now, of the 55 registered political parties only 2—LPK and NPK—are under women leadership. This has contributed to the insignificant inclusion of women in top decision-making organs of parties. In most of the political parties audited women form a minority of the founding members and it is only in parties whose key founders were women that they are well-represented. Women percentage representation as founding members in the said parties, are as follows: LPK (50), FORD-K (41.7), Saba Saba Asili (33.3), KENDA (33.3), FORD-P (25), LDP (25),



Some of the members of WSP-K Governing Council: Mrs. Happy Gloria (Left), Mrs. Asenath Nyamu (2nd from left) at corporate governance consultative meeting.

PICK, Shirikisho (20), FORD Asili (none), KANU (none), KADU (none), and SDP (none). The situation which obtains regarding the founding members is also replicated in the number of women among the parties' registered members. However, most political parties did not provide a record of their registered members as well as the fraction that are women. Of those that responded to this question, only three, NPK (40 per cent of over 100, 000), LDP (1/3 of over a million), and Saba Saba Asili (almost a half of 3million) provided the estimates representative of the number of women in the said parties. The statistics provided by Saba Saba Asili is questionable as it is a marginal party whose activities are not even known. There is also no way of verifying the statistics of NPK and LDP as their registers were not available.

Another area of concern is the representation of women in the top organs of the parties. These top organs include the National Delegates Conference/Congress (NDC), the National Governing Council (NGC), and the National Executive Committee (NEC). The audit by WSP-K on the 14 political parties reveals that the presence of women either in the formation of political parties, leadership organs, and decision-making organs is quite limited as Table 1 below illustrates.

However, on the positive side, most political parties, as shown in Table 1, indicate that women seem to be penetrating, in terms of numbers, the higher echelons of power within political parties though their influence in these organs is yet to be felt. In a number of political parties, for example, LPK, NPK, NARC, and Saba Saba Asili women representation in the top three decision-making organs ranges from 20-50 per cent.

It is evident from the audit that women now hold various key positions although the influence of these positions compared to those held by men is still wanting in quite a number of parties. In Ford-K, they hold positions of national organizing secretary (Jael Mbogo), secretary-environment (Yvonne Khamati), secretary-gender relations (Beatrice Nyagah), assistant secretary-international affairs (Zera Mzungu), assistant secretary-gender relations (F. Machayo) and assistant secretary-human rights and democratization (Janet Mutisya), while in LPK, the chairperson (Prof. Julia Ojiambo), Organizing Secretary (Dr. Ruth Kibeti), Deputy Secretary (Caroline Ng'ang'a), National Treasurer (Tiyah Galgalo), Gender Secretary (Susan Njoki), National Coordinator-Women Congress (Dina Sawe), and Assistant National Youth Coordinator (Suzanne Mang'eni) are women.

Information deduced from the other political parties is, however, vague and merely state that women constitute 33 per cent of these key decision-making organs without providing the names and positions of the said women. One explanation could be that the majority of these parties are fringe parties which come into

action only during an election year since their sole objective is to field candidates, mostly defectors, from popular parties who were in one way or another denied nominations. Most of these parties have no structures that are operational and are mostly dormant in-between elections. The figures they provide as representative of women in the higher echelons of the party can, therefore, not be verified as either they do not have party constitutions or manifestos, or if they have, they do not avail them.

The enhanced representation of women in party echelons that exceed 50 per cent can be attributed mainly to party leadership of women. In this case, NPK and LPK, have over 50 per cent women representation due to the fact that they are led by women who it can be argued champion the women's course and are able to ensure implementation because they are the chief decision-makers within their parties. The other parties which have over 30 per cent representation of women in key decision-making organs are LDP, FORD-K and Saba Saba Asili. The rest of the parties audited fall under 5-30 per cent representation of women. These figures, however, remain contestable as the documents of the parties showing them were not accessible and WSP-K relied on questionnaires filled by the party bureaucrats.

There are also cases in which parties act contrary to their party constitutions and manifestoes. For instance, despite laws governing the operations of Ford-People stating clearly that a third of its positions must go to women, during the 2004 party elections, no woman was elected to any of the party's major offices. Instead, out of the nine positions that were filled during the elections, only one went to a woman.

The situation is not any better in branches, as very few branches amongst the political parties audited by WSP-K are headed by women. LPK again tops here as 50 per cent of its branches are headed by women. KANU and FORD-P branches are headed by women to the ratio of 5.1 per cent and 3.1 per cent respectively. Although NARC claimed that 25 per cent of its branches were headed by women, it does not have any known branches and therefore the information was null and void. Other parties perform even dismally. In FORD-A and FORD-K none of the 39 and 74 branches respectively of the parties are under the leadership of women. This is in stark contrast to, for instance, in LPK where women are well-represented in other key positions at the branch level: 20 have women as chairpersons, 20 as secretary generals, 15 as treasurers, 20 as assistant secretary generals and 30 as organizing secretaries.

Most of the parties audited do not have functional secretariats. Likewise, some which have did not provide information. Information was, however, forthcoming from LPK and FORD-K where women are well represented: LPK (50%) and FORD-K (40%).

The WSP-K audit also revealed that in most political parties women have been relegated to women wings and desks with most parties claiming that women wings are part of the key decision-making organs of the parties and that women through this forum influence the deliberations of the party. This is evident from the fact that in most parties, for example, FORD-P, KANU and FORD-K women form less than 25 per cent of the key decision-making organ—the NEC.

Thus, although most parties audited claim that the women structures in the parties are strong and that women influence key-decision-making organs, the reality is otherwise. The more established parties, however, acknowledge that party structures meant to enhance the participation of women are weak. These include: FORD-K, Shirikisho, FORD-P, SDP and KANU.

Table 1: Women Representation in Political Parties

Political Party	Founding Members			Rep. in NDC			Rep. in NGC			Rep. in NEC			Rep. in Secretariats			Head of Party Braches		
	Women	Men	%	Women	Men	%	Women	Men	%	Women	Men	%	Women	Men	%	Women	Men	%
NARC	1						70	130	35	4	16	22.2				10	30	25
FORD-P	1	3	25	200	870	18.7	20	301	6.2	3	30	9.1				4	103	3.7
LDP	1	3	25	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
KANU	-	2		1200	3000	28.6				2	37	5.1						
NPK	1			30	30	50	8	7	53.3	8	7	53.3						
FORD-K	5	7	41.7	700	2900	19.4	7	213	3.2	6	40	13	2	3	40	-	74	-
Saba Saba A.	3	6	33.3	*	*	*	12	24	33.3	2	10	16.7						
KENDA	1	3	33.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	6		
LPK	1	1	50	325	325	50	30	30	50	7	7	50				20	20	50
FORD-A	-			*	*	*				5	19	20.8				-	39	-
PICK	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shirikisho	1	5	20	33	72	31.4				4	25	16				-	7	-

* These parties simply state that women representation in these organs constitute the 33 per cent threshold without providing the any information to authenticate the percentage.

4. Political Parties' Elections/Nominations and Representation of Women

Party nominations are normally carried out under the instructions of the governing body, the National Executive Committee (NEC) of a party. It is here thus that most important decisions are made. The audit has showed that women are poorly represented in these governing institutions. Thus, in most cases they miss out in the most important decision-making organs that influences the nominations as well as the electoral process in a given party.

Kenya has had the least number of women in mainstream politics and decision-making since independence. Before the 2002 elections, only 32 women had been in parliament, with the Seventh Parliament (1992-97) having the highest number of (6) elected women as reflected in Table 2.

Table 2: Women Representation in Parliament

Year	No. of Women Candidates	Elected	Nominated	Total No. of Women MPs
1963	7	-	-	-
1969	13	1	1	2
1974	11	4	1	5
1979	15	5	1	6
1983	7	2	1	3
1988	6	2	-	2
1992	19	6	-	-
1997	53	4	5	9
2002	44	9	8	17

Among the 32 women, 21 were elected, while 11 were nominated. Unfortunately, the Seventh Parliament had no nominated woman member, a clear demonstration of the lack of commitment to gender inclusion in politics and decision-making. Among the women elected to parliament in 2002 eight come from NARC and one from KANU. NARC went on and nominated five and KANU three. This outcome was influenced by the ECK requirement as was amended by the IPPG to enhance women representation. In total, more than 200 women sought parliamentary nominations but only 44 (22%) went through the nominations, as opposed to 1,037 (ratio of 4:96) men. Among them only 21 were nominated by major parties—NARC (12), FORD-P (7) and KANU (2) with the potential of winning elections. Other parties such as FORD-A, Safina, United Agricultural Party, Economic Independent Party nominated 4, 3, 2, and 2 respectively.

A total of 23 parties with minimal following did not nominate any women. However, a critical examination of the parties that most women chose as vehicles to parliament shows that the parties were weak and did not command large voter following.

Since the dawn of multi-partyism, women have got a raw deal from their respective parties on nominations. The case of the 1992, 1997 and 2002 civic and parliamentary elections

reveals that more women presented themselves for elections but got very little support as well as accommodation, and many failed to get nominated. In 1992, a total of 300 women sought nomination for parliamentary seats but only 19 (2.2 per cent) female contestants out of 854 total candidates were nominated. This number of nominated women increased to 50 (5.7 per cent) women out of 882 total candidates in 1997 and to 63 (6.1 per cent) in 2002. This is replicated in civic elections where there was an increase of women participation from 2.7 per cent in 1992 to 8.1 per cent and 13.3 per cent in 1997 and 2002 respectively.

Table 3: Parliamentary Candidates by Gender per Political Party in the 2002 Elections

Political Party	No. of Candidates			Number of Elected MPs		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
KANU	209	2	207	64	1	63
NARC	208	13	195	125	8	117
FORD-P	185	7	178	14	-	14
SDP	96	5	91	-	-	-
FORD-A	41	4	37	2	-	2
Shirikisho	17	1	16	1	-	1
LPK	5	1	4	-	-	-
KENDA	4	1	3	-	-	-

Table 4: Civic Candidates by Gender per Political Party in the 2002 Elections

Political Party	Number of Candidates		
	Total	Female	Male
KANU	2,053	134	1,917
NARC	1,847	101	1,746
FORD-P	1,253	56	1,197
SDP	484	23	460
FORD-A	160	7	153
Shirikisho	105	7	98
LPK	14	3	11
KENDA	14	0	14
PICK	2	0	2

Critical mass is very important in politics and yet women have not formed a critical mass in mainstream politics. The audit shows that although most parties assert that their election rules and regulation are gender sensitive, this is not the case and as a result, women have been locked out of important party positions and hence out of party nominations as their marginal position in the party hierarchies ensures that they are not able to influence who gets nominated to represent the party during the general elections. In the 2002 elections, as Table 3 and 4 clearly indicate, the number of women nominated in comparison to their male counterparts is wanting.

Table 5: Number of candidates nominated for parliamentary elections per political party by gender in the 1997 general elections

Party	Women	Men
SDP	13	90
Liberal Party of Kenya	6	103
KANU	6	204
FORD-K	6	98
NDP	5	26
KSC	3	16
FORD-A	3	33
DP	3	131
FORD-P	2	35
KNC	1	11
DAP	-	1
EIP	-	1
GAP	-	1
KENDA	-	12
Labor Party of Kenya	-	4
PICK	-	7
RRP	-	1
Safina	-	46
SPK	-	9
Umma Patriotic Party of Kenya	-	1
United Patriotic Party of Kenya	-	5
Total	48	835

Source: ECK Records 1997

In 1997, among the above political parties, as Table 4 above shows, the SDP nominated the largest number of women. Although this was only 12.6 per cent of the total SDP candidates, the number provided a substantial 27.7 per cent of women candidates. The largest number of women nominees in SDP is partly attributed to the fact that the party had a woman presidential candidate.

Overall, the number for women nominated by political parties to contest the civic and parliamentary elective positions was minimal and this can only be addressed through the presence of women in key position in the major decision-making organs of the party. The nomination process, for example, has been woeful for women, since men dominate the decision-making structures of most parties. The higher one goes up the echelons of party leadership, the fewer the women in positions of decision-making or policy-making. Women are consigned to 'women's wings' which are not authoritative. In order to overcome this bottleneck, women have to penetrate the party structures in order to influence party policies and their implementation.

In cases where women succeed in nominations, there is little or no support from their sponsoring parties. Most women find it easy to get nominations in the new parties; but these lack resources for campaigns. This is disadvantageous to women, most of whom cannot raise their own campaign funds.

5. Women's Shadow Parliament and Political Parties

Most political parties are aware of the existence of the WSP-K. Of the targeted 20 political parties, Fourteen (FORD-A, FORD-K, FORD-P, KENDA, LPK, NPK, and PICK, NARC, SABASA-ASILI, LDP, KADU, KANU, SDP) are aware of the existence of WSP-K. WSP-K knows about WSP-K through the media, while four political parties (LDP, KADU, KANU, and SDP) did not respond to this specific question.

Most parties that are aware of the organization are of the opinion that they would like to see the WSP-K play the following roles: enhance and promote full participation of women in political leadership and governance; provide a forum to lobby for issues affecting women; act as a reservoir for women parliamentarians as well as support their activities in parliament; empower aspiring women legislators through training and resources; and encourage women participation in politics. They believe that the WSP-K



WSP-K Executive Director (4th from left, at a workshop organized by WAFNET).

should be mandated to: provide civic education; identify national issues concerning women, lobby government and other representative institutions to cater for women interests; support women in parliament as well as audit their performance; organize forums to brainstorm on women issues; update women parliamentarians on issues affecting women; advocate and lobby for gender equality; empower women to enable them to fight for their rights and freedom; and prepare women political aspirants.

To this end the parties recommend that WSP-K should: link up with political parties to supply WSP-K with some candidates for mentoring/training; create a forum for women from all political parties to deliberate on issues hindering their participation and chart a way forward, especially in view of the 2007 general elections; form one body to channel all women activities; enhance collaboration between parties and WSP-K with the goal of mainstreaming women in political parties.

The WSP-K will also in future undertake to establish whether the measures parties' states are in operation are really being implemented. Issues to be addressed include: whether women really constitute 33 per cent of the key decision-making organs; the efficacy of women wings and an assessment of whether they influence the operations of key decision-making organs—or whether they end up undermining women's influence in the decision-making structures of political parties; why parties do not enforce the engendering of political parties; and whether they have established mechanism for enforcing the lofty promises they advocate for women. In any case, if parties are interested in promoting equal participation to encompass women, what is the rationale for the creation of women's congresses and wings. Overall, there is a need to find out why all parties declare and proclaim that they will cater for women interests but end up practically neglecting them.

6. Impediments to Women Participation in Political Parties

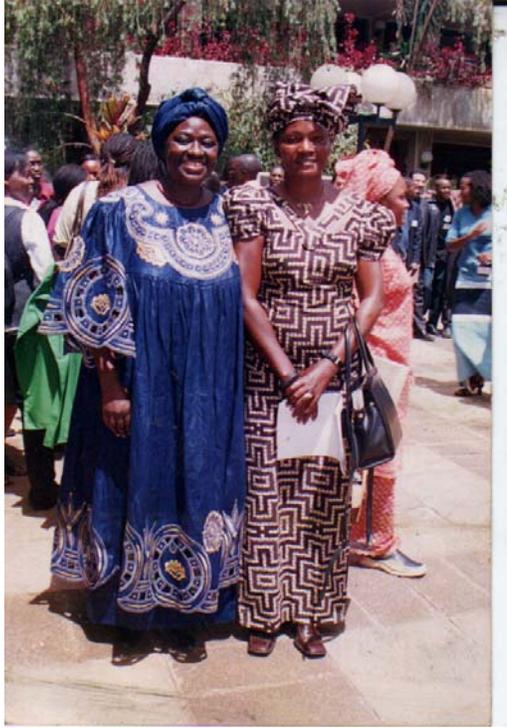
Arising from the audit, it is evident that there are a number impediments to the participation of women in political parties. These include:

- Lack of political party support for female candidates, particularly limited financial support and limited access to political networks;
- Male-oriented norms and structures that mitigate against women's public participation, including political party schedules that are difficult to reconcile with parental and family responsibilities;
- Lack of leadership-oriented training and education for women as most of the parties assessed lack gender-based programs;
- Men dominate the influential decision-making structures in most political parties, thus, women concerns are not adequately addressed.;
- Short-changing of women during political party nominations as most parties nominate very few of the women who present themselves for party nominations;
- Women in leadership positions are passive and lack grassroots support hence owing their loyalty to male leaders who put them there. Women need to take effective positions, participate more effectively and ground themselves in the party without relying on male godfathers.

7. Recommendations and Way Forward

In order to remedy the gender insensitive scenario that obtains in most political parties and hence ensure that a critical mass of women participate, not only in the political parties, but in civic, parliamentary and presidential elections, the following must be undertaken:

- Lobbying for women to be nominated to contest seats in strongholds of parties which they belong to;
Revision of internal party rules and procedures to ensure that women have the same chance of being elected as men. Some parties already have this provision. There is thus need to put in mechanisms for enforcement;



Founders of the WSP-K having a light moment during the UNIFEM Partners review meeting in November 2005 at the Great Rift Valley Lodge, Naivasha.

- All political parties should implement affirmative action in all party structures to increase the number of women from the grassroots (sub-location) to the national level by at least 30 per cent. Enforcement of women's quota is an important tool to enhance women participation in political decision-making;
- Women should seek effective representation in the structures of popular parties;
- Women should aspire to be the leaders of political parties so as to ensure the promotion of women participation in the parties. The audit has showed that parties controlled by women such as LPK and NPK are the one that encourage and enforce women visibility in their respective parties;

- Parties should be compelled to have specific budget lines for women activities;
- All political parties should increase the representation of women in top party leadership. This will enable women to influence decision-making in the party and therefore uphold women's rights. Womenzz, for example, as party spokespersons often receive more media interest than men as they are considered a novelty;
- All political parties should mainstream gender in their constitutions and manifestos. Women should therefore participate in the drafting as well as implementation to ensure that positions friendly to women are enforced. Parties should also prioritize women candidates capable to integrate the principle of equality in their everyday political action;
- Political parties should indicate how and the time frame within which their parties will meet the demands put forward by women and the lofty promises they include in their constitutions and manifestos;
- Parliament should pass a Gender Equality Act and a Political Parties Bill specifying the required 30 per cent representation by gender in party structures and decision-making bodies.
- Pressure should be brought on the Registrar of Societies to only register parties that reveal that affirmative action as provided in the party constitutions has been adhered to;
- Parliament should facilitate electoral reforms to create a level playing field for women's effective participation in elective politics and governance in general.