

INTRODUCTION



Introduction

The materials presented in this publication record the proceedings and main results of the conference, "Women's Leadership – Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making," which was held in Prishtina, Kosovo, on June 18-19, 2004. Co-organized by STAR Network of World Learning, Kosova Women's Lobby, and the U.S. National Democratic Institute (NDI), this conference marked a significant moment in the efforts to increase women's equal, active, and effective participation in all levels of political decision-making in Kosovo.

The energetic efforts of the women's movement to realize gender equality in Kosovo has produced many remarkable situations and results. One of the movement's most significant endeavours is the attempt to build alliances between women's NGOs and women politicians as a strategy for ensuring women's equal participation at all levels of political decision-making. Several such attempts have been made in the past; some, unfortunately, did not succeed. The most recent effort was the successful establishment of the Kosova Women's Lobby (KWL) in September 2003. Women leaders from politics, NGOs, the media, and the private sector came together in a loose coalition to discuss and propose progressive and gender sensitive approaches for addressing key issues of Kosovo's political, economic, and social development.

KWL is currently still in the development and consolidation phase, a phase which is seldom ever easy. However, guided by the common goal for women's empowerment in all spheres of life, women leaders from various sectors have discarded past misunderstandings and have opened themselves to each other's opinions and ideas. In the process, they are learning how to engage in joint strategies and actions that benefit both women and society. KWL has encouraged dialogue between Prishtina, Belgrade, and the international community; called for peace and tolerance during the March 2004 unrest; and engaged in a Kosovo-wide campaign to reform electoral regulations in order to increase elected officials' accountability and the quality of voter representation. The conference, "Women's Leadership – Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making," was an effort by KWL and the co-organizers to reflect on the progress achieved thus far in increasing women's political participation; to learn from the past as well as from successful strategies and programs in other countries; and to elaborate upon a Platform for Action for Empowering Women in Political Decision-making in Kosovo. The Platform for Action will be used as a guiding document for KWL and all Kosovar and international state and non-state actors that work to bring more women into the highest levels of decision-making.

During the conference, Kosovo's women politicians, representatives of women's NGOs, and the media presented a number of key achievements in the struggle for gender equality, such as the establishment of an electoral law that requires 30% of Parliament members and 30% of local assemblies be women. Furthermore, Kosovar women lead nine out of eighteen parliamentary committees, a Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality has been established, and the Gender Equality Law was approved and promulgated this year. The government also recently adopted the Kosovo Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality, which was developed through a joint effort by women's NGOs and women politicians and facilitated by UNIFEM. Gender Officers were instituted in every municipality and Gender Equality Committees were established in a number of municipalities. The Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender Equality has brought together Gender Focal Points that were appointed in many ministries, and the Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues was set up at the Prime Minister's Office.

These accomplishments are the result of the Kosovar women's movement's incessant endeavors and strategic initiatives to expand the space for women's leadership and increase women's capacity to assume leadership roles. These efforts, which started in the early 1990s, took a leap forward after the end of the NATO intervention in Kosovo in 1999. In the context of the rapid political, economic, social, and cultural change that marked the post-conflict period, leading women's rights advocates,

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women's organizations, and women politicians moved swiftly ahead, pushing for a greater role for women in Kosovo's democratization and socio-economic development processes. This included efforts to demonstrate to international agencies, donors, and Kosovar political forces the power of women's voices and their irreplaceable contribution to Kosovo's peaceful and democratic development.

As demonstrated at this conference, Kosovars are heading in the right direction for ensuring a sustainable increase in women's equal and effective participation in political decision-making. Yet, a number of challenges lie ahead. Most important is the need to engender all political decision and policy-making institutions so that the benefits of bringing more women to key decision-making positions trickle down to women and girls in places that are remote from centers of political power. Kosovar women's rights activists and politicians must also struggle to bring more young and talented women into the political arena. Winning over political parties – the engines of democracy – and turning them into leading actors of change for mainstreaming gender in Kosovo's political life is a crucial strategy for steadily increasing the number of women in key decision-making positions and engendering policy-making in Kosovo.

These tasks may look daunting if one does not take into consideration the energy and commitment that representatives of women's NGOs and women politicians reaffirmed at the "Women's Leadership – Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making" conference. Most of all, the conference strengthened the resolve of women leaders from all sectors to initiate closer and more genuine cooperation as a guarantee for the sustainable and growing success of efforts to achieve gender equality in Kosovo.

AGENDA



Agenda

Conference
“Women’s Leadership – Strategies for
Empowering Women in Political Decision-making”
Prishtina, June 18 and 19, 2004

Friday, June 18

09.00 – 09.30	Registration
09.30 – 10.30	Session 1: Opening speeches <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Opening speech by Igballe Rogova on behalf of Kosova Women’s Lobby◆ Remarks by Yvana Enzler, Head of Swiss Liaison Office in Prishtina◆ Key note speaker Jean Carnahan, former senator of Missouri “Equal and active participation of women in all levels of decision making processes in politics”
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
10.45 – 12.30	Session 2: Bringing more women in governmental decision-making <i>Moderator: Delina Fico, STAR Network of World Learning</i> <i>Speakers: Edita Tahiri, MP and Chairperson of Transportation and Communication Committee, Kosovo</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Gordana Sobol, MP and Chairperson of Gender Equality Committee, Croatia◆ Behar Selimi, Head of Support Services, Kosovo Police Services◆ Lesley Abdela, Senior Partner, Shevolution, UK◆ Mimoza Kusari, Spokesperson at the Prime Minister’s Office, Kosovo
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 15.00	Session 3: Win with women – Strengthen political parties <i>Moderator: Heather Kashner, NDI</i> <i>Speakers: Ramush Haradinaj, MP and President of AAK, Kosovo</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Petra Blaess, Special Advisor to the Stability Pact for SEE, Germany◆ Nazlie Bala, Head of Women’s Forum, PDK, Kosovo◆ Jean Carnahan, former US senator of Missouri
15.00 – 15.15	Coffee break
15.15 – 17.00	Session 4: The role of NGOs and the media in promoting women’s participation in decision-making <i>Moderator: Flora Macula, UNIFEM</i> <i>Speakers: Afërdita Kelmendi, Executive Director, RTV 21, Kosovo</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Stanmira Hadjimitova, Bulgarian Gender Foundation◆ Lule Vuniqi, Program Manager, KFOS◆ Vesna Kesić, Founder, B.a.B.e, Croatia◆ Fezal Gulfidan, KADER, Turkey

Conference
“Women’s Leadership – Strategies for
Empowering Women in Political Decision-making”
Prishtina, June 18 and 19, 2004

Saturday, June 19

09.00 – 10.30	Session 1: Mobilizing citizens and voters in support of women. Moderator: Xheraldina Vula , RTV21 ◆ Speakers: Lael Stegall , President, Social Change International, USA ◆ Vjosa Dobruna , Chairperson of RTK Board, leading women's rights activist, Kosovo ◆ Flora Macula , National Program Manager, UNIFE ◆ Smiljka Milisavjević , MP, Return Coalition, Kosovo ◆ Bernard Zeneli , Head of Political Science Department, Prishtina University, Kosovo
10.30 – 10.45	Coffee Break
10.45 - 12.30	Session 2: Working Groups Group 1: Bringing more women in governmental decision-making ◆ Moderators: Makbule Çeço , Vice-Speaker of the Parliament, Albania ◆ Facilitator: Flora Macula Group 2: Win with women – Strengthen political parties. ◆ Moderators: Lumturije Luci , PReK, Mateja Demsic , Liberal Democratic Party, Slovenia ◆ Facilitator: Delina Fico Group 3: The role of NGOs and the media in promoting women's participation in decision-making. ◆ Moderators: Xheraldina Vula , RTV21, Igballe Rexha-Jashari , CPWC, Kosovo ◆ Facilitator: Arjeta Rexhaj , Gender Training and Research Center, Kosovo Group 4: Mobilizing citizens and voters in support of women. ◆ Moderators: Argjentina Grazhdani , Kosova Women's Lobby ◆ Facilitator: Nada Drobnjak , Chairperson, Office for Gender Equality, Montenegro
12.30 – 13.30	Lunch
13.30 – 14.30	Session 3: Working Groups (continued)
14.30 – 14.45	Coffee break
14.45 – 16.00	Session 4: Reporting from working groups followed by discussions ◆ Moderator: Delina Fico
16.00 – 17.00	Closing remarks by Dale Pfeifer , Head of USAID Mission in Kosovo Closing speech by Kaqusha Jashari , Kosova Women's Lobby

CONFERENCE REPORT



Conference Report

I. Introduction

1. Executive Summary

Like all nation-building projects, developing Kosovo into a healthy democracy requires widespread citizen participation and good governance. Kosovo cannot afford to leave 52% of its population – Kosovar women – out of the political decision-making process if it seeks legitimacy. As the second free and democratic elections since the 1999 NATO intervention approach, the active participation of women in politics in addition to men is a necessary condition that Kosovo must satisfy for successful transition to democracy. Although the current electoral regulation requires that 30% of Kosovar Members of Parliament (MPs) be women, the political power to make a difference still remains within the domain of men. Because the quota addresses only numbers, not the actual configuration of decision-making power in government, women make up only one out of the ten powerful ministers, one out of the thirty Heads of Municipal Assemblies, and two out of the thirty Chief Executives of Municipal Governments. Most importantly, women are largely missing from the engines of change in democracies – Kosovo's political parties.

During the October 2004 elections, citizens will have the opportunity to bring democracy to the next level by empowering women in politics. With these elections in mind, international and local organizations – such as OSCE, IFES, Norwegian People's Aid, Kosovo Women's Network, and others – have carried out projects to encourage women's political involvement. Because the upcoming elections make the coming months an ideal time to focus on women's political participation, the STAR Network of World Learning, Kosova Women's Lobby, and the National Democratic Institute (NDI) organized a conference, "Women's Leadership – Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-making," with the participation of women's NGOs, political party leaders and activists, and elected and appointed officials, to meet the following objectives:

1. Look critically at the successes and failures of strategies for promoting women's participation in political decision-making in Kosovo.
2. Learn from successful and failed strategies, programs, and initiatives in other countries, especially in South Eastern Europe, to involve more women in the highest levels of political decision-making, with particular attention paid to political parties.
3. Develop recommendations for effective and farsighted strategies that will consolidate the achieved results and ensure the sustainability of women's participation in the highest levels of political decision-making in Kosovo.

Held in June 18-19, 2004 at Prishtina's Grand Hotel, the conference used as a foundation for dialogue the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UN Beijing Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the NDI Global Action Plan "Win with Women: Strengthen Political Parties", and Kosovo National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality. Participants included Kosovar political activists, female MPs, leaders of political parties, representatives of women's NGOs and networks, media professionals, and representatives of donors, as well as international speakers, particularly from other countries in Southeastern Europe like Slovenia, Croatia, and Bulgaria.

During the two days of strategy development, participants addressed four main themes: (1) bringing more women into governmental decision-making, (2) win with women – strengthening political parties, (3) the role of NGOs and the media in promoting women's participation in decision-making, and (4) mobilizing citizens and voters in support of women. Each conference session addressed one theme and included a panel of 4-5 Kosovar and international speakers who presented their experience and ideas, raised questions, and pointed out challenges and possible solutions. Open discussions and working groups followed the panel discussion sessions.

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The conference targeted political party leaders, high governmental officials, Kosovar women's NGOs, media, and donors that support programs for increasing women's political participation in Kosovo. Around 190 women and men attended the conference.

The conference succeeded in strengthening ties between Kosovar women's NGOs and politicians with their counterparts in Southeastern European countries and the world. It also gave larger public visibility to the efforts of Kosova Women's Lobby to push for equal and active participation of women in the highest levels of governmental decision-making. The main outcome of the conference was a Platform for Action on Empowering Women in Political Decision-making in Kosova with concrete conclusions and recommendations to be used in particular by Kosova Women's Lobby, political parties, the parliament, and women's NGOs to promote women's political empowerment. A Working Group formed at the conference continued to collaborate in the months leading up to the elections to develop the Platform for Action.

2. The organizers

STAR (Strategies, Training, Advocacy, and Resources) Network of World Learning is a network of integrated programs that provides sustained support to a new generation of women leaders who have a vision for inter-ethnic cooperation and peace in South East Europe. STAR's current focus is supporting organizations that promote women's political and economic empowerment.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) is a nonprofit organization working to strengthen and expand democracy worldwide. Calling on a global network of volunteer experts, NDI provides practical assistance to political and civic leaders advancing democratic values, practices and institutions.

Kosova Women's Lobby (KWL) is a group of women leaders in politics, civil society and the economic sphere who engage in constructive critical thinking and support strategic, progressive programs for the political, social and economic development of Kosovo.

The conference also had co-funding from the Swiss Cooperation Office, Fridrih Ebert Stiftung and UNIFEM.

II. Conference Proceedings

1. Plenary sessions

Opening session

Igballe Rogova, a leading figure of the Kosovar women's movement and internationally renowned activist for women's rights, delivered an opening speech to introduce the conference's goals and structure. In 1999, she co-founded Kosova Women's Network, a coalition of women's organizations that work on joint advocacy campaigns on behalf of Kosovar women, and she has won several international prizes for her work in civil society development. During her speech, she characterized the task of promoting women's political empowerment as a continuing process that we must carry out step by step. Only with the patience to see this process through both successes, like the recently passed Law on Gender Equality, as well failures like the proposal for electoral reform can gender equality be truly realized.

The Head of the Swiss Liaison Office in Prishtina, Yvana Enzler, followed Rogova's speech with remarks on the challenges that lie ahead for women in politics. Women's lack of political participation often stems from deeply ingrained social norms, she said, encouraging self-censorship and limiting the confidence necessary to engage in high-level political decision-making. It is the responsibility of civil society organizations, international and domestic, to help expand the space in which women are socially permitted to operate and encourage them to cross limits. Quotas and

affirmative action, she argued, are necessary but should only be a temporary tool to jumpstart women's political empowerment. Recalling her experience in Switzerland, where women must still struggle for equality despite living in a highly developed country, she concluded that gender equality is both an aim and a prerequisite for social change and economic growth.

Jean Carnahan, former senator of Missouri, delivered her keynote address on the equal and active participation of women in all levels of political decision-making. Becoming the first woman in her state to serve in the Senate after the posthumous election of her husband, who died along with her son in a tragic plane crash, she realized immediately the necessity for women's equal political participation if democracy is to be preserved worldwide. Deciding that she had to "give up or step up," she chose to step up not only to the responsibility of being a senator of Missouri, but also to the responsibility of being a woman in politics. She finished her address by explaining the particular value that women may bring to public life, based on her firsthand experience in American policymaking. First, women's perspective as caregivers encourages transcending violent divisions and seeking widely encompassing solutions, "with an additional dimension, that of a mother." Second, in her experience, women play an important role as questioners in the policymaking dialogue, improving the poor channels of communication that so often prevent effective decision-making. Finally, she has seen women act as collaborators who encourage consensus over controversy – a contribution growing ever more valuable in modern global politics.

A. Bringing more women into governmental decision-making

In a panel discussion, five speakers gave presentations on how to involve more women in the political decision-making process. Edita Tahiri, a leading figure in Kosovar politics and current Member of Parliament, spoke first by laying out the positive and negative consequences of the quota requiring 30% of Kosovar MPs to be women. The upside to the quota, she said, was that it provided representation for women where there was virtually none. To outside observers unfamiliar with the actual configuration of power – its concentration in parliamentary committees, ministers, and political parties setting the agendas on which policies are based – Kosovo began to resemble a country that truly valued women's participation. But the downside has been that women, absent from the leading structures of government left untouched by the quota, still play a negligible role in decision-making. Even some female MPs, Tahiri noted, have become complacent with that secondary role. She concluded with the idea that women must "conquer decision-making" in government if they are to live up to the quota and encourage even more women to be politically active.

Gordana Sobol, a Croatian MP and Chairperson of the Gender Equality Committee, spoke next on the lessons learned from her experience promoting women's participation as a prominent member of the country's Social Democratic Party (SDP). Between 2000 and 2003, the SDP was the ruling coalition's most powerful party, and it has consistently possessed the largest number of women in the government and parliament. What Sobol has learned, she said, is that "democratic changes may be led only by those parties that are prepared to democratize their own internal party structures" on their party lists and during elections for their most powerful representatives. She emphasized the need for long-term partnership between female politicians and civil society, as well as among women in government across partisan lines. "We knew," she explained, "that only by changes we initiate on the level of the party...can we influence the direction of changes...on the level of the whole state."

With twenty years of experience promoting women's rights around the world, Lesley Abdela presented a series of practical suggestions for Kosovar women in civil society and government. These included writing a letter to the Prime minister to request a gender balanced quota – 40% women and 40% men – in the Cabinet as well as intense campaigning for a more transparent candidate selection process in political parties. Based on her experience in other countries like South Africa and the U.K., women achieve equal representation when they have a "champion," either male or female, in a high position of power, and when women in government are widely supported through training and civil society. She also said that a Proportional Representational Electoral System tends to produce more gender equality in government, and concluded by encouraging the conference participants themselves to stand for candidacy and enter government.

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The Head of Support Services at Kosovo Police Services, Behar Selimi, presented his perspective on women's political empowerment next. He explained why equal participation is important in such institutions as the Police Services, where he has seen women add more professionalism and prudence as well as favor prevention of crime over more violent enforcement. He urged the participants to act as role models for younger women, and convert powerful members of the opposite sex in government into allies in the fight for gender equality.

Mimoza Kusari, the Spokesperson at the Prime minister's Office, agreed with Selimi in her following speech that young, qualified women should be encouraged to enter government. She also responded to Lesley Abdela's suggestion that the Prime minister should institute a gender-balanced quota in his Cabinet by explaining such a move would not be in his power. Finally, she described her experience as a minority in government as frustrating yet rewarding, since salaries are almost half of those in civil society and the institutional infrastructure prevents upward mobility. She suggested making government work more attractive for qualified young women, possibly with stipends and training to increase the confidence and competence needed to be an effective voice for women in government.

The open discussion began by addressing Kusari's remarks on the lack of incentive for qualified women to enter politics. When a civil society representative asked Kusari for further explanation, Kusari said that internal political barriers and nepotism discourage women's involvement as well as low salaries, and added that women's own lack of initiative plays a role. Advertisements for positions at the Prime minister's Office go unanswered by women, she noted; women hesitate, and these positions go to men. A woman politician agreed and called for a greater movement of women from the civil society sector to the political sector, especially political parties, since the women in civil society are qualified and experienced. Participants also agreed on the need to democratize the internal structure of political parties to allow more room for women.

On the point of women's hesitation, a member of the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo asked how programs might help free women from social and political constraints. To reduce that hesitation, the representative of the Turkish women's association KADER suggested that "we have to be seen in politics, and to be seen, we have to be more." She said that this should be coupled with promoting positive images of women in politics. Lesley Abdela added that Kosovar civil society should closely study examples of successful programs promoting gender equality in other countries, not to copy but as a tool to convince politicians of gender equality's importance and acceptance internationally. The Kosovar ministers she has met are eager for Kosovo to resemble a modern democratic country, and they are open to discussion about mechanisms other countries have used to promote equal participation. Gordana Sobol from Croatia gave the example of girls' education programs in other countries, which demonstrate the power that increased space for self-expression has to encourage women's political empowerment.

B. Win with women – Strengthen political parties

During this panel discussion, four speakers presented their ideas on how to increase women's participation in political parties, using as a starting point the National Democratic Institute's Global Action Plan "Win With Women – Strengthen Political Parties". Ramush Haradinaj, an MP and president of AAK, Kosovo's third largest political party, started off the discussion by pinpointing poor education, especially in rural areas where it may inculcate discriminatory customs, as a major obstacle to women's participation in political parties. The government has the responsibility to create policies that enable and encourage all children to attend school, without family's prioritizing their sons over their daughters. He also stressed the need to refashion the internal culture within political parties into one that supports women's involvement through quotas and open selection processes. Finally, he reminded participants that they should target men in addition to women by demonstrating how women's equal participation is for the good of all Kosovo.

Petra Blaess, former Vice President of the German Parliament, gave a presentation based on her twelve years of experience in German politics. She explained the usefulness of gender mainstreaming, which incorporates the gender perspective into decision-making processes, as an instrument for including more women in power structures. But she warned that the term is too often

used as a buzzword in politics or debated *ad nauseum* in gender studies; instead it should be actively implemented by incorporating gender-sensitive politicians into all decision-making structures. A best practice catalogue should be created to demonstrate the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming in fields, such as welfare policies that acknowledge women's specific living conditions and budget decisions that address the actual – often discriminatory – flow of money in different societal strata. She added that women in government tend to feel isolated, often asking "Where are all the women who fought for women in such positions?" Civil society, she said, should produce concrete proposals for women politicians to solve problems in governmental circles. "There is a big gap," she explained, "between the...academic gender studies debates and...the practical daily work of female politicians."

Blaess also described the political image of gender equality as a so-called "soft issue," subordinated to social policy and not discussed in terms of democracy, equal participation, and human rights. Parliamentary commissions for gender affairs consist mainly of women, who are considered "responsible" for this area. She recalled discussing a new labor law as a member of the German parliamentary commission for family, seniors, women, and youth affairs, and her disillusionment when the more powerful, mostly male-dominated labor market affairs commission passed the law without her commission's input. Besides their absence from the most powerful parliamentary commissions, women lack a solid presence in mainstream debate and the media, she said. Women should mobilize to support female experts on issues, not only gender-related but regarding economics and security, who could become powerful media players. She concluded by encouraging more professional support for younger women through mentor programs in which female politicians share their experiences and knowledge with younger women

Nazlije Bala, Head of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) Women's Forum, spoke on the more persistent, ingrained problems preventing women's involvement in political parties. She described the lack of willingness within parties to develop strategies that would include more women and grant gender equality a more prominent place on their political agendas. Although the parties claim they are pursuing a partnership between men and women to promote gender-sensitive party platforms, they have not made significant progress in this direction. Nazlije discussed the role of women's forums in political parties versus the efforts to get women in all levels and structures of decision-making within the party. She favors the latter strategy.

In the panel's last speech, Jean Carnahan, the former Senator of Missouri, emphasized the power of strong networking to promote women's involvement in political parties. Not only could women's networking bring more women into politics, it could serve as a foundation for women's long-term political sustainability, crossing generational and partisan lines.

In the discussion that followed, Gordana Sobol noted that civil society should focus on empowering women in political parties by providing financial support and training, given that the quota already guarantees their physical presence. She called for widespread support to help the women already in government promote gender equality more effectively, especially in political parties. She also asked to what extent the AAK, Ramush Haradinaj's party, incorporates women in its most powerful decision-making structures. Haradinaj responded that AAK created the women's forum, "Alliance for the Future of Women" (AGK), to promote gender equality and equal representation on behalf of his party. A participant noted that AAK is the only political party to ask for civil society's help to activate women in government. Another audience member returned to Haradinaj's initial point of education by mentioning that there are numerous educated women with masters degree and Ph.Ds, some of them also members of the Democratic Women of Kosova (the women's forum for PDK, Kosovo's second largest party), who could serve as role models or mentors to younger women. Finally, Haradinaj explained that every structure in his party has a 20% minimal percentage for women's participation, but posed the following question: is it better to have a bigger quota, or to take out the separating mechanism that produces forums within parties for gender equality, like AAK's Alliance for the Future of Women?

C. The role of NGOs and the media in promoting women's participation in decision-making

Five speakers gave presentation during the third panel discussion on the role of NGOs and the media in promoting women's political empowerment. First, Luljeta Vuniqi, Program Manager for the Kosova Soros Foundation (KFOS), outlined the political, socio-economic, and cultural obstacles facing women's political activism. These included an electoral system with closed lists, lack of training for women in communications skills and activist strategies, significant poverty, and the oft-mentioned patriarchal customs that empower women only as mothers and wives.

Next spoke Vesna Kesi?, a well-known Croatian feminist, who recalled Jean Carnahan's emphasis on the power of strong networking when she described the network of fifty women's organizations she founded in Croatia, with representation in parliamentary commissions, the media, and in the government's Committee for Social Development.

Stanimira Hadjimitova, Executive Director of the Bulgarian Gender Foundation, provided her insights next on how coalitions that unite women in politics with women in civil society advance women's political participation. The Bulgarian Gender Foundation uses three working groups to promote gender equality in every area of life. The first working group addresses gender equality in political participation and decision-making, involving women's NGOs, female politicians, researchers, and local authorities, while the other two working groups address particular legislation and implementation, involving MPs, local authorities, media, and national agencies and institutions. Using this across-the-board approach, the foundation includes and mobilizes all players whose enthusiastic support is necessary to realize gender equality as widely as possible.

A board member of KA-DER (Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) in Turkey, Fezal Gulfidan, spoke on what she has learned from promoting women's involvement in Turkish political parties. To overcome Turkish traditions that prevent women's political participation, like those in Kosovo, she encourages developing more democratic families and schools. The Turkish History Foundation, for example, recently eliminated discriminatory words and images from more than 180 elementary and middle school books. She also described women's low status in Turkish political parties, where they are concentrated in the notorious Women's Branches ("kitchen" of the party). Party statutes leave them without authority, money, representation in party decision-making, or permission to take gender-based political action. As for younger women, Gulfidan said she was "sure they won't want to be trapped in Women Branches to do social work only." So KA-DER has lobbied to change the Law on Political Parties and Elections by creating a Constitutional Amendment Package and Equality Package for distribution to parliamentarians. It has also carried out a project, "Women Using Computers," to train women in e-mail communication and online information-gathering so they can create a large network of female voters with real power. To encourage women to stand for candidacy in local and national government, KA-DER has prepared billboard advertisements, radio jingles, and flyers that show why women are needed in politics. KA-DER has also trained women candidates how to run a successful campaign and effectively communicate within the political arena.

The last speaker, Afërdita Kelmendi, Executive Director of Radio Television 21, focused on improving women's communication skills as a means to political empowerment. To be effective parliamentarians and communicators, women "have to feel the needs of the audience more," even be "shorter in their presentations," she strategized. If they are to build a broad support base and mobilize voters behind them, they need to use strategic communication techniques and tailor content to target the interests of their audience. She suggested that women make shorter, more succinct arguments demonstrating exactly why average Kosovars, both men and women, should invest in women's political participation through voting women into office or providing other kinds of support.

One of the participants began the open discussion by suggesting that television programs encourage women to vote or eventually stand for candidacy during the months leading up to the October elections. Another participant felt that the work of Kosovar NGOs is not channeled properly, nor is the progress made by female MPs sufficiently visible and positively portrayed in the media. More research should be

conducted, another participant added, on the work of local women's NGOs so their successes will be better documented in mainstream media. With increased visibility, these successful women's NGOs could serve as role models for other segments of civil society. The discussion also drew attention to a lack of cooperation between civil society and media.

D. Mobilizing citizens and voters in support of women

Five speakers gave presentations during the final panel discussion on how to mobilize citizens and voters in support of women. Lael Stegall, STAR Network's co-founder and its former director, began the discussion by describing one model called "Emily List" (EL) that successfully mobilized American voters in support of women. Twenty years ago, she and twenty-four other women formed a grassroots network of donors that gave women candidates early support to establish their credibility as "winners." To become a member, donors would give \$100 and financially support at least two women candidates during that election season. EL offered the most viable of women candidates funding for their campaigns, as well as practical and professional support, including media training, fundraising training, and issue education. With 75,000 names today, EL is the largest political action committee in the U.S.; it has elected eleven Democratic women senators, fifty-five women to Congress, and seven governors.

Stegall offered three important lessons from the success of Emily's List. First, she urged using positive messages and focusing clearly on a few important points to mobilize voters. EL reached out to both women and men with affirmative language and an emphasis on the strong, positive qualities women bring to public life; campaign slogans and other materials had bright graphics and forward-thinking messages. She suggested repeating a few solid strategies for voter mobilization over and over again, promoting the same overall message to the parties and public. Second, she encouraged Kosovar women from all geographic, partisan, ethnic, and economic backgrounds to collaborate and form a powerful base in numbers. Third, she suggested that women's NGOs be as resourceful as possible to women candidates by providing highly professional, strategic advice and seeking financial support for them. Women candidates need good political strategists with robust research skills, she said, as well as issue education and media training to make the best of a television interview.

Vjosa Dobruna, leading women's rights activist and Chairperson of Radio Television of Kosova's Board, spoke next on the quota's role in mobilizing voters to support women. Requiring 30% of MPs to be women, she said, the quota has encountered resistance from both men and women, who argue that voters will view these women as artificial representatives, not elected for their merit. But she still favors the quota because, though flawed, it has had more success than any other measure in raising awareness about the need for women's political participation. She described the tendency in rural areas for men in families to "show" women how to vote without letting them choose for themselves. Agreeing with Stegall, Dobruna concluded by encouraging civil society to raise funds for women candidates.

UNIFEM's National Project Manager, Flora Macula, followed Dobruna's remarks by drawing attention to women voters, rather than women politicians. She asked whether more connections between central and local government should be formed, and to what extent civil society should lobby for more decentralization to facilitate voter mobilization. She agreed with Petra Blaess that "We have to focus on the practical needs" of women voters by figuring out what issues matter most to them and so induce them to vote.

Smiljka Milisavjevic, a Kosovar Serbian MP, responded to Macula's emphasis on the practical in her next presentation. From her experience in the parliament, mobilizing voters requires institutional support and mass communication outlets that convincingly demonstrate the down-to-earth benefits of voting for one candidate over another. Vocational lectures and seminars also help voters recognize the power behind casting a vote in terms of their daily lives. For example, women voters need to see how greater government concentration on childcare and education would leave more free time for their own economic development, ultimately helping to support themselves and their

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families with increased income. “The society in which 50% of the population is marginalized,” she concluded, “cannot develop...such a society doesn’t represent a society of progress but a society of stagnation and regress.”

Bernard Zeneli, Lecturer and Chair of the Political Science and Public Administration Department at Prishtina University, gave the last presentation on mobilizing voters in support of women. He said voters do not consider going to the ballot box as a way of changing their lives, and political parties should reinvent the voting process so that votes translate to various policy alternatives. He also noted that voters tend to support a political party leader, rather than a party’s ideological position or candidate’s individual policy proposals. In the closed list system, citizens vote for a party, which provides a list of internally selected candidates, based on their impression of that party’s key leadership. Political parties, he added, use ethnicity to fill the ideology gap, and lack clear post-independence strategies for developing ideologies to define themselves. The fact that women politicians are women, he concluded, is not incentive enough for voters – men or women – to mobilize in support of them; instead women voters need to see women politicians propose policies that will directly benefit them in their daily lives.

The open discussion began with a focus on how to work with central leadership in a political party to increase women’s representation on the party’s agenda, and therefore mobilize voters. Bernard Zeneli recommended proposing that parties include on their election platform one to three issues that Kosovar women find important, characterizing them not as “women’s issues” but as important issues for Kosovo at large. Flora Macula added that candidates and elected representatives should work more often in the field to build a stronger relationship with their constituents, since women voters often may not even know the candidates for whom they are voting. Smiljka Milisavjevic reinforced this point by encouraging more direct contact with voters through door-to-door campaigns that define election issues in a specific, personally relevant way. Noting that NGOs have carried out such campaigns before, worked individually with women in villages, and used surveys to gather local women’s input, Flora Macula argued that there is only so much NGOs can do to mobilize voters without government cooperation. She called for more connections between central and local governments to help voters get to know their representatives.

One of the participants emphasized that women’s NGOs should recognize and publicize the work of women MPs. Women lead nine out of 18 Parliamentary Committees and they do a very good job there. She also raised the issue of voters turn out. Two factors will discourage voters from voting this year: first, the closed lists electoral system, and second the message that UNMIK sends to the voters regarding the power and role of Kosovar governing institutions - that they have no real power over Kosovo’s future. She recommended lobbying with UNMIK to send a strong message to voters assuring them that the Kosovar governing institutions play an important role in Kosovo’s political development. UNMIK should also pass a greater number of competencies to the Kosovar institutions.

The participants then worked in Working Groups to draft recommendations for strategies for empowering women in political decision-making.

2. Working Groups and Recommendations

A. Bringing more women into governmental decision-making

This working group discussed in more detail the issues that arose from the panel discussion on bringing more women into governmental decision-making. Noting that this topic overlaps with the conference’s other three themes, Gordana Sobol reinforced the need for democratizing the political parties and building a partnership between women’s NGOs and women politicians. “NGOs and the government,” she said, “cannot be successful without mutual cooperation.” Other participants addressed the low salaries and lack of education

preventing women from seeking government posts. Reacting to a suggestion that international organizations support women politicians through stipends, one participant objected that this external supplemental support could end up being a type of discrimination. An NGO representative recommended that Prishtina University create a gender studies department, and the schools and faculties adopt more of a gender perspective in their curricula and textbooks.

Recommendations

- Introduce mechanisms in local and central government to implement the Law on Gender Equality.
- Use media, civil society, and gender mainstreaming to increase women's representation in political parties.
- Seek funding to provide early financial support to women candidates, possibly on the model of Emily's List.
- Introduce a gender studies department within Prishtina University and campaign for curricula and books to support gender equality.
- Integrate the gender perspective into party platforms with the justification of the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and UN Resolution 1325.
- Establish mentoring programs to involve younger women in politics.

B. Win with women – Strengthen political parties

During this working group, participants developed recommendations for how to increase women's participation in political parties. One participant described a tendency to view politics as a hobby, subordinate to more immediate economic and family concerns. Echoing earlier comments, she argued that politicians should have more direct contact with constituents to demonstrate that political participation concerns those more immediate concerns. Lesley Abdela and other participants focused on how to monitor the work of political parties so voters will be able to make informed decisions. She suggested using surveys to compare what voters truly want and what political parties say they want in their election platforms. To incorporate more women's priorities into these election platforms, Ramush Haradinaj recommended that NGOs present central leadership of political parties with a list of problems and policy solutions.

Recommendations

- Monitor the implementation of political party regulations that promote gender equality.
- Pressure political parties to be more involved with their constituencies, as they develop political agendas, form policy proposals, and push for those proposals in government.
- Promote role models among women politicians
- Develop a broad network of women voters with clear policy goals that address their actual needs.
- Present political party leadership with a list of policy goals as cogent solutions to problems, and demonstrate the power of the women's voting network to elect into office party candidates supporting their recommendations.
- Train women candidates and politicians how to use media effectively and communicate convincingly with voters and in government.
- Lobby for greater democratization of political parties, along with transparent candidate selection processes and empowerment of women's organizations within parties.

C. The role of NGOs and the media in promoting women's participation in decision-making

This working group began by pointing out journalists' lack of awareness and willingness to present news stories with a gender perspective. One participant suggested that NGOs should target editors, since they set the agendas in print media, with training on gender-sensitive reporting. Stanimira Hadjimitova, the Bulgarian Gender Project's Director, described how her organization provided training for sixty journalists from all over the country on how to present gender-sensitive stories, such as domestic violence cases. To keep the journalists focused, the training took place in an isolated environment, which also had a disco to prevent information overload and tedium. She also established a competition to grant the journalist presenting the best gender-sensitive story a cash award.

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Media representatives explained that media remains a business, with beauty contests often more profitable than gender awareness. “We are only the bridge between the audience and the NGOs,” one noted as she described how NGOs have not often produced a good, simple message for media to send out to audiences. A representative of Kosova Women’s Network recommended training for NGOs on how to collaborate with media organizations, including collecting sound-bites, designing catchy slogans, and developing raw material for gender-sensitive stories that will “sell.” Most of all, she said, NGOs should develop a clear, convincing answer to the question: “Why women in politics?” Another participant suggested that media cover more public debates showcasing problems women have and the solutions women candidates or politicians have developed to address those problems.

Recommendations

- Train NGOs to effectively use media as an instrument for women’s political empowerment (i.e. collecting sound-bites, developing gender-sensitive stories that will be profitable for media, and organizing audience-friendly public debates for media to cover)
- Ensure that civil society representatives respect the rules of the media world (i.e. giving media sufficient time to develop a program covering an event, rather than informing media only the day before)
- Train journalists and other media representatives in gender-sensitive reporting, and create incentives like rewards for such reporting, especially during election periods when women candidates need positive public exposure and space to present their policy solutions.
- Carry out research to determine how people in different regions receive their information, and what media sources they trust the most.
- Monitor media channels to gauge whether this training actually results in more women’s political participation.

D. Mobilizing women and voters in support of women

Participants in this working group discussed the general voter regression in Kosovo, especially the fact that in the last election only 18% of voters were women. One participant said that voters, especially women, feel a sense of hopelessness or think their expectations will not be fulfilled by political parties because they have not been in the past. Smiljka Milisavjevic argued that low voter turnout on the part of women had more to do with unprofessional electoral campaigns that did not address current citizen interests. Most political parties, she said, orient their campaigns toward patriotic and national sentiments, rather than more tangible problems of employment and education that are more relevant to citizens. Based on her experience in Montenegro, Zylfije Duraku noted that the “euphoria of patriotism is gone”; citizens need concrete solutions to their basic problems, not more nationalist rhetoric. Petra Blaess suggested that women’s associations create checklists with three to five questions of interest for women voters, and distribute these to political parties and candidates. With media cooperation, NGOs could set up forums for candidates and political parties to answer the questions, along with audience participation and additional question-and-answer sessions.

Recommendations

- Promote women candidates by showing how their policy proposals address voters’ needs and priorities.
- Create checklist for political parties and candidates to see women’s particular concerns and better address them.
- Invite candidates and politicians to forums to discuss the checklists with their constituents.
- Establish a Women’s Caucus in the parliament that transcends partisan lines.
- Create a database of women who seek greater political involvement so they can identify shared interests and develop policy proposals to present to political parties.
- Conduct a survey in different regions to gauge women’s voting priorities and identify emerging voting patterns.
- Base advocacy campaigns on strong research, survey results, and clear arguments.
- Build strong alliances with other civil society organizations, not only women’s associations, to promote voter mobilization.
- Continue the campaign, “Political Parties Work For Women.”

One representative of each Working Group presented the recommendations to the plenary session.

Closing session

Kaqusha Jashari, Head of Social Democratic Party and representative of Kosova Women's Lobby, and Dale Pfeiffer, Head of USAID Mission in Kosovo, gave their closing remarks. Although civil society did not succeed in changing the electoral system from closed list to open list, Jashari said, civil society with its grassroots base still has the power to change the way women voters conceive of the voting process. "We must ask women voters to vote based on their own judgment," she said, if democracy is to succeed in Kosovo. She recalled how young women have told her that they don't want to be "politicians," but honest, accountable politicians are precisely what democracies need to survive. Joining a political party is not like becoming a "politician" in a negative sense; it is committing to the vital job of building democracy in Kosovo. Dale Pfeiffer delivered a final speech on the incremental process of empowering women in politics. He articulated the main points made at the conference, and added that women must focus on communicating what they bring the public life. He highlighted the voter education campaigns run by women's organizations in the U.S. that organize lively public debates and publish a guide for voters on all candidates and issues. Echoing the conference's recurring focus on political parties, he gave one last piece of advice: "Make yourselves invaluable to political parties."

III. Media Coverage

During the conference's two-day duration and afterwards, the conference was widely reported in the media. Two main private television stations, RTV21 and KTV, as well as the public television station RTK, reported on both days of the conference, and invited international and local speakers, such as Jean Carnahan (the former senator of Missouri), Lael Stegall (the co-founder of Star Network), and Vesna Kesic (founder of B.a.B.e, Croatia), to participate in their morning and evening programs. The main daily newspapers, Zëri, Koha Ditore, Bota Sot, Kosova Sot and Epoka e Re, also reported extensively on the conference. In addition, Kosova Press, the main news agency providing all media with initial reportage and information, covered on the conference proceedings.

IV. Follow-up efforts

A Working Group established at the conference met several times after the conference to develop a Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-Making. The Platform was based on the following documents:

1. Conference discussions and recommendations
2. Kosovo Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality
3. NDI Global Platform "Win with Women – Strengthen Political Parties"

The Working Group presented a draft-platform to leading Kosovar women politicians and representatives of women's NGOs at a round-table that took place in Prishtina on July 13, 2004. The roundtable was organized by the Gender Training and Research Center and STAR Network of World Learning. A final draft of the Platform was prepared at this round-table. This Platform will be launched publicly. It will also be presented in face-to-face meetings with all governmental institutions at the central and local level, civil society institutions, and donors, who work to ensure women's equal and effective participation in political decision-making.

STAR Network of World Learning with assistance and co-funding by UNIFEM and Fridrih Ebert Stiftung put together the publication of all conference proceedings and materials to be used as an advocacy tool by Kosovo Women's Lobby, women's NGOs, and women's forums of political parties.

NDI has expressed interest in supporting efforts by women's NGOs and women's forums of political parties to implement Platform recommendations, in particular those that focus on the role of political parties in bringing more women in all levels of decision-making within the party.

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Opening Statement

By Igbaile Rogova, member of Kosova Women's Lobby

The second general elections of Kosovo are drawing near. Although many local organizations, political actors, and representatives of civil society (including Kosova Women's Lobby) advocated for an open list system with geographic representation and gender balance, it was decided that the October 23 elections would use closed lists.

They told us that the reason why they chose a closed list system was women. Once again women were used as a justification. They told us that not enough work has been done in Kosovo for gender equality; we are not ready for an open list system; and, we should keep the 30% quota because political parties do not yet think of women.

Several critiques stated that there has not been enough work on behalf of women in decision-making positions. Listening to these critiques, we realize that we have forgotten what we have achieved together so far.

We have forgotten the harsh times when we got together and raised our voices. The majority of you remember the days before the war when Milosevic banned any activity and would not allow groups of more than five Albanian speakers to get together. In those days before the war, we would gather in the basement of the Center for the Protection of Women and Children to organize protests and humanitarian fundraisings. We developed strategies on how to get out of that situation and how to bring a stable peace to Kosovo.

Then came the postwar period when women worked tirelessly to help Kosovo's population. On one side, civil society worked with the people; on the other, women worked in Parliament. The time came when these two forces were joined in one group, Kosova Women's Lobby. As a women's rights activist for the past 15 years, I felt incredibly happy last year when women in politics, NGOs, and the private sector came together with common declarations concerning the stance of our Women's Lobby on issues important to Kosovo and women.

As I mentioned, in the beginning, Women's Lobby was a co-organizer of the campaign for reforming the electoral system. We have shown that women can work on key issues of political development, but still we are told that we are not yet up to the level that Kosovo should reach. Yet we know that this is a long process. In no country can gender equality be reached overnight, and we are going through this process.

This conference is part of that process. This conference cannot awaken Kosovo in two days, but it is part of the effort to increase women's participation in politics, an effort that started before the war and will continue.

One thing is certain – in this process, we have been joined by men. Today we have men speaking in gender equality trainings and talking about changing women's position in Kosovo. I think that this is an important step in reaching gender equality. By following each other's steps and cooperating with men, we will get women in where we want them – in decision-making positions.

Today Kosovo has a National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality, a plan that has been accepted and adopted by the government. We also have the Gender Equality Law. Therefore, we have the mechanisms that will help us reach our goal to see more women in key decision-making positions. Now we have to make the jump from theory to practice, all together, women and men.

Thank you.

Opening Remarks

By **Yvana Enzler**, Head of the Swiss Liaison Office in Prishtina

First, I would like to thank the organizers of this conference for their kind invitation and the opportunity to address a few words to this assembly.

The role of women in political decision-making processes obviously depends on the social context. Each society has its rules and its place for women. However, social processes do evolve and change. I strongly believe that fighting structural inequalities and unequal power relations between different groups is both an aim and a prerequisite for development and social advancement. Reducing inequalities between women and men will develop sustainable societies where women as well as men are equally involved in the governance of public affairs at all levels. Cooperation between men and women is necessary for the development of a more fair society in which the concerns and needs of both men and women are equally considered and addressed.

Why is it then, when it comes to important decisions or issues in politics and government, women are left out of the decision-making process? Do men not deem women's presence necessary and mistrust their judgement to make a good decision? Well, the somewhat provocative answer that I am tempted to give to this question is: because women themselves do not trust in their own judgement. This is not because women think that their judgement is wrong or stupid. Quite the contrary. It is because they feel that they would go about things differently than men. They know before opening their mouth that their opinion will not be considered because it will not be understood. Women are very much aware of the difficulty to convince men that their judgement is as good as men's, although it is often quite different. So they prefer to adopt a self-policing attitude and remain in the background. On the other hand, and I observe this quite frequently in my own professional surroundings, when women are in a majority, they do not hesitate to speak out, to make their point, and to carry the decision. This means, in other words, that we need more women in politics, in government, in the administration, and in all places where important issues are being dealt with in order to advance women's empowerment in decision-making.

Women are more vulnerable than men to social pressure because they often depend economically and emotionally on men in the family. Women are expected by society to behave in a certain way, to perform specific duties, and to play an assigned role. This is what one could call "role-making": the role that is made for them and imposed on them by society. In other words, it is the space in which they are allowed to move and it is always risky for a woman to trespass these assigned limits. "Role-taking," on the other hand, is the role women want to take for themselves as individuals. It is about personal choices and trespassing limits, self-determination, and decision-making.

Measures such as affirmative action and quotas are necessary to increase women's presence in Parliament and government and to put more women in decision-making positions within the political parties, public administration, economy and business sector, university, social sector, etc. But these measures should be discontinued as soon as possible because women have no interest to be labelled as: "oh, you know, she came into this position because we needed a woman to fill the quota." So quotas and affirmative action should be time-limited and applied only as long as they are necessary.

Women will also increase their impact in decision-making processes if they stick together and push their demands through professional associations (women's lawyers association, for instance), interest groups such as Kosova Women's Lobby, or through a women's caucus in Parliament. No matter what the political differences are, women in Parliament should work together when it comes to issues that concern them.

My country, Switzerland, has never been at the forefront of addressing gender disparity. To give you some comparative elements, let me point out that Swiss women were only granted the right to vote

in 1971. At the same time, I have to add that Switzerland is the only country in the world in which men were asked to give their approval to such a move. And they did!

In the private sector, even today, women are often paid less than men for the same position and qualifications. Women in senior positions in the economic sector are almost non-existent. Yet, in the public administration things have slowly improved as more women came into senior positions. However, in my ministry, for instance, we are only eight women heads of mission compared to some one hundred and twelve men. Progress has, however, been achieved in universities, where the number of women professors has significantly increased even in scientific faculties; and, as far as the student population is concerned, there are more enrolled girls than boys in some Swiss universities. Women are also well-represented in Parliament and cantonal governments. Last year, two of the chairpersons of the four major Swiss parties were not only women but French speaking, which means that they were twice a minority. We also had two women ministers out of seven members of the central government. Now, after a change in government, there is only one left. What I want to show with these examples is that even in a country that is considered highly developed, women still need to struggle to advance their presence in decision relevant positions.

I hope that this conference will help design strategies to increase women's leadership in Kosovo. The Kosovo Action Plan for the Achievement of Gender Equality is by all means an appropriate tool to enlarge women's space in Kosovar society. Women should not invent something new, but push for its implementation.

Let me conclude by wishing you very fruitful discussions.

Keynote Address

By **Jean Carnahan**, former US Senator from Missouri

Democracy is in great danger today, not because its ideas have failed or that its premises are wrong. But because there are far more threats to freedom now, ranging from terrorism to intolerance to complacency. We have found that the democracies of the world — regardless of their age — cannot be left unattended. Unlike the pyramids of Egypt, we cannot build a democracy and then walk always from it.

A healthy society requires the nourishment of ideas and the exercise of equality, tolerance, and justice. The work of self-government is strenuous and unending, for free citizens must think for themselves, fix the things that go wrong, and be ever alert to tyranny. These are the most fearsome and difficult of tasks.

One of the lessons of my childhood came from reading the words etched in stone upon a wall of the U.S. Archives building: "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," it reads. When I asked the meaning of such big words, I was told that the phrase was a reminder that, "Freedom is never free. It costs somebody."

Kosovo has learned that in recent years, as has America. Despite the daily hardships that democracy must endure, I am encouraged by recent trends. The infusion of more women into the political process has given a new boost to democracies around the world.

The work of the National Democratic Institute in educating voters and candidates, developing platforms, and monitoring elections is also having a profound impact on emerging democracies. The Global Action Plan provides a bold blueprint for expanding the role of women in political parties and for making parties more successful in elections and government. Still, the emergence of women leaders—like a protracted birth—has been painfully slow. The activism gap between men and women participating in politics is still far too broad. Currently, women hold a mere 7% of cabinet posts worldwide. While the United Nations' benchmark of 30% women in the parliaments of the world has been reached in a dozen or more countries—largely because of quotas—the United States, France, and Japan still lag far behind with 14% or less.

But regardless of where women live, the reasons for their lack of political involvement are much the same. Many are inhibited by lack of education, or feel politically unqualified, or unconfident in dealing with policy issues. They dislike the public scrutiny that comes with holding office. Some feel uncomfortable competing in a male-dominated arena. In many cases, women are distrustful of institutions and frustrated by mainstream political activity.

When women do venture forth, they are not always welcomed or encouraged by their male counterparts. Some of these problems were discussed in the Fawcett Society Report recently conducted in Great Britain. The study described what they called the "four C's" as reasons for low political participation: Culture, Childcare, Cash, and Confidence. Plagued by these stern realities, it is no wonder that most women place family and employment higher on their priority list than politics.

How, then, can we convince women that they should be a part of the decision-making process—that, indeed, they must—if their concerns are to be reflected in public policy? Rather than a woman's family being an excuse for not participating in politics, I submit that her love and concern for family should be a prime reason for her involvement. The need to change repressive laws and customs that effect women's lives and those of their daughters and grand daughters should be motive enough. There is, indeed, a need for policy makers who understand, firsthand, what women go through.

In 19th century America, a woman by the name of Elizabeth Cady Stanton learned that lesson as a young girl. She would often sneak into her father's library to read the law books. She was disturbed by what she read. There was good reason to be disturbed. Women could not buy, sell, or inherit property or borrow money in their own name. They could not file a law suit, serve on a jury, or testify in court. They could not divorce an abusive husband, or attend certain schools. Legally they were not even entitled to their own wages.

As she read those books, Elizabeth took a pencil and wrote in the changes that she wanted made in those laws. When her father observed what she was doing, he let her know how futile her ideas were. He said, "Elizabeth, only lawmakers who are men—elected by men—can change the laws. You can't do anything about it." Elizabeth declared that this was a pivotal moment in her life when she determined to do all she could to change those laws. Well, she grew up, got married, and had seven children. But she never got over what she referred to as the "cruelties of the law." Elizabeth became part of the suffrage movement, advocating voting rights for women. She wrote many of the speeches for the cause, organized women, and set up conferences across the nation.

During that time, women were frequently harassed, ridiculed, and jailed. But they would not give up in their pursuit of equality. Despite their efforts and those of thousands of other women, it was over eighty years before women could vote in America. Elizabeth and those early suffragettes never lived to cast a ballot or to hold public office. But they did not despair. They knew that their work was not for themselves, but for future generations.

Today suffragette Elizabeth Cady Stanton would be delighted to see Senator Barbara Mikulski and the other thirteen women who now serve in the U.S. Senate. Senator Mikulski says that she never dreamed of being the first woman elected in her own right. She said, "I never sat in my little sandbox in Baltimore and said someday I want to be a U.S. Senator." Her political career didn't happen because of a burning ambition for power. I suspect that is true of most women who run for public office.

For Barbara Mikulski, her involvement started when she and others became angry about the placement of a road in their neighborhood and its effect on the families living there. In doing so, she brought together two groups, the Polish community and the African-American community. It was a difficult alliance because they had never worked together before and had no basis for trust. But these families found that their common interest in neighborhood solidarity outweighed their differences in race and religion. Today that proposed sixteen-lane highway stops just short of that neighborhood because one woman knew how to organize to save the community. Her successful work on a road issue at the neighborhood level led her to the U.S. Senate, where she now works on the national level for workers, women, and children.

My own route into public office was quite different, but was just as unexpected and unplanned. When I went to the Senate in 2000, it was following the death of my husband and son in a plane crash just three weeks before the election. With my husband's name still on the ballot, I agreed to take his place in the Senate should he be elected posthumously.

On Election Day, the people of Missouri, wanting something to survive that plane crash, went to the polls and voted for my husband, knowing that I would take his place in Washington. I became the first woman from my state to serve in the United States Senate. People have asked, "Weren't you overwhelmed at taking on such a tremendous task?" You bet I was. I was sixty-eight years old and had never held public office before in my life. I had always worked behind the scenes in my husband's nineteen political campaigns as he went from state legislator to Governor. I frequently wrote the letters and speeches, designed campaign material, maintained the database, and scheduled appearances.

But after my husband's death, I had two choices: I could give up or I could step up. I could give up all the things that we had fought for so hard for so many years—education, health care, jobs. Or I could step up, take his place, and carry on the work that we both believed was important. In the weeks and months that followed, I was thrust into the spotlight without warning. While learning to cope with 12 to 14-hour workdays, I was also preparing for another political campaign that was required if I wanted to hold the office beyond the two years allowed me under the circumstance.

During that time, I was inspired by other women who had triumphed over tragedy—women who had built lives that refused to give into hurt and hardship. One of those was Dr. Sema Simar. I met her during my trip to Afghanistan and again when she visited Washington. She had just been appointed to head the women's ministry in the new cabinet. During the Russian occupation of her country, her husband was taken away for questioning and never returned. Despite her grief and disillusionment, she did not back away from her work. Along with establishing medical clinics, she set up schools for girls—though it was against the law to do so under Taliban rule. She wrote bravely, "We must all die, so why not do something for others while we are here."

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Yes, even in the most hopeless and harshest of times, women find the strength to move forward, to take on new tasks, and to direct their energies toward the betterment of families and communities. I still marvel at the courage that bubbles up from within when we need it, empowering ordinary people to do things they never dreamed possible.

As you can see, women get involved in politics at different times in their lives, in unexpected ways, and for different reasons. But when they do, they bring with them some traits much needed in the decision-making process.

As I considered the value that women bring to public life, it occurred to me: could it be that traits common to most women and once perceived as weaknesses are, in fact, political strengths in today's world? A recent survey would tend to confirm that. In the study, Northern Ireland voters were asked what characteristics they saw in male and female candidates. They described male candidates as aggressive, ruthless, ambitious, and crafty. Female candidates, on the other hand, were seen as approachable, able to compromise, honest, and levelheaded. When asked to describe the ideal candidate, voters said they should be honest, able to compromise, hardworking, and approachable. The ideal candidate had essentially the same traits that voters saw in women candidates. Carol Gilligan, professor of psychology at Harvard University drew a similar conclusion. She said: "Women have greater moral strength, they have higher ethical standards, and a particular ability to establish and maintain good relationships with people; that is, the qualities of a contemporary political actor."

Let's take a look at three traits that women bring to public policy development.

Women are caregivers by nature. They bring that perspective to every task they perform. Each woman in this room, at sometime in her life, will be a caregiver. As a result, we have the ability to see pain and injustice, not abstractly, but with the face of a neighbor, friend, or relative. Former prime minister of Pakistan Benazir Bhutto said, ". . . as a woman I entered politics with an additional dimension, that of a mother."

That "additional dimension" makes a world of difference in the way we look at public policy—the way we look at everything. Time after time, I saw women of the U.S. Senate put aside their differences on the budget, the economy, or foreign policy to deal with issues of women's health, childcare, fair wages, improved housing, education, and safety issues. Their perspective as caregivers enabled them to transcend politics and to seek bipartisan agreement on issues of importance to women.

In addition to being caregivers, women bring another trait to the table that adds value to the public dialogue. **Women are questioners.** They don't mind asking the tough questions. It was said of Socrates that his greatest accomplishment was that he taught men to question. Well, that was not necessary for women, they already knew how. When women raise questions, things began to happen.

A few years ago in America, a worker by the name of Sherron Watkins questioned the ethics of her employer, a huge company that was defrauding its employees and stockholders. Her questions helped uncover one of the biggest corporate scandals in American history—the Enron scandal.

Most women when they sense something is wrong, unfair, or harmful, are not inclined to ignore it or to make excuses. They want the situation corrected. Yet it's tough to be a questioner. It makes everyone uncomfortable. It is oftentimes like opening Pandor's box—the outcome is uncertain and intimidating.

Fortunately, enlightened women and men worldwide are beginning to ask more and more questions. They ask: must we continue the same ugly hatreds and hurts of the past? Must we repeat the same old patterns, make the same mistakes? Must we respond in the same way generation after generation? What can we do different for the sake of our children? Today's questions are so compelling, so necessary, to ignore them is unconscionable. Nor can we wait for someone else to ask the questions or for someone else to right the wrongs in our society. We cannot count on that happening.

Jane Addams certainly didn't wait. In the early part of the twentieth century, she looked at the plight of immigrant men, women, and children, many of them working long hours in factories for low wages and under poor conditions. As she pondered her role in changing those conditions, she posed three haunting questions to herself and others:

If not now, when? If not here, where? And, if not me, then who?

These are timeless questions that will not go away. We cannot in good conscience close our eyes, muffle our ears, silence our lips, or fold our hands.

When Ms. Sevdie Ahmeti wrote of her work with rape and domestic violence victims, she concluded, "I can no longer bear to listen to the stories as I used to do, I have listened too long." Listening is not enough. Questioning alone is not enough. As Mrs. Ahmeti and her co-worker, Dr. Vjosa Dobruna, remind us, ultimately, we must ourselves become the answer.

I would mention one final attribute of women that is of tremendous benefit in public policy formation.

Women are collaborators. While men are more likely to see themselves as competitors, women find that it makes sense to cooperate for the common good. We believe that consensus is preferable to controversy—and far more productive—so we look for ways to be supportive of each other.

In my own race for the Senate, I saw the power of collaboration in a group called "Emily's List." It is a national women's group interested in electing women who favor reproductive rights. I met thousands of members all over the nation, many of whom were giving financial support to women candidates for the first time. Emily's List keeps their membership informed on issues and encourages support of worthy women candidates. As a result, Emily's List is one of the most powerful women's organizations in America in terms of membership and their ability to raise funds, rally voters, and win elections.

While we can work through interest groups, ultimately it is to political parties we must turn to improve people's lives. Former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt understood the power of parties as a tool for accomplishing such a goal. She made an astute observation back in 1928, a decade after women received the right to vote. She bemoaned the fact that the right to vote was a gesture without power, that women's opinions were regarded with little weight, and little influence. She called upon women to organize and become supportive of each other, better able to influence decision-making. It is a call that I would reiterate here today, some seventy-years later. I would also add my own call, urging you to identify one or two causes around which you can rally women to make a difference.

Women have been criticized for being "causey," in their approach to political activity, that is, they get involved only when there is a cause or issue about which they feel strongly. If true, let's turn that to an advantage by activating women on a few key issues where change can be made and where a foundation can be laid for more endeavor. I realize from personal experience that whenever we attempt a new challenge there is always the risk of criticism, the risk of doing something wrong, or the risk of failure.

Still we must take the risk of trying.

And we must begin now.

There is no time to lose.

The clock is ticking on the future.

... and the course of free societies is yet to be determined.

During the darkest hours of World War II, twelve-year-old Anne Frank wrote these words of hope from her hiding place. She wrote, "How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

So let us begin.

For when women's voices join in chorus, the cry for change will ring out, and the sound will level the ancient walls of oppression and lift the hearts and hopes of freedom yearning people everywhere.

And then—and only then—will we be truly free.

Women Must “Occupy” Governmental Decision-Making

By **Edita Tahiri**, Member of Parliament, Head of the Democratic Alliance of Kosovo (ADK)

This conference comes at a critical time because we are in a new phase with new challenges: the pre-electoral phase. The second national election will take place in October, and we women aim to be a powerful force in this political battle. We also face the challenges of women's political development and reversing the current situation in which women are well-represented in the Parliament but not in the government.

If someone checks Kosovo's statistics on a website, he or she will read that women make up 30% of the Parliament. This person would immediately get the impression that Kosovo's gender situation is pretty good, considering that Kosovo is the first in the region to give women 30% of the seats in Parliament. We fought for the 30% quota. When they tell us that others allotted it to us, we reply: "No, it was not allotted by others; we won it ourselves."

The next question is: "If we are so well represented in the Parliament, if Kosovo is first place in the region regarding women's representation, then why do we need a conference to empower women's decision-making in other important institutions?" The issue, which we are gathered at this conference to discuss, is that we are represented by 30% in the Parliament but 0% in government and decision-making institutions that matter. This is not in the interest of women or within the interest of a Kosovo that aims towards democracy and equal opportunity for both genders. For this reason, I say we are in a new phase. Our new challenge as women in politics and a democratic Kosovo is to ensure that women occupy decision-making positions, not in a negative sense, but to empower women in decision-making. After October 2004, we should not allow there to be an absence of women ministers, prime ministers, etc. in the new Parliament and government institutions.

We have one woman in the Parliament's leadership and one woman minister, but they are in these positions due to the minority quota and have not won their seats as women who represent half of this society. Women constitute half of our human capital, and if we empower women, we strengthen the potential of the whole society to advance towards development and democratization.

Women's political development is divided into two phases: prewar and postwar. Before the war and during the ten year occupation, women found the strength, courage, and political ideas to become a powerful wing of the liberation movement for independence, freedom, and democracy. They were present in all of life's activities from humanitarian aid to politics and diplomacy; perhaps some even took part in battles. However, after the war, Kosovar women were politically marginalized. Kosovar men largely ignored all the work that women had done in the last decade. This marginalization manifested itself with the exclusion of women from the political stage and the exclusion of women's agenda in the national agenda. We women of politics and civil society noted this marginalization, rebounded, and returned to the political stage. How? By demanding a 30% gender quota in local and central government. Allow me to repeat myself. The 30% quota is not something that we imported from outside, nor was it given to us by internationals. The quota was won by Kosovar women in politics and civil society, who argued that they had deposited their political capital in the last decade and now wanted their reward.

We naturally do not feel too well about the gender quota victory because it was an artificial victory that did not result in social awareness of the need for women's participation in political decision-making. However, we women thought that the quota was a good strategy that produced both positive and negative results. Women won 30% of the seats in Parliament; women became visible in the Kosovar and international public eye; and Kosovo's image improved because it demonstrated its desire for democratization and appreciated the gender dimension of democratization. The negative side of the quota was that men relaxed, thinking that women would be content with their new seats in Parliament and did not need any in government. Women also felt comfortable with the situation and did not demand anything more. Therefore, when some Parliamentary and civil society women joined in the Campaign for Electoral System Reform and demanded that the October elections allow women to be

represented through a quota, they also demanded for quota mechanisms that would result in high quality choices. Some Parliamentary women disagreed because they did not want this change.

Thanks to the quota and the engagement of women in politics, civil society, media, and business, we advanced our strategy of institutionalizing women's issues. Some important results of gender institutionalization have raised the issue of women's empowerment to a new level. These include the law for Gender Equality, the National Platform for Action to Achieve Gender Equality, and many different campaigns, including the Campaign for Electoral System Reform. However, much more work must be done.

Our second phase will be to define challenges on two levels: what is the main challenge ahead of us and what strategies should we implement to pass the main challenge? The main challenge today is increasing women's participation in Kosovar politics and empowering women for governmental decision-making. Allow me to describe some strategies that we could use to meet this challenge – strategies that could be included in the Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-Making in Politics:

First, we should build a critical mass of serious women in politics and civil society who will aim to ensure that the future Kosovar government is not a man's government. There have already been two attempts to achieve this. First was the effort to form the Lobby of Parliamentary Women during 2002-2003, an effort that failed. I think that the problem was that Parliamentary women could not fully bypass their political ties. It was a failure on our part especially because this lobby gave notice to men politicians, who just three months before failed to form the government after the first elections. We thought that we could teach men politicians a lesson, but we failed in this as well. Learning from our first failure, we formed the Kosova Women's Lobby, which was not just a union of women politicians but also those from civil society and the private sector. This lobby has been functional for a year. However, the lobby has its shortcomings. For example, there is not enough participation from women politicians. This is demonstrated by our conference today: there are more women from civil society than from politics, yet we talk of empowering women in politics. We should learn from our mistakes so we can correct the processes in such a manner as to reach our objectives.

Second, we should work together to change the power relations within the political parties in regards to gender. Today, relevant political parties have more men than women in their leadership structures. There is no relevant party where women are leaders, second in command, or seriously take part in party leadership. This situation must change.

Third, we must work and prepare national programs for the Kosovar government to undertake so that women can get their place in the local and central government.

Fourth, the media must be a more engaged and open space for women. I would like to compliment the media for what it has done thus far, but much is left to do.

Fifth, the international community, including UNMIK, OSCE, USAID, and other organizations like NDI and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung must provide more support to women's issues. The international community must offer more support to women's empowerment in politics. Allow me to present a negative example. In 1995, although Kosovo was occupied, ten Kosovar women took part in the Global Women's Conference in Peking. In the 2000 Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations Peking +5, no Kosovar women were invited although the UN was in Kosovo through UNMIK. I cannot say that we were the ones who failed because we sent our ten when we could. When it was up to the international community, no representative of ours took place in such an important meeting. Let this be a serious remark to the international community, which is here today and needs to change its strategy on women's issues.

Finally, as a country that lacks a defined status, we have even greater challenges than our efforts to empower women. We as women should work for Kosovo's independence and in building a just, tolerant, and democratic society. We insist that a society is democratic only when the gender dimension gains its deserved recognition.

Bringing More Women into Governmental Decision-making – the Contribution of Women Social Democrats to the Promotion of Gender Equality Policy in Croatia as of 2000

By **Gordana Sobol**, President of the Gender Equality Committee of the Croatian Parliament

Dear Women Colleagues, Dear Women Friends,

I am pleased to be in Prishtina again to meet with many of my dear friends, share my experience from Croatia, gear myself up with positive energy, and learn many new things.

What is common to women from South East Europe? They all deal with the challenge of promoting a policy of equal opportunities for women and men. I speak as the current President of the Gender Equality Committee of the Croatian Parliament and as a member of the Croatia Social Democratic Party (SDP). From 2000 to 2003, Croatia SDP was the most powerful party of the ruling coalition and contained the largest number of women in the government and Parliament. As of November last year, SDP became part of the opposition; however, we still possess the largest percentage of women in Parliament – 34%. SDP acts upon the understanding that women are capable of undertaking a large portion of responsibilities for the promotion of SDP policy, even in departments usually run by men, such as the Department of Defense.

Moreover, in the last SDP Convention, we completely changed the composition of the party leadership. Out of three vice-presidential positions, SDP has a deputy and two vice-presidents who are women, and the Main Board contains more women than men. It can be said with certainty that this is a precedent that will result in far-reaching consequences for gender equality throughout South East Europe. This is something that each of us strives for her own field.

However, the path towards achieving the parity of women representation in political decision-making bodies is by no means easy. It was not easy yesterday, in the developed, 'older' democracies and it is not easy today, in young democracies as ours. However, one thing is certain. Democratic changes can only be made by those parties that are prepared to democratize their own internal party structures. Gender equality policy will be best represented by those parties that respect the principle of equal representation on their party lists and in their selection of representatives for positions of the highest responsibility within the executive and legislative branches. In the last fourteen years, the Social Democrats in Croatia demonstrated the highest level of consciousnesses of the need to respect gender equality as a precondition for harmonious social development.

Naturally, there are those who minimize the importance of our systematic fight for greater women's participation in public life; there are parties that put one or two 'strong' women at the front, thinking that they have made a step forward. However, it is not enough to have two or three women at the top to fill the so-called women party quota and fully neglect the engagement of women in lower levels of party organization. It is not sufficient to meet the minimum requirements of publicly announced gender equality policies; parties must make additional efforts and implement this policy on all levels.

This is, certainly, a long-term project. SDP started to work on this project in 1995 through the establishment of the Social Democratic Women Forum. I am certain that the rising level of awareness and number of women in party bodies resulted in greater representation of women in SDP bodies, on the candidates' lists, and among the elected representatives in city councils, assemblies, the Parliament, and government. Solidarity, joint engagement, and work based on a personal belief in policy values were all necessary for the realization of our aims. We, women Social Democrats in Croatia, know that only by initiating changes on the party level today, can we influence the direction of changes on the state level tomorrow. We know that we must persistently insist on 40% representation of both genders in parties in order to have the sufficient number of capable, engaged, and informed women and men prepared to undertake the responsibility of participating in

the management of our society. This is not liked by everyone. Representation of such principles is not simple; it is not painless; and sometimes it can return as a boomerang in unfavorable ways. To be consistent and principled very often means to be misunderstood, and it certainly does not always mean that you will be rewarded. This is something you must acknowledge when entering the fight for gender equality in the political arena.

We, the women in SDP, have had both bright and less bright moments regarding gender equality. During our co-participation in the government in 2000, we often talked publicly about taboo topics. We amended many laws: the Labor Law, Criminal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, and Family Law; and passed some new laws: the Gender Equality Law, Domestic Violence Prevention Law, and the Law on the Rights of Communities of the Same Gender. We made gender equality one of the fundamental constitutional values.

However, we did all this in cooperation with representatives from civil society – engaged and brave NGO women activists. This partnership between the women representatives of civil society and women politicians proved itself to be very stimulating for Croatia. This partnership will be useful when we expand networks and build bridges of co-operation and solidarity on specific issues. It will be especially important to use this partnership between women in and outside institutions when our state comes closer to integration into the European Union. We need to work jointly in strengthening women's participation in political decision-making processes in order to reach the standards of the most developed European countries. We must not forget that when we talk of women's rights, there should be no differences between us.

When we talk about the issues that are relevant to us, we must not emphasize the differences in policies, parties, or organizations that we represent. As far as the fundamental rights of every woman and man are concerned, we must be one: strong, consistent, and uncompromising. I repeat, this is not an easy path. If it were, we in Croatia could boast today of far greater achievements in amending legal provisions pertaining to gender equality. But, if we have not achieved that thus far, I believe that the most important thing is not to give up. By building women's solidarity, we build a society that has greater solidarity as a whole, which will not have members that are excluded, forgotten, less valued, and discriminated against.

My dear women friends, to be a woman in politics in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, or anywhere else was not easy yesterday nor will it be easy tomorrow. We are all aware of this because every day we fight with the same problems, the obstacles of the historical heritage, and social conventions. We cannot change many things, but we must influence many issues. We are not alone on the path that we have chosen. We have to keep this in mind every moment. Many have passed this path before us, and tomorrow our young women colleagues will continue from where we stop. I believe that we will leave them a legacy many kilometers towards a society that we will proudly call one of equal opportunity for women and men. I believe that we should continue fighting jointly for this goal.

Thank You!

Democratic Decision-Making

By **Behar Selimi**, Head of Support Services, Kosovo Police Service

I am honored to take part in this conference, as it focuses on women and decision-making. I chose the title of my presentation, “Democratic Decision-Making,” because true “democracy” is based on the idea that everyone, regardless of gender, is represented in the government. This type of democracy, the most advanced so far, cannot be reached so long as decisions are the result of men’s will when women comprise half of the human race.

Why and how should there be an increase in women’s participation in decision-making?

The first argument for women’s representation in democratic decision-making is that women comprise half of the human race. However, decisions should not only be legally correct, but also legitimate. For example, the Law on Labor, among others, regulates maternal leave. Although this law was approved through legal processes, if women did not participate in preparing and approving the law, do they consider the law legitimate? If women were truly involved in the drafting, evaluation, and approval of this law, its articles would have been fairer. We would have had social justice, which characterizes a true democracy. A second argument for equal involvement of women in decision-making is that it would bring higher quality to the process in which decisions are reached, allowing for decisions that are wiser and more easily enforced.

You may have heard these arguments often, but I am repeating them because it is necessary for men and women to be conscious of them. I say women as well because there are still women around the world who do not see themselves and their opportunities as equal to those of men.

How can we offer equal opportunities for women’s participation in political decision-making?

First and foremost, it is important to enforce gender identities in favor of other identities (religious, nationalistic, political, social, etc.), which are the results of historical and socio-political circumstances. These are not something that we are born with, unlike gender identity. Before we become members of this or that religion, political party, nationality, or social stratum, we are women or men and we should unite around this identity so that our voice is amplified.

Second, greater cohesion within women’s organizations is necessary for women’s role in decision-making to increase. Although you may not like it, I will speak as I think: there is too much jealousy both individually and between organizations. Yet, you have a common vision – achieving gender equality. In all of the years that I have dealt with this issue, I have never witnessed any women leaders or organizations working on social justice issues receive encouragement or honors. We must start by withdrawing from envy.

Third, we must nurture the leadership abilities of women leaders who have already entered the decision-making processes. Discrimination will not disappear just because women gain access to decision-making through satisfying some political party’s quota requirement.

Fourth, women in Kosovo can benefit from the relatively favorable social and political circumstances for reform and electoral changes. The international administration has an obligation to increase women’s participation in decision-making.

Fifth, we must fight to ensure the support of men who can influence the public. Research conducted in different political and professional fields shows that it is not just the system or society that is obstructing women’s engagement in decision-making, but also the men with whom they work. These studies show that there are men who believe in the possibility of creating equal opportunities, but they need leadership from an influential member of their gender. This situation is common for most human societies, especially developing or transitioning societies like ours.

The policy of gender preferential treatment (affirmative action)

This title could be unwelcome since many women think that preferential treatment is an artificial advancement. However, I think that gender-based preferential treatment and the quota system are mechanisms that are necessary to reach gender equality in all fields, including decision-making.

Some possible affirmative action policies for Kosovo:

Funds for women's development would financially support women's education and their advancement in public administration and management sciences (for young women). Women that are already working could be offered training in the fields of management and leadership.

Kosovo should consider establishing a quota system in all government institutions and in the political parties' leadership. Based on the experience of Nordic governments, I believe that quotas are the most efficient mechanism for increasing women's participation in decision-making. To realize such a mechanism, we need to wait until men are conscious of the gender situation. We could adopt the Nordic formula, which is rational, socially justifiable, and fulfills the demands of the different international mechanisms. Their gender quota demands that at least 40% of the government system consists of women.

The rise of women's representation in Western European politics shows that quotas have been successful. Sweden has reached the highest percentage - 45.3% of the Parliament consists of women. The following countries rank closely: Denmark with 38%, Finland with 37.5%, the Netherlands with 36.7%, and Germany with 32.2% (see www.cld.org).

Women in the police force

I am proud to be part of the Kosova Police Service (SHPK), which is ahead of the rest of the region in women's participation police activity. In fact, Kosovo is ahead of some countries that have developed democracies in Europe, U.S.A., and Canada. However, in many countries the percentage of women participating in police forces is rising. For example, in the U.S.A., women comprise 14% of the police force as opposed to 9% in 1995. In the E.U., women comprise 13% of the police force in comparison to 9-10% in 1997.

Now, I will present some results from studies that I conducted, which might interest you. This is the actual presence of women in Kosovo's police force:

Grade	Nr. total	Women	%
Lt. Colonel	9	1	11.11%
Major	7	2	28.57%
Captain	33	6	18.18%
Sergeant	153	11	7.19%
Corporal	337	34	10.09%
Ranking officers (total)	539	54	10.02%
Total # police officers	5984	883	14.76%

The main obstacle to involving women in security forces and decision-making remains resistance and mistrust from men co-workers. Primary support comes from outside, meaning that NGOs and political parties offer the most support. Very little support comes from inside the police departments.

Our experience is that women have brought much to the police force, such as professional quality in the services rendered; wisdom and compassion, making police forces more humane; and minimization of the use of force in police activities.

Women's 14.7% presence in the general structure of SHPK and their 10% presence in the commanding structure is a good beginning, which promises continuous advancement of women's position in the police force. Women's presence in Kosovo's police force has contributed to the improvement of women's view of themselves and the view that men have of women. Police women have proven that women have the necessary strength to be part of the police force, contrary to the common perception that women are not strong enough.

In conclusion, I am certain that women's representation in the police force has strengthened the positive public image of SHPK, especially considering that more than half of Kosovo's population consists of women. Perhaps this is the most important achievement because a democratic police force should be accepted by the citizens so that it can be successful.

Quota systems and party politics

By **Lesley Abdela**, Senior Partner, Shevolution, UK

As I understand it, during this conference we will focus on:

1. How to get a critical mass of women into positions of power in government, parliament and municipal councils in Kosova;
2. How to increase the possibility that once these women get elected they act as effective policy makers for the public good;
3. How to get the political parties to include gender considerations in all their policies and programs: employment policies, education policies, transport, and economy.

Many of the obstacles to women's equal participation in political leadership and decision-making are at first sight invisible. Sexist and racial prejudices and preconceptions exist in most organizations and they are definitely present in most political parties. Women face preconceptions that are essentially cultural, have become accepted as 'the norm', and have become institutionalized.

Why are more women needed?

All of us in this room know, around the world, government after government has tended to ignore, even to disdain what women want and need. In every country there is a long list of policies which overlook or damage the female half of the human race. As well as being important for the future of women, the issue of women working in equal partnership with men in political decision-making is a crucial issue for the future of the whole of society women and men. My experience is that women working in partnership with men at all levels of political decision-making are more likely to create a stable, peaceful, yet progressive democratic society.

My original motivation for my work was that relations between countries and different ethnic groups, would be more peaceful if at least 40% of people on all decision-making bodies were female and at least 40% male. My experiences in conflict zones including Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, Iraq, and here in the Balkans, have strengthened my belief that at times of enormous change and challenges when whole new societies are being shaped, future leaders need to be drawn from the entire talent pool of the society, not just from half the pool.

The whole point of increasing women's participation in politics is not just to increase numbers, but to support the creation of a new democratic agenda in politics that changes the lives of everyone for the better - both men and women.

In my address I will start by a brief description of the current situation in Kosova and then suggest practical actions that you could choose to take to overcome obstacles for women in politics here in Kosova.

Please feel free to adopt, adapt or delete my suggestions.

Developing support networks.

There is currently only one female Government Minister in Kosovo. When it comes to being appointed to key places on important parliamentary committees or top posts such as Government Ministers, women continue to meet many barriers. One of the strongest barriers for women to overcome are male networks by which men reciprocally help each other up the political power ladder. Men who were at school or university together or who bonded as comrades in arms in a freedom fighter militia help each other into political positions.

In similar situations in other parts of the world the key ingredients for getting reforms introduced have been when women mobilize and campaign and this also combines with commitment from 'a champion' (male or female) in a high position inside the power system who takes a proactive role.

For example, in Spain where there have been strong women's advocacy campaigns, the new Spanish Prime Minister appointed women as 50% of his Government Ministers. The Prime Minister also

declared that his Government's top domestic policy for Spain next year will be addressing the issue of violence against women.

Kosova Women's Lobby could send a letter to the Prime Minister and Party Leaders to ask them to appoint at least 40% women ministers in the next batch of appointed Ministers. You could even send a list of suggested names of well qualified women. This conference could also ask the Prime Minister and Party Leaders to put one important issue for women at the top of the political agenda for the coming year.

Overcoming the 'quota-queen' syndrome.

In Kosovo and in other parts of the world, some women elected by a quota system are perceived by their political colleagues, the media and the electorate as ineffective politicians who don't bother to take up issues and advocate on behalf of citizens, but are just placed on the lists to fill up numbers and to vote the way they are told by their Party Leader. This may or may not be undeserved, but there appears to be a widespread perception that some women elected by the quota are ineffective political representatives in Parliament. I am going to suggest three practical steps that can be taken to enable women parliamentarians and local councilors to be rightly perceived as valued legislators and policy makers.

Introduce transparent internal party candidate nomination processes.

Part of the reason for women elected by the quota system being perceived as ineffective politicians may just be a reflection of the fact that some political parties have not yet developed democratic internal candidate selection processes. If the Party leadership retains the right to decide which candidates will be appointed to the top positions in the party list, the system gives total power of patronage to the Party Leader, because male as well as female candidates know that they have to demonstrate total allegiance to the Party Leader in order to retain their seats in the parliament or on the Municipal Council. This leads them to neglect the pastoral care of raising issues that are important to their community.

In every post-conflict setting, including Kosovo, political parties are characterized by weak internal organization and unclear rules for selecting the candidates. Internal Party decisions are made by a limited number of an inner circle of apparatchiks from the established elites, typically men. Women are usually on the outside and excluded from these male networks. While it is not uncommon for there to be *some* women on the inside, they are usually few in number, and unlikely to promote women's issues. Promoting the greater representation of women is rarely seen as a goal by the political parties.

Parties in older democratic systems have developed more open and transparent procedures for selecting their election candidates. They hold internal party elections in which potential candidates have to compete with each other within their party to persuade party members to vote for them. This reduces the power of patronage of the party leader.

NGOs and women and men in political parties could call for all Kosovar political parties to introduce democratic and transparent internal candidate selection processes in which all the party members have the right to vote in the their candidate's nomination process. This would weaken the patronage power of Party Leaders.

Choose a gender-balance quota system

At present there is a quota for women in Kosova. This means that women are elected by different rules from men. However, in countries such as the Nordic countries where they use a gender-balanced quota, women and men are elected by the same rules. This reduces the chances that women are perceived as somehow a second class status of representative.

I therefore strongly recommend that Kosova Women's Lobby campaign for a gender balance quota system where the rules are the same for men as for women - for example there must be at least 40% men and at least 40% women or there can be no more than maximum 60% parliamentarians of any one sex.

Conference Speeches

If not you, who? If not now, when?

There are some truly impressive women leaders here in Kosova. I see many of them at this conference. It is time for many more of you to stand as candidates in the election. An election is looming on the horizon later this year. A crucial step you can take is for many of you to take the plunge and to put yourselves forward as potential candidates yourselves. If enough of you put yourselves forward as candidates for Parliament and for the Municipal Councils, you can really make a difference.

Proportional Representation plus Quotas - the formula to increase women's representation in legislatures

There has been a great deal of discussion in Kosovo about the electoral system reform and about the use of quotas in politics. It is notable that the 15 countries in the world with over 30% representation of women in parliament share three things in common:

1. Women's NGOs got organized and provided training for women and campaigned for quotas.
2. They use some form of Proportional Representation (PR) electoral system. Research shows that a higher percentage of women get elected under a Proportional Representation Electoral system than under a first-past-the-post (majoritarian) electoral system.
3. They use some form of quota.

Many of you say you are dissatisfied with the Closed List system of PR which is used for elections here in Kosovo. I am Vice-president of the Electoral Reform Society in the UK and I can tell you there are a variety of 60 choices of PR system which are far more democratic than the closed list system - for example the Single Transferable Vote system. Whichever PR system you choose, it needs to be combined with a quota system. A PR system on its own does not guarantee a major increase in the number of women elected. The use of quotas is the key factor in determining whether or not a country has high levels of women's representation.

Other measures, such as training and support for potential women candidates, are helpful, but when used on their own, without quotas, they do not make a significant difference. The number of women in the legislature increases, but is very slow.

Quotas are not needed because women are not able to succeed on merit, but because at the moment they are rarely given the opportunity to try. The biggest hurdle facing most women in politics is to get the party to select women for seats their party expects to win. Discrimination (usually unconscious and indirect) is widespread during political party selection processes. This means that capable women are not able to compete for safe and winnable parliamentary seats on the same basis as men. For anyone who has never taken an active role in politics it can be difficult to fully appreciate the extent of the incredible extra obstacles women have to overcome in addition to the usual challenges faced by any political candidate.

Mainstream gender throughout the election procedures.

UN and EU Resolutions on Gender in post conflict situations

Another action Kosova Women's Lobby could take right away is to ask UN and OSCE to comply with their own policies, resolutions and guidelines on gender. This includes the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the even stronger European Parliament Resolution 'Gender Aspects of Conflict'. This EU Resolution piloted by the Swedish Euro MP Maj Britt Theorin passed in November 2000 by the European Parliament, specifies a gender balanced quota of at least 40% in all aspects of post conflict missions.

Mainstreaming gender into election processes must start right at the beginning of the election planning process and continue through every aspect of the procedures. Women should participate on an equal basis with men at every stage: the election advisory forum; appointment and conduct of election commissioners; committee deciding on selecting electoral systems and deciding on election laws and rules; voting registration procedures; planning the logistics of elections, such as locations and opening times of polling stations; choice of political candidates and campaign managers; appointment of Government Ministers; political editors setting the media agenda.

Gender monitoring report on the election

OSCE has developed an Election Observer Manual that comprises a gender mainstreaming section. This document would be a useful tool for NGOs in Kosovo to conduct a gender monitoring of the elections.

'After-care' for elected women.

I have often seen huge efforts put into training and supporting women candidates, but it all disappears once they get elected. When women get elected they continue to need advice and support, they need to learn how to use parliamentary rules and how to access research information for developing policy and for their speeches and sometimes to help them improve their media and communication skills. Let me give an example of support programs for women MPs. In 2001 I was invited to work with The Malawi Women's Parliamentary Caucus in partnership with UNDP Malawi to develop a pilot workshop program that could be adapted and used by Parliamentarians in other Southern African countries. They organized a workshop for female parliamentarians in Malawi. This program included increasing the understanding of how the parliamentary process works and ways in which women parliamentarians can advance gender equality issues.

The purpose of the workshop program in Lilongwe, Malawi, was:

1. To develop and build on the existing skills and knowledge of the participants in order to strengthen their ability to carry out their responsibilities and duties efficiently as Members of Parliament, as Government Ministers and as role model female leaders.
2. To give participants the opportunity to practice and seek advice on public speaking and media skills in a supportive environment.
3. To ensure participants shared a common understanding of the concept of gender issues – in the international context and in their local context with particular reference to policies, legislation, political parties' workings, and the Parliament.
4. To develop a team spirit among members of the Women's Parliamentary Caucus so that they could carry forward joint ideas and actions.
5. To strengthen two way communication links between parliamentarians and women's NGOs.

After the workshop the Parliamentary Women's Caucus sent a letter to the Speaker of the Parliament and Party Secretary Generals requesting that more women MPs should be appointed to Parliamentary Committees. The Speaker and the Party Secretary Generals asked female MPs to name which Committees they would most like to serve on and appointed women to those committees. Also, Women's Caucus performed better in debates in the Parliament. This helped them to gain more respect from colleagues and increased their self confidence. There was more cross party cooperation on some issues of importance to women such as women's health.

So let me conclude by congratulating Delina and the team at STAR, Igballe and Kosova Women's Lobby and Heather and NDI on organizing such an important, interesting and timely event.

I'll end my talk with a quote from a famous British women's rights campaigner, Dame Millicent Fawcett, who campaigned for 60 years for women to have the right to vote and to stand for Parliament. In 1928 Dame Millicent Fawcett said: "I am firmly convinced that justice and freedom for women are things worth securing, not only for their own sakes, but for civilization itself."

Why Should Women Be Engaged in Governing?

By **Mimoza Kusari**, Spokeswoman for the Prime Minister's Office

When we discuss incorporating more women in leadership structures, we should keep in mind Kosovo's special situation. Although women in NGOs have created a specific identity and experience, the same cannot be said of women in the government. Not because it is impossible for women in the government to develop like their NGO counterparts, but because Kosovar governing structures that allow for elections through free votes have not existed for very long.

People have different perceptions of women in governmental decision-making. Are they there because of quotas, because the international community demands it, or because they deserve it?

The Kosovo government's lack of experience is not the only issue that should be kept in mind when discussing the quality and level of women's participation in governmental decision-making. The other issue is that qualified women do not desire a position in government – I speak of those women who do not come from political parties. Positions in Kosovo's institutions are not attractive to anyone, not just women. They do not offer good pay, institutional infrastructure is underdeveloped, there is no tradition (lacking previous experiences, new ones must be formed), and all must start from the beginning.

There is a huge disparity in Kosovo because most human resources are concentrated in the non-governmental sector.

Let us examine what has happened to the governmental sector. The government has a huge disadvantage: it is a coalition government so senior positions must be politically balanced. I understand that there are women that deserve to be ministers, but they must be nominated by political structures rather than governmental institutions.

However, dear friends, how many of you coming from developed countries have had the chance to build your own governmental institutions and establish the state in which your children, nephews, and nieces will live? We Kosovars have the rare opportunity to establish institutions that are equal for all, including women. Whenever one considers entering public service, he or she should consider this as well.

My position in the Prime Minister's Office is out of the ordinary. It is challenging, time demanding, and sometimes frustrating, but it is most often rewarding because I am changing and creating something that will remain even when I am gone. I want to leave a heritage that my successors can build on. Personally, I do not feel like I face more difficulties as a woman in politics. My daily work does not make me feel different because I am a woman, perhaps other than when I want to feel so.

Based on my personal experience, I publicly and without hesitation invite many of you to find the courage and strength to work for our governmental institutions. All those who have the possibility should use it to make a change and leave something behind. You will feel that you are giving away part of yourself and your personal life, but it is worth it. It will enable you to invite others to do the same. And this must be done for Kosovo and its future.

Thank you.

Hard Work Does Not End When We Reach the Peak – It Starts There

By **Ramush Haradinaj**, Leader of the Alliance for the Future of Kosova

As long as Kosovars are working to establish a solid economy, healthy democracy, and secure state, it is important that we use the talent and energy of all our citizens. We cannot accept a state in which only part of our citizens contribute to the future because of prejudices.

It appears to me that the political parties have two roles in creating opportunities for women's participation in governmental decision-making: crafting public policies that address legal and cultural conditions that limit women's participation and promoting favorable circumstances to their participation in leadership roles.

In Kosovo, both are equally important and more progress is needed to achieve them. Women play an important role in the family, but, due to cultural influences, this role has been primarily one of servitude, not that of an equal partner in decision-making. This cultural marginalization has led to minimized opportunities in education and has affected women, especially in rural areas.

In order to prevent the continuation of limited education, political parties must craft public policies to promote opportunities for educating women and girls. We must demand that girls complete high school and that they are not denied education because of their family's economic situation. Our government must help families under economic restrictions confront the dilemma of which child to educate. We cannot be an advanced society if parents need to sacrifice the primary education of their children in order to survive. After they start going to school, the opportunity of education for women and men must be equal so that they will be ready to take on their future as equals.

Other than educational opportunities, political parties must develop policies that ensure opportunities for women's independent action. Most importantly, we must strengthen the laws that defend women from violence in the household.

Other than crafting policies, political parties can provide a cultural example and demonstrate the role women can play in society. Political parties can and must invest as much time into recruiting talented women for participation in decision-making processes as they invest in drafting policies, which will allow women to become better prepared for leadership roles in society.

We must accept that cultural barriers still exist in Kosovo for women's participation in decision-making. After we recruit women into our parties, it is important to defend and maintain their right to take part in decision-making and ensure space for them in all levels of leadership. This can be achieved through quotas and, more importantly, by guaranteeing them the opportunity for open and democratic competition within the party. The party I lead is doing both.

Women in politics are aware that although quotas guarantee them a seat at the decision-making table, it is only through tireless work and dedication that they can influence the content of policies.

Women are not happy being just spectators and they must understand, like their counterparts, that they will not always be called on to speak. At times they must make sure that their voice is heard. This can be achieved by investing more time in organizing support through events like this, fundraising, and continuing to develop communication skills.

In the end, I would like to offer my women colleagues the same advice I offer my men: hard work does not end when you reach the peak. It starts there.

Between Movement and Power Structures: Strategic Conclusions after Twelve Years of inside Experience.

By **Petra Bläss**, Former Vice President of the German Bundestag

I would like to speak about some general issues that confront the women's movement and provide a practical point of view regarding possibilities and limits for our work.

My background includes experience as an active member of various women's organizations and networks. I co-founded the Feminist Roof Organization during the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) transition and served in the federal Parliament between 1990 and 2002. During most of this time, I was the Party of Democratic Socialism's Speaker for Women's Affairs. I have been Vice President of the Parliament for the last four years.

These are my focal points:

1. How can we implement the gender mainstreaming strategy?
2. Where is the issue of gender equality in politics?
3. Where does decision-making take place?
4. Where are women and women's issues in mainstream debates and the media?
5. What possibilities and limits do women's networks across party lines have?
6. How does communication between women politicians, academics, journalists, and NGO activists work?
7. What is the best way to support young women?

Implementation of the Gender Mainstreaming Strategy

Everybody is talking about gender mainstreaming – even those who do not have any idea what it means. Therefore, we have to pay attention to the following four phenomena:

1. The term "gender mainstreaming" is often used as a buzzword, without any idea what the implementation of this principle means in practice.
2. A lot of people think that gender mainstreaming is nothing more than the advancement of women, especially at the quantitative level.
3. Even more dangerous is the position that because of gender mainstreaming, special women's structures and affirmative actions are no longer necessary.
4. Gender mainstreaming is mostly delegated to women because it is seen as a "women's issue."

Gender mainstreaming can be an excellent instrument for changing power structures; therefore, we must use this chance and implement it. Here are four proposals for doing that:

1. Our biggest challenge is to ensure that gender mainstreaming will be accepted as a benefit for every political field and as a necessary qualification for everyone. Therefore, it would be useful to create a "best practices" catalogue that demonstrates the importance of gender mainstreaming in certain fields of activity. For example, security policy would benefit from a gender sensitive definition of human security. Reforming the welfare system will not do justice to the whole society if it does not consider women's special needs for living conditions. Budget decisions are also an especially important field for gender justice; it must be asked from a gender perspective, "who gets the money."
2. We must make sure that gender sensitive politicians are not concentrated in special women's commissions. They need to be present in all other decision-making bodies to ensure that the principle of gender mainstreaming is fulfilled.
3. We need to more self-consciously implement gender mainstreaming rather than engage in long negotiations. It is absolutely appropriate and necessary to mention the effects of political decisions on gender. As Vice President of the Federal Parliament, it was a matter of course for me to include the gender perspective during official debates at the international level.
4. We must develop a gender-index that emphasizes the main criteria for the creation of concepts, programs, or drafts of bills. Without these criteria, proposals are incomplete because they do not consider women's perspective.

The Status of Gender Equality and Women's Affairs

If we ask how gender equality and women's affairs are rated in the political agenda, we learn that women's issues are not classified as an important political topic but as a so-called "soft area." Women's issues are usually subordinate to social policy. Therefore, this field is not the best place for a woman to make a career.

There are two structural problems with political bodies:

1. Women's issues are mostly discussed in ministries for family, pensioners, women, and children; the main perspective is that women's issues are an object of policy.
2. There are mainly women members in the parliamentarian commissions for gender affairs because they seem to be "responsible" for this topic. Men have their place in the real power structures.

Thus the policy of anti-discrimination is discussed as a social issue and not as an issue of democracy, equal participation, and human rights. Our strategic conclusion should be that gender and women's issues need to be located at the center of power across different fields, not in a single department.

We also must ask why women's issues are valued as less serious topics. Does this have anything to do with our strategy and image as women's rights advocates?

We should not ignore the following two phenomena. First, a lot of women in politics are not automatically identifying themselves with women's issues. They often argue that they are not working against men; they like to be respected for their work rather than for simply fulfilling a gender quota. Second, women politicians who start their career in the field of women's issues sometimes forget their roots when they transfer to another so-called "important" issue.

I feel that I made the right decision to remain the speaker for women's affairs in my political group when I was promoted to Vice President. My power-position was useful to promote women's issues and to give them a better image. It makes sense to use an important position for women's interests. I also have eight years of experience as the speaker for social affairs of my parliamentarian group. I used my work in this field to sensitize people to women's affairs. Women and gender issues are important strategic fields; it depends on us to assert them.

Locations of Decision-making

First, it is no secret that most political decisions are made outside women's structures. As a former member of the Commission for Family, Seniors, Women, and Youth Affairs, I remember a good debate we had about the negative effects a new labor law might have on women. Meanwhile, members of the Commission for Labor Market Affairs, which is responsible for making the final decision, passed the draft of the new bill without any reflection about its impact on women.

This case is typical: while the commission for women's affairs works on a comment regarding a draft law, decisions are made in the commissions for budget, labor market, or economic affairs. It is quite obvious that gender sensitive politicians should not concentrate themselves in commissions for women's affairs. It is especially important that women enter the structures where decisions are made. Qualified gender experts need to deliver the gender discourse to different political fields. We need a new quality of networking.

Second, there is a risk that equal participation of women is only understood as a quantitative problem. Quantitative analyses are necessary, but women also need to be integrated into the real (often informal) power structures. My experience is that even in a left-wing party with a 50% quota for women in leadership positions and parliamentarian groups, the important decisions are still made in informal structures that consist of a few men.

Therefore, women should try to integrate themselves into the current power structures as well as try to develop their own (informal) power structures and networks. Currently, we are still at the beginning because women politicians lack solidarity and cooperate less in "joint ventures."

Women's Presentation in Mainstream Debates and the Media

It makes sense to ask that women's issues are present in mainstream debates and that women are represented in the media. There is a considerable lack of women in both areas. While watching the news or political talk shows, it is notable that important debates on issues such as "the war against terrorism," reform of the welfare state, and economic crises are mostly discussed in the absence of women. Women experts who promote a gender perspective are few or not present in mainstream debates.

One thing is clear: we women have important things to say and we must bring them to the agenda. We do not lack knowledge and know-how. However, feminists are known to often have a different style of discussion that does not correspond with mainstream debates. Also, these debates take place mostly between members of "old boys' networks." Even women TV moderators do not guarantee adequate representation of women. It is a special dynamic: those who are invited need to be "important" people - and these are usually men.

My first conclusion is that there is no alternative to pushing women's knowledge and perspective into mainstream debates. Often we stay inside our own circles. Of course professionalism is a basic condition for successful intervention. Maybe we have to think about a new approach for presenting our positions. Second, we may at times support a single woman as an expert in a special issue. Our interventions will only be successful if we unite to apply a common pressure. Therefore we also need better solidarity and networking.

Women's Networks across Party Lines

Women's networks that cross party lines have both possibilities and limits. When I consider my own experience, I can recall both positive and negative experiences. Let me give two examples.

In 1999, the Parliament celebrated the German Bundestag's fifty year anniversary. This included a special day for officially celebrating the work of women parliamentarians. Without women from all five parties in the German Bundestag taking the initiative to fight together for this day, nobody would have paid attention to the topic. It was a sensation that women from different political backgrounds worked together. The men in decision-making bodies were especially impressed; they could not refuse the proposal. Two of the project's initiators, the former president Rita Süßmuth and I, were members of the presidium. Therefore, we were able to use our special knowledge about this power structure for the project. The event was an inspiration for women in other spheres as well because it demonstrated how a successful project can overcome the classical borders of party politics.

Second, a tradition of dialogue between women across party lines already exists in the German Parliament regarding special issues such as abortion, rape in marriage, or pornography – mostly under the exclusion of the left-wing party – PDS. In 2001, women parliamentarians met to prepare a common appeal for the gender perspective to be included in the pension debate. We were afraid that otherwise women would be the losers in pension reform. It was quite difficult to formulate a text that could be signed by both left-wing and liberal women. We all had to compromise. Even so, at the last moment women from the governing Social Democratic Party (SPD) said that they could not sign the appeal because of their party discipline.

Despite this annoying experience, I would still prefer that women from different parties take common action. There is always a greater chance that a proposal will be successful if it comes from different sides. Even though it will always be difficult, you must give a lot of your knowledge, time, and energy for such projects, not only for your own party. Therefore, your party comrades might accuse you of not being a "real" party politician. We have to be realistic about the possibilities of networking and should not put too much on the agenda. A double-strategy is necessary. We need both networking, which includes making compromises, as well as radical demands. Without them we will not move forward.

Communication between Women Politicians, Academics, Journalists, and NGO Activists

In my opinion, our biggest challenge is to advance communication between women politicians, academics, journalists, and NGO activists. Women parliamentarians are often alone in power structures; they ask themselves: "Where are all the women who fought for women to be in such positions?" The question is: "Elected, and then what?" There is a necessity for activities from both sides. For me, twelve years of working in the federal Parliament and my own (women's) network provided the most important background for getting feedback and inspiration.

A big gap exists between the highly developed academic debates and research regarding women's and gender studies and the practical daily work of women politicians. Women in Parliament, at both the federal and the local level, need alternative concepts for a (gender sensitive) justice policy, concrete proposals for solving problems, and strategic support. It would be very useful if women's and gender studies would have more practical political orientation and impact. It could be an advantage for all sides because the practical impact might motivate students. I would like to give three examples of women from different backgrounds working successfully as a team.

1. During the abortion debate in Germany in the early '90s, feminists from both inside and outside the Parliament promoted the pro-choice position. Radical feminist positions had a voice in the Parliament. Even if they were part of the minority, feminists could be nominated as experts for the parliamentarian hearings.
2. While preparing for the UN-World Conference on Women in 1995, women from political structures, academics, and NGO activists worked together for the so-called "shadow reports." The different perspectives were used in a productive way.
3. Currently, women from peace groups, peace research institutes, and political institutions are creating an autonomous network – the so-called Women's Security Council in Germany. These women try to exert pressure on the German government concerning the implementation of the UN-Resolution 1325, which demands equal participation of women in peace-building and peacekeeping missions. They bring together different know-how as scientists, journalists, politicians, and NGO activists to influence this absolutely man-dominated political field.

Support to Younger Women

Young women are still underrepresented in political decision-making bodies. We should give them professional support. We are confronted with the best educated generation of young women, including those educated in politics. Yet, most of them maintain a distance from political structures and parties.

I think mentoring could be the right way to change this situation. The idea of mentoring is that a woman politician, the mentor, shares her experiences and knowledge with a younger woman, the mentee. For example, the mentee will spend a limited amount of time during the working day with the politician. But this is not a one-way street. The mentor will also receive feedback and new ideas from the mentee. The mentee should have her own tasks and responsibilities. Respect and exchange from both sides are the bases of success for such a model. Such a project needs good preparation. The best way is to organize it as a professional institution with seminars for the mentees so that they have the possibility to exchange their experiences.

I have had very good experiences as a mentor for young women coming from the political science departments of the university. All of us profited from exchanging different views and experiences between the generations. As a woman in politics, it is great to know that there are women 10 or 15 years younger who are entering power structures and pushing their own agenda into the debates and that I can give them support with my own experience.

Political Parties: Not Just Talk, But Real Support

By **Nazlie Bala**, Head of Women's Forum, Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK)

Influenced by many speeches and pronouncements from the political and intellectual circles in Kosovo on the position of women in politics and decision-making, I would like to present some modest thoughts on this issue without ignoring the role of the women's movement. I think that the lack of proper information on women's participation in political decision-making leads to comments that are not in touch with Kosovo's current political reality.

We all agree that political parties are weak in dealing with issues surrounding women and their role in society and politics. At the same time, we all seem to believe that men's dominance over Kosovar politics fails to open space for women in the near future. Although political parties convey that they are self-styled European, democratic, moderated, transparent, and people-serving – words that sound anachronistic to citizens – political parties in Kosovo are still closed to women.

Even if the political parties have structures that deal with gender equality, the structures are not effective and do not include a solid analysis of women's status. Political parties still lack strategies and gender programs that aim to change the current social and political mentality to establish a partnership between men and women within the party structure. Five years after the war, Kosovo's political parties have not changed in this direction.

At the same time, the propaganda of all main political powers tells us that women and men should work together to draft the programs of their parties, contribute to party fundraising, present the party to the public (in the media and internationally), share power, and take responsibility. Is this the political reality in Kosovo regarding gender equality? We should all know that this is not the reality because none of the parties can give an accurate number of their women members. Yet, the decision-making structures of their parties demand that they follow the rules on quotas for women's representation in electoral lists, which were established by the international governing structures.

No one is reacting to or reporting on this fact, excluding some women's NGOs. Not even the central institution acts for gender equality because quotas are still considered to be just a formality to fulfill the written standard on gender balance. But who is responsible? So far, no one because we must first analyze and react; political parties have not shown the willingness to undertake these steps. The worst part is that women themselves justify this situation. Political parties offer electoral programs which, surprisingly, dedicate only a few lines to the issue of gender equality. I will cite some of these statements: "Women are the divine part of the nation," "Women are equal in all fields," "Women are the backbone of the nation." If these statements are true, the question to be asked is: what have these parties done to include women and how much have they worked to answer these "considerations?" The answer is close to nothing. The last Parliamentary election in Kosovo required a 30% quota for women's representation. As a result, we have 28 women members of Parliament. Yet this quota only ensures women's representation in Parliament, not in Parliamentary leadership, or government.

We have only one woman in a leadership position in Parliament and only one woman minister. They were placed there because of a necessary formality (both positions were designated for ethnic minorities). While women in Kosovo have played an important political and social role in the last ten years, they are represented only in Parliament; and they are there just because of quotas. The lack of women in leadership positions in local governments proves the same point (no woman is mayor or deputy mayor of any municipality). Where are women in political life?

We can conclude that it is not enough just to write about the importance of women in Kosovo's political life; we should also think and work against the current division of labor that assigns women to dealing only with gender issues.

Women today are willing to take over the role and responsibility of advancing progress in all fields, including politics, economics, security, defense, and social welfare. Political parties must stop marginalizing the issue of gender equality. It is necessary that they change their programs to consider women an integral part of politics and social life in general. Kosovo's process, which includes a fundamental change in gender relations, truly requires serious engagement, will, energy, and the responsibility of every citizen, organization, and institution. Political parties are not an exception.

Political Participation and Parity Democracy

By **Marvi Monteserín**, Deputy and Spokeswoman of the Mixed Parliamentary Commission for Women's Rights and Potential for Parity, Spain

I think that analyzing the relationship between women and politics is necessary. As women, we need politics as an instrument to advance our emancipation. This is traditionally a man's field of activity, and we often need to justify our presence there. Yet, this can be justified simply by the fact that we are citizens, without any need for further explanation.

During the 20th century, the life of women has changed a lot. A century ago, women in the west won formal parity. Women became engaged in something that was previously considered forbidden for them.

During this period, women brought about legislative changes in every country. The signing of international agreements brought parity that was formally established by law. Unfortunately, the application of this law did not end discrimination. Women's social status remains unequal and the presence of women in decision-making posts is lower than we would like.

Certainly, the 20th century brought lots of progress for women on their way towards emancipation. This progress enabled global social changes, including economic, political, and cultural repercussions, which without any doubt affected the entire society and everyday life of men and women by provoking important individual transformations.

In this context, politics have a very important role. The quality of life improved in countries where women were present in the public, political, and economic sectors and where they had the willpower to advance equality and develop a social policy for helping women. In Europe, these countries include Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and the Netherlands.

In countries that lacked this kind of willpower, women were years late in the process, or they were not involved in public life at all. For example, Franco's government in Spain made women have far less freedom than what they had during the period of the Republic. During dictatorships in countries like Greece or Portugal, there was no parity policy or State of Welfare.

With the arrival of democracy in our country, the socialist government made installing a policy of parity a priority. By establishing the Women's Institute and approving the First Plan of Parity, they showed their determination for women's progress in our country.

With these two examples I would like to emphasize my belief that policy can either help or interfere with the progress of women. Therefore our involvement in political action is essential for achieving parity. In this country, as in Europe, the growth of feminism and the involvement of political parties with many proposals were core elements in contributing to parity.

In a democracy, women have the right to vote. Therefore we need to be taken into consideration. This means that policies that talk about us or deal with our issues should exist at least for some things that are important to us. Above all, these policies should respond to the new models of people, relationships, and social and family structures. This helps in developing a State of Welfare.

Policies should help women in their progress towards a better life that will be better for us and for our husbands. Policies should put public services at people's disposal. Women want to be free and equal. We want our rights to be taken into consideration and to live more safely in our towns and homes.

I also think that we women need to work a lot in politics to put political roles in our favor. We need to increase women's presence in national and international decision-making, whether economic or political, to incorporate our rights and needs as part of the political agenda.

Undoubtedly, our presence is still insufficient. We have 31% in the European Parliament, 38% in congress, 25% in senate, 32% in autonomic parliaments, 34% in local governments, 23% autonomic governments, and 50.6% in the national government.

Conference Speeches

It is true that we have made good progress in a short time, considering that our presence in 1986 was only 6.6% in congress, 5.6% in senate, 6.4% in autonomic parliaments, and 15% in the European Parliament in 1989.

In 1980, the Socialist Party started advancing women's participation in politics by installing a 25% quota in the election and organic candidatures of the party. This was considered a first step for women. It was a basic factor for political representation and for further changes that brought internal partial democracy (representation of 60% and 40%), approved at the 35th congress held four years ago.

This process reached its peak by guaranteeing parity for men and women in decision-making and by presenting a proposal for changing the Constitutional Law for General Elections (LOREP). This and the Integral Law against Sexual Violence are the biggest election successes for women.

This reform means inserting a new section in article 44 that requires a balanced percentage of men and women that does not exceed 60% or fall under 40% for either gender. This percentage should be maintained through all levels of the list, from beginning till end.

In principle, this reform disqualifies all applications submitted for municipal elections for places where the number of inhabitants is smaller than or equal to 2000. In this case, one point should be added to article 187 of LOREP. Overall, the law's purpose is to apply parity in all spheres by establishing rules for situations of particular difficulty. This is the case with small municipalities.

One of the reasons that pushed us – socialists to demand changes in the election law is the experience that we have in the party. Installing a quota and parity on the election lists provided an important impetus. We believe that the other parties were attracted in this way.

The development of democracy and progress towards freedom and parity is a major task for the Federal Executive Commission and PSOE. The proposal guarantees parity democracy that all parties agreed to as it improves the overall quality of our political system.

The meeting "Women in Power" held in Athens in 1992 debated concerns surrounding unfair representation of women in decision-making, which shows that our democratic system suffers from "democratic deficiency." This should be eliminated if we want progress – something that is impossible without effective parity between men and women.

This is the exact source of the democracy of parity. Its aim is not only to plan the parity of representing men and women, but also to enhance the need for eliminating all kinds of obstructions to parity in practice. The new concept of the democracy properly utilizes all available resources so that men and women can coexist in parity in all fields of the social and political life.

Quantitatively, the democracy of parity means balanced participation of men and women in that none of them have more than 60% or less than 40% representation.

Today, like 70 years ago, there are men and women who believe that freedom, justice, and democracy come through protecting women's right to vote. All of us who believe in freedom and parity must protect the democracy of parity as a fundamental part of our political system.

To develop it we initially took part in the convention on eliminating all forms of discrimination against women on 18 December 1979. This is an international agreement published as an internal Spanish regulation like that issued at the United Nation's Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing in 1995 and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

At the same time, the community's right is essential. The Amsterdam agreement reinforces these positive actions as a strategy in favor of parity. Also, the European Parliament approved a resolution about the balanced participation of women and men in decision-making at a session in January 2001.

Other countries possess laws that encourage balanced participation of men and women by requiring election applications or through financial stimulation. These countries are France, Belgium, and Finland.

Our Constitution clearly allows for the adoption of measures for affirmative action. The quota system is an affirmative action and this includes already-established quotas in social services and the labor market. The intention is to apply parity between individuals and groups as requested by article 9, even in the field of political participation.

Experts on constitutional rights consulted regarding the Constitutional Right of applying Article 14, which recognizes formal parity, with Article 9, which obligates material parity in public services. The purpose was to remove all obstructions that could appear along the way to achieving efficient parity. It appeared that for our Constitution such a reform, planned by us, is not just possible, but also desirable.

I would like to conclude by referring to three challenges that need to be addressed:

1. We should not take any steps back in the policy of potential parity. Affirmative action should be continued and developed just like the plans for parity.
2. Women's presence in posts with responsibility should be increased. This means that women leaders should remain persistent. At the same time, the democracy of parity should be established in all areas where it is necessary.
3. Finally, we need to insist upon advancing gender issues in all levels and public policies should implement it. Only in that way can we have real parity between men and women.

In the end, with the election triumph of the socialists last March, our hopes for parity democracy are closer to being realized. For the first time in the history of our country we have one political vice-president with the high position in economic vice-presidency.

This meant that one of the first approved laws (within the first 40 days of government) was an integral law related to violence against women. Within a few months a law of parity will be presented.

It is more than necessary to include values such as the right for parity, solidarity, and peace in politics. This will undoubtedly cause deep structural changes not only for women but also for the entire society.

Thank you very much.

Women and the Media

By **Aferdita Kelmendi**, co-owner and Executive Director of RTV21, Kosovo

I will start my discussion with a question inspired by the previous speakers: what should women do when they are presented by the media? I come from the media world, which disseminates information to audiences and potential voters, conveys information for women's activities, and helps women become part of the decision-making process. Allow me to make some concrete suggestions from my perspective.

Women should not just read typed speeches; they should feel out the audience in front of them and concentrate on its needs. They should be concise in their speech, direct, and well-articulated. Otherwise, the audience will be bored, will not listen, and the speech will be useless. This happens in all conferences and even in the Parliament, independent of the issues discussed. Good speech-making is a "pain," not just for women, but also for men because a lot of public persons have learned a stereotypical vocabulary and type of communication that does not strike the listener. What I have said is not to be taken as an indirect critique of the women that spoke in this conference, but rather as a suggestion to help women connect with their audience through communication, especially with those whose votes they want.

In presenting women candidates to the public, the use of language is very important. Language as a means of communication can attract or repel. Therefore, women must be very careful in their manner of communication and fashion a distinct style. Some women politicians use the same language as men politicians. From my perspective as a woman who watches and listens to the presentation of problems in our Parliament's séances, I receive no satisfaction and am not convinced by the debate because my needs and experiences are described in the language of men politicians. I do not mean that there should be a unique language for women politicians, but there are important nuances that will influence women to vote in the future. I speak not only from the journalist's point of view, but also from that of a citizen who wants to vote for a women candidate.

It is clear that the media could potentially play an important role in improving the position of women in all fields of life, especially in political decision-making. However, achieving such a role will depend on the sensitivity of the mass media in their support and relations with women in society. This depends on the media's executive directors. For example, in this conference I see only one of the three national channels, RTV21.

Allow me to return to the issue that was discussed several times regarding the qualitative and quantitative representation of women in Parliament and their presence in decision-making. Like many transitioning countries, Kosovo followed the quota model to include women in the electoral lists. Whether the quantitative or qualitative goals have been reached is of no importance; the leadership will decide this. And those who lead are men because they make up the majority in the decision-making institutions. We can say that we have imposed quantity, but not quality because of the current closed lists electoral system. While it is thought important to reach quotas, few think of quality. This is reflected in the presentation of women candidates and elected women to the public. I do not want to imply that women in our Parliament do not represent us appropriately, but we should do more to ensure that the future elections bring more capable women to the Parliament.

I would like to conclude my speech by answering a concern that has been raised several times by women politicians and women in civil society regarding those women present in electronic media programs. On RTV21, women make up 20% of the people presented in our shows. I believe that this number reflects the level of women's participation in decision-making processes in our public life. Change should start from here.

Thank you.

The Role of NGOs in Promoting Women's Participation in Decision-making

By **Stanimira Hadjimitova**, Gender Project for Bulgaria Foundation

Each individual woman counts. Her personal battle, when linked to other women's similar concerns, becomes political once articulated and disseminated. Politics is about power. And power is about being able to participate in decision-making and planning any aspect that affects one's life. In many societies, women are often excluded from exercising this power.

Many women live their lives for the family, unable to develop their natural abilities. Some women even earn a master's degree but are not allowed to work. Women are often dependent economically.

Before a woman can aspire for political power, she must have self-confidence. More often than not, self-esteem comes from economic independence. For economic empowerment to take place, higher education and skills are needed. Women in Bulgaria are generally not discriminated against when it comes to education. However, there are no recent figures for the situation in rural areas and among ethnic groups.

Statistics show that throughout the world, women are a minority in politics and decision-making. This is a result of men making the laws and the lack of logistical planning for women's political campaigns. The overall lack of gender representation in politics stems from a series of issues. First, elected women are not taken seriously; this is exacerbated by the fact that society still upholds the stereotype that women should remain in the home. Second, laws that favor women are rarely enacted. Third, women leaders do not have a feminist orientation and expose traditional politics. Fourth, women can rarely participate in out-of-town events since most participants are men; this demonstrates the multiple role and gender biases in the workplace (e.g. fieldwork is for men). Fifth, there is an absence of data that accurately describes the situation of women in various sectors.

Why do we insist upon balanced participation of two genders in decision-making? Because women-centered politics differs from patriarchal politics in that it uses power to create change in a participatory manner; it strives not to dominate but to serve.

How Do Women Currently Participate in Politics?

A table detailing the position of Balkan women in decision-making positions and the status of gender equality can be found below.

Women engage in a number of political activities such as registering voters, giving out ballots, counting votes, delivering returns to municipal halls, volunteering to watch polling, and making sandwiches. Voting appears to be the most common political activity. Yet, while more women vote than men, there is no women's vote. Sadly, many women still follow the political choices of their husbands. Very few women run for political office because it is considered men's turf, "dirty", or they have to ask permission from their husbands. Unfortunately, even when women become directly involved in politics, they are not always elected according to their merit. Often they enter positions of power as relatives of men politicians or because men put their names on the lists, expecting them to serve. In this case, we cannot expect for these women to practice any different "women's way of politics."

We could better prepare women for politics by raising women's consciousness regarding gender issues, networking mechanisms, ways to improve their performance, and realistic programs for action. NGOs have a large role to play in this.

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What Can NGOs Do to Increase Women's Participation in Political Decision-Making?

First, NGOs can provide training to women candidates on how to develop an understanding of women's issues; running and winning a campaign; dealing with the media; raising funds; and speaking in public. For example, in 2000, the first Stability Pact Gender Task Force South Eastern European regional project, "Women Can Do It – I," included 18 Train the Trainers Seminars through which 426 trainers were prepared. Then the trainers delivered 554 local training seminars on concrete political skills to women from different NGOs, minority groups, and trade unions based on the Norwegian Labor Party Women's program. Since we need to know what happens to project participants after a project's completion, an effective project component could be to organize a competition for funding common initiatives. This will ensure long lasting impact and will keep the "feeling of cooperation" alive. "Gender awareness" should be an obligatory component of all leadership training provided by NGOs.

Second, NGOs can advocate for the women's political agendas to be incorporated in political parties' platforms. They can also make candidates remain accountable for the positions that they take on regarding key women's issues.

Third, NGOs can create a women's vote. For example, in the Philippines, women's rights and health-oriented NGOs formed a women's vote for health and family planning in 1993. They drew an agenda for responsible parenthood and women's health and presented it to presidential and senatorial candidates. They announced the endorsers at a rally and launched a signature campaign in support of this agenda. Women could easily be persuaded to vote for candidates that support day-care services or more severe laws on rape, etc.

Fourth, NGOs can provide legislative advocacy. For example, quotas can be established as part of the election law or through special laws for Equal Opportunities for Women and Men. Establishing a quota within political parties will increase the number of women in the party leadership. For example, in Slovenia, as part of the regional "Women Can Do It-III," women's political groups, trade unions, and NGOs formed a "Coalition for Parity." They encouraged ministers of Parliament in the United List of Social Democrats and Liberal Democrats parties to lobby for amending the law about European Parliamentary elections. A 40% quota was enacted for E.U. elections. The women that participated in the project seminars decided to continue the work at the local level. They became active members of the Coalition for Equal Representation of Women and Men in Public Life. The United List of Social Democrats decided to use the zip system for European Parliamentary elections. Yet, quotas are not panacea; they have to be combined with training, financial support, gender education in the schools and universities, and media campaigns to overcome stereotypes in society.

Fifth, NGOs can establish a center with the goal of creating a critical mass of competent, effective, and committed women politicians. They could use their elected and appointed posts to influence national and regional decision-making.

Sixth, NGOs can press the government to do an inventory of public appointments, disaggregated by gender; to adapt decision-making practices to both women and men decision-makers' needs so that they can reconcile private and public life; and to implement the present laws and international covenants for women – not just near the deadline for reporting compliance with these standard-setting documents.

Seventh, NGOs can create women's networks with representatives from the government, businesses, trade unions, and women's NGOs to share experiences and create support groups for women candidates and nominees. While women's NGO networks have been created, this is not enough. Wider coalitions are needed to influence policy-making.

Eighth, NGOs can identify possible sources of funding to support women candidates and facilitate training on fundraising and budgeting. To do this, avenues for linking politicians to NGOs will need to be found. Women NGOs should also be encouraged to build their own capacity in income generation for core costs.

Ninth, NGOs can document the experiences of women as they enter the political arena as candidates, platform makers, strategists, monitors, poll watchers, etc. This could be done both quantitatively and qualitatively. For example, the project, "Women Can Do It – II," was implemented in the Stability Pact countries in 2002. It analyzed women's participation in forming party policy; women's position in party leadership; and the existence of specific measures, policies, and mechanisms in the party rules and programs to promote women's advancement in the political party hierarchy. The necessary steps for women to be represented in the political party leadership were outlined based on positive European party experience.

Women's leadership cannot be built with sporadic one or two year efforts. It is a long lasting process in which the involvement of political parties, men, and youth is crucial. It is about changing stereotypes regarding women's and men's roles in the society. To do this, we must keep in mind what stereotypes already exist regarding the image of political party women and women NGOs; some are detailed in the following two transparencies.

New generations are coming. They need awareness and training, too.

1 – What do women in political parties dislike about women in NGOs

- The independence of the women's NGOs
- Women's NGOs enhanced expertise on the concrete issues
- Being reminded of unfulfilled promises
- Women's NGOs can afford to be radical
- Women's NGOs prefer to work cross-party
- Women's NGOs have more money and resources than political party women's groups in some countries.
- Women's NGOs are more publicly visible/ successful
- Women's NGOs have long term security (no elections)
- Possible competition of NGO women leaders for leadership positions in the party
- Lack of understanding from women NGOs for the need of tactical steps and compromises for women's political party groups.

2 – What do leaders and members of women's NGOs dislike about women in political parties

- Politics
- The influence and organisational skills of the women in the parties
- Continuity in their work
- Being treated like a service for political party women leaders
- To be accused of being "paid exponents" of foreign organisations, funders, and NGOs
- Party obedience and discipline
- Unavailability of the political party women
- Superficial support to women's NGOs
- Avoidance of any real cooperation with women's NGOs
- Lack of sensitivity once in power
- Changing of political colour/ ideology
- Insensitivity to gender equality issues
- The "bossy" behaviour of men and women politicians.

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TABLE: BALKAN WOMEN IN DECISION-MAKING POSITIONS AND THE STATUS OF GENDER EQUALITY – MAY 2004

Countries	Women MPs %	Women Ministers %/ EOpp/ Act	Ombuds- person on Gender Eq.	National Gender Equality (GEq.)/ Mechanism	Local Gender Equality Mechanism	Active / Positive Measures	
Albania	6.4	10.5	In process	-	Government Committee for EOpp; Consultative Council on GEq	-	-
Bulgaria	27	25	Anti-discrimina-tion Act, 2004	-	In process: Sub commission to the Anti-discrimination Commission; Consultative Commission to Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	-	-
Croatia	19	28.6	Yes, July 2003	Yes	Parliamentary Committee for GEq; Government Commission for GEq	Committees, Commissions and Coordination for GE in Counties and Cities	+
Kosovo/a	30	28	Yes, 2003	In process	Government Office for GEq	GE Offices in 30 Municipalities	In process
Republic of Macedonia	18.3	1	In process	-	Minister of Equal Opportunities	-	-
Hungary	10	11	Yes, 2003	-	Minister of Equal Opportunities	-	-
Moldova	15.5	5.8	In process	-	Government Commission for GE; Focal Points in all Ministries; Department in Ministry of Labor and Social Policy	-	-
Montenegro	10.7	12.5		-	Government office for GEq	Offices in 3 towns in process	In process
Romania	1	9	Yes, 2002	-	Parliamentary Commissions in Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate; Nat. Council against Discrimination to the		
Serbia				Deputy in Voivodina	Ministry of GEq in Voivodina	In process: Focal Points in 30 communities	
Slovenia	13.3	18.7	Yes, 2002	Yes Advocate for EOpp. for women and men	Government Office for Equal Opportunities	In process appointments of Coordinators	- 40% in government; 40% for European Parliament elections

The Role of NGOs in Promoting Women's Participation in Politics – Kosovo's Experience

By Luljeta Vuniqi, Kosovo Open Society Foundation

The Context and Difficulties in Which Kosovar NGOs Operate

Women around the world, independent of their professional and social stratum, are seldom present in political life and quite far from decision-making. Although every country has a different political context, they unfortunately all share one element: they are difficult and unfriendly environments when it comes to women's participation in politics. Women who find the courage to enter the political race quickly realize that political, social, public, and cultural spaces are closed to them.

Kosovo is not an exception when it comes to the difficulties that women face in political participation. Therefore, women have a difficult time deciding to participate in the nation's political life.

First, I will describe the problems because this will make it easier to identify possible solutions. Women in politics and the members of civil society who support them are confronted by three types of problems: political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural.

Political difficulties

We all know that men dominate the political arena. Since men decide the rules of the political game, women in Kosovo are faced with obstacles such as the dominance of the man's model in political life; lack of political and financial support for women candidates; lack of well-developed systems for training women leaders; lack of policies for attracting young women to politics; and an electoral system with closed lists and a single electoral district. This system presents problems in recruiting quality candidates for the Parliamentary elections this October.

The campaign for reforming the electoral law showed that it is not always easy to surpass these obstacles. Kosova Women's Network and Kosova Women's Lobby together with many other NGOs organized an advocacy campaign and a series of protests that demanded reform of the electoral system, suggesting open lists, more electoral zones, and ensuring a gender quota. UNMIK totally ignored these ideas. We noticed, once more, that UNMIK is not interested in listening to the voice of Kosovo's civil society, even on such important issues to a society in the process of democracy-building.

Socio-economic difficulties

Five years after the end of war, Kosovo is experiencing a deep economic crisis. The process of privatization started a year ago, but the lack of defined status for Kosovo has practically blocked the process, raising the insecurity of investors and keeping foreign capital out. All these problems are expected in a country in "transition" or in a "developing democracy;" however, these circumstances are becoming serious problems to the development of our society overall, especially for women. According to manipulated World Bank reports on poverty in Kosovo, women have the highest unemployment rate, meaning that poverty is becoming feminized. This is one of the primary reasons why women are still enclosed in the private sphere and do not have many opportunities to insert themselves into the public sphere.

Socio-cultural difficulties

In Kosovo, as in the Balkans, the patriarchal model of role division dictates that women's primary role is that of fully domesticated mothers. The powerful value system favors the division of roles according to gender and so-called traditional cultural values, which are huge obstacles for women's affirmation, progress, and participation in public life and political processes. Kosovar society – and it is not alone in this – is dominated by the ideology, "we know where women belong: in the house!"

By this I do not mean that all women in Kosovo are closed up in their homes and inactive. Some of them work and are active in public life, but even in these cases, they are working mothers who are often apolitical, lack self-confidence, and do not have equal access to resources. They do not get into politics, among other things, because this engagement is traditionally considered to belong mainly to men.

The Role of Kosovar NGOs in Increasing Women's Participation in Politics

An analysis of women NGOs' role in increasing women's participation in public life and politics should consider two periods of growth in the Kosovar women's movement: the ten years before the war (during the 90s) and five years after the war. Each of these two periods has its own specific situation and each imposed different action strategies.

Until now, there has been no analysis of the role and contribution of Kosovo's women NGOs in increasing women's participation in politics. Such research would clarify their activity and results, successes and failures, and experience and strategies. This is why I have a hard time giving analytical judgments. However, there are facts and data that indirectly supply a basis for analysis and allow me to present some ideas on the role and contribution of NGOs in increasing women's participation in political life. These ideas are based on my previous direct experiences working with women's NGOs, not just as a donor, but also as an activist before and after the war in Kosovo.

The UN mission and the large presence of donors, organizations, and international institutions in Kosovo after the war of 1999 created an environment opposite the one we had ten years ago, when civil action and movements were forbidden and brutally punished by the Serb regime. This new atmosphere gave hope to the women's sector of NGOs that a historical moment had come, that, together with the agencies and international organizations, they could build strategies and politics that would fulfill the urgent needs of women in Kosovo and enlarge women's area of activity. For this reason, NGOs, especially the women's rights organizations, grew from day to day. This was thanks to enthusiasm and energy as well as donations and technical assistance from international organizations.

Yet, these hopes were gradually diluted. The potential of local NGOs with ten years of experience was marginalized and often ignored by international organizations and institutions because many of them came with their own plans, programs, and agendas ready to be implemented in Kosovo without consulting Kosovar women.

It is not rare for women NGOs' work and their endeavor to empower women's influence in political life and decision-making to be criticized, misunderstood, and even ignored by organizations and local institutions. NGOs have been accused of being motivated by material profit and lacking the necessary expertise for the job. These criticisms and accusations have often caused clashes and divisions between NGOs and women politicians. In this manner, cooperation between the two sectors has been damaged and fragmentized.

Even with all the problems mentioned above, women organizations, knowing the importance of their role in supporting women's participation in public life and decision-making, have been very active and have undertaken concrete initiatives. These initiatives have aided women who desire to become part of Kosovo's political life and helped them surpass obstacles. Women politicians have also shown a willingness to contribute and cooperate to achieve common goals. There are many examples that illustrate this development, but I will mention those that have had the most influence in creating a climate of cooperation between these sectors. Since the first local election in Kosovo in 2000, the Kosova Women's Network established a coalition of women from NGOs, politics, and the media; its objective was to help women candidates during and after the electoral campaign take an active part in local government.

Kosova's Women Foundation for an Open Society in cooperation with Kosova's Foundation for a Civil Society developed trainings and media campaigns that would empower women candidates for the 2001 local elections and the general elections with the motto, "What do women want in politics?" At the same time, Norwegian People's Aid financed a program to empower women candidates through trainings organized by the Focal Point for the Gender Task Force of the Stability Pact for South East Europe with the motto "Women Can Do It." There were many other activities by local and international organizations, which I will not list due to the lack of time and space.

After the successful cooperation between local and international NGOs, women in politics, and the media, it became clear that solidarity and cooperation between different sectors of society could increase women's participation in politics and decision-making. This encouraged all organizations in the field. One of the most important results of this cooperation was the draft for a National Action Plan to Achieve Gender Equality in Kosovo, which was developed in 2002-2003. This process was supported by UNIFEM, an agency that has and is giving great support to local women in programs and projects that are quite valuable for the inclusion of a gender perspective in all sectors. Drafting the National Action Plan to Achieve Gender Equality was a year long process, during which women from the NGO sector, media, and politics successfully drafted the plan and advocated for its acceptance and implementation by governmental institutions. In March 2004, Kosovo's government adopted this plan.

Another successful campaign for creating equal opportunities for the active participation of women in politics was "Political Parties Work for Women," led by the Kosova Women's Network with support from OSCE, STAR Network of World Learning, and UNIFEM. Through meetings with women and girls in Kosovo's 30 municipalities, the main obstacles and problems that women deal with on the local and national level were identified and possible solutions were recommended. The meetings included women and girls from the city and countryside; of varying professions and ethnicities; and from the government, private, and non-governmental sectors. The resulting recommendations were presented to the local branches of political parties and their leadership, asking that these proposals be included in the electoral programs for the 2004 elections. Some of the major political parties welcomed these proposals.

An important step in the effort to empower women in public life was the creation of the Kosova Women's Lobby in 2003. The Women's Lobby is a key mechanism for cooperation between diverse sectors of Kosovar society. It is composed of leading women from NGOs, politics, the media, and the private sector. Women's Lobby has a clear mission and takes a public stance on important political issues like the dialogue between Prishtina and Belgrade, the issue of electoral reform, and the March 2004 events.

My presentation of the success in efforts to build coalitions and cooperation between NGOs and women in politics to achieve common goals does not mean that the women's movement in Kosovo has been easy. These coalitions and common initiatives often times are difficult, fragile, and face many challenges, which often lead to limited positive results.

However, efforts for cooperation between women in NGOs and those in politics have taught both sides that only cooperation and solidarity bring results that help women take part equally and effectively in political life and decision-making. Women in both sectors know that their exclusion from political processes and decision-making would exclude half the population in the democratization of the country. Women in both sectors are certain that much still needs to be done before women are accepted as equal partners in the important decision-making processes of Kosovo.

The Role of Croatian Women's Networks in Efforts to Increase Women's Political Participation

By **Vesna Kesic**, founder of Be Active Be Emancipated (B.A.B.E), Croatia

I would first like to forward greetings to all of you from the Croatian Women's Network, on whose behalf I am present here today. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to come to Kosovo again after 30 years.

Many things have changed since I was last here. I would like to begin with an observation that is directly connected to my long absence. Today, I have often heard people comment that women here are still "at the beginning" when it comes to their rights and social, political, and economic status. In Croatia, we also very often say this, and as far as I can tell, similar things are said in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and all the other countries of the former Yugoslavia.

I have made a significantly different observation. I visited Kosovo back in 1974 as a young journalist of the weekly magazine "VUS," which was read throughout Yugoslavia at that time. I did not have any acquaintances here. During the few days of my stay for journalistic research, I met many important and interesting personalities from political, cultural, and artistic circles. However, after I left, I did not meet or contact any of them ever again. Today, unfortunately, I do not even remember whom I talked to during that time.

These days I know many of the women from local associations and institutions that are here at this conference as well as many of our international friends. I am relatively well informed on what is going on in Kosovo regarding the status of women and in general. I have been meeting some of you on a regular basis once or twice a year during the past ten years, sometimes within the region and sometimes in very distant and important places such as UN meetings in New York, the conference in Beijing, at American Universities, and many other parts of the world. I often receive relatively fresh news of what Kosovo women are doing. At the time of the refugee crisis, I knew the whereabouts of Igo, Vjosa, Rachel, and Sevdia. I have attended a conference in Iceland with Vjollca Krasniqi and Žaranoa Papić, who is unfortunately no longer with us. At one of these worldly conferences, I met Nitta Luci, who I strongly believe will become one of the leading feminist anthropologists of this region.

I cannot accept the theory that women of this region, including the women of Kosovo, remain here only to constantly stay "at the beginning" and that no change has been made. Today, women from the countries of the former Yugoslavia represent an important political factor that should be taken into consideration. We influence the public opinion in our own surroundings and in the world. We are mutually well-connected, exchange information, and most likely maintain better communication than any other state or civilian segment in the region. We have managed to present the question of women as an important political and social issue. Of course, we cannot be entirely satisfied with what has been achieved, and a lot remains to be done. But when it comes to final goals, we will probably always be under the impression that we are still at the beginning. Traditions and power relations that are centuries old need to be changed. Still, I wish to remain optimistic and believe that the first, most difficult steps have already been made here, as well as in Croatia and other places.

I would like to take the opportunity to pass on to you some of the experiences that we women in Croatia have gained in our fight for our rights during these past ten transitional years. The former president, Franjo Tuđman, whose reign we do not remember as a good one for women and their rights, used to refer to Croatia as a "regional force" with quite an amount of nationalistic and unrestrained thought. Now the political situation in Croatia has stabilized. Although the country is still recovering from war trauma and losses, I do not exaggerate when I say that Croatia has become a unique regional force, especially in the power, organization, and influence of its women's groups. The Croatian Women's Network, which started its activities as a coalition in 1994, today gathers around

fifty women caucuses and is one of the most powerful civilian networks in the country. As was already mentioned by the representative of the Assembly and the President of the Board for Gender Equality, they have managed to create a complete framework for the improvement of human rights for women due to the cooperation of women in civilian initiatives and women in politics.

In 1995, Parliament consisted of only 5% women. This number increased during the 2000 and 2004 elections and has now stabilized at around 23%. This was one of the higher percentages in Europe in 2000. We have achieved this through political activity, campaigns for women, and the additional help of gender quotas (in general, I do not have anything against gender quotas, but I do consider it better to realize the representation of women in politics by political activity whenever possible.) However, the percentage is still not satisfactory. The ratio of women to men in Croatia is 60:40, and we strive to realize this ratio in all bodies of political decision-making and the economic segment. However, women, as well as all other marginalized and discriminated groups, shall only get what they carve out as their true hold of power. And, as we were taught by post-socialist history, they will always have to re-preserve and re-maintain these attainments with all the means at their disposal. This is exactly why it will always seem to us that we are "only at the beginning." No privilege, including those that the patriarchate carries with it, is easily loosened from one's grasp.

The Croatian Women's Network is an equal partner in analyzing all important political and social decisions regarding women. Although we have managed to influence the amendments of many laws, much still needs to be done. For example, violence against women has not decreased; at first glance it seems to have increased. However, I am certain that this is a consequence of it becoming more socially visible and socially condemned. We all still remember the times when jokes about beat-up and molested women were being publicly told.

In Croatia, we succeeded in getting the state to significantly contribute to the financing of autonomous shelters for women and children victims of domestic violence. Although these are small in number, we have at least convinced the public and the state that this deficiency is a serious social failure.

Even though it may seem unimportant, it seems to me that a crucial achievement was also made on the symbolic level of language. Women caucuses and women activists started to change the language women use and the language used to describe women. Instead of women-mothers, women-wives, women-victims, and women-martyrs or heroines of their nation, we started talking about women's rights as "human rights," and asked for changes to take place on the political, social, and private level.

In order to lose the impression that we are always at the beginning and that we are always starting over from scratch, we must work on bringing back to the public memory of all the things women initiatives and women caucuses have done in this region since the late seventies, when feminists' voices were first heard in the former Yugoslavia. These memories include our companionships, meetings, cooperation, and mutual support in the past ten years, when we got to know each other very well. These memories could also be a good foundation for future collaboration in the development of our surrounding environment and the whole region. We must continue to work on maintaining and developing peace and democratic procedures that, allow me to use a typical "woman" metaphor, are still in the "diapers." Progress depends on solidarity and cooperation between the women of the region.

The Role of NGOs in Promoting Women's Participation in Decision-making

By **Fezal Gulfidan**, Association for Support and Training Women Candidates (KA-DER), Turkey

I come from Istanbul and would like to share my experiences from Turkey. I represent the Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates (KA-DER).

Turkish women have had the right to vote and be elected since 1934. After the 1935 elections, 4.6% of the Parliament was women. Representation of women in the Parliament decreased to 0.6% in 1950. It was 2.4% in 1997, when KA-DER was founded. It rose to 4.2% after the 1999 election and almost stayed the same, 4.37 %, after the 2002 election.

Turkey rated 140th among 179 countries in the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) list of Women in National Parliaments. Representation of women in Turkey remains below the average of European, American, Pacific, and African countries. It is closer to the average of Middle Eastern and Arabic countries. Women's representation in local governments is worse than in the Parliament: only 1.5%. We had local elections two months ago, and the results were even worse for women, only 0.65%, all were in small districts. Usually there was one, rarely two, and sometimes no women in the government. The new government has one woman out of twenty-three ministers.

In Turkey, the Lowest Level of Representation is in Political Decision-making

In 2000 the rate of women's participation in professional jobs and even at the managerial level was much higher, 33.9% and 11.5% respectively. These figures, compared to the 4.2% of women representatives in the Parliament, are enough to prove extreme under-representation of women in political life.

In Turkey, Social Development Does Not Mean the Development of Women

Turkey is rated at 48% by the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gender Development Index (GDI), but stands at 91% when analyzed by the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM) scale.

What are the Reasons for the Under-Representation of Women in Political Processes?

In Turkey the structure of society, in general, is quite conservative and the social responsibility of women is confined to family life. The family is considered 'private,' outside the sphere of politics. The participation of women in social and political life is considered destructive to the function and well-being of the family. Due to these values and beliefs, social and political activities of women are controlled and drawn back by husbands, families, and other social and political actors. Therefore, we need policies and measures for more democratic families. For example, the Turkish History Foundation has recently screened around 180 elementary and middle school books, eliminating all discriminating words and implications on gender issues and ethnic groups.

The dominant social activity pattern for women is to participate in 'voluntary social help' associations which do not focus on the issue of women's empowerment. Such work does not help change the invisibility of women in politics. Therefore, a paradigm shift of women's participation patterns in social and political life is necessary.

The 'male-dominated model' in political life and decision-making processes has a discriminatory effect. The rules and values of the political game are still based on personal power, money, competition, winning, and losing. These values are unfamiliar and discriminatory, so politics continues to be 'dirty' and 'the job of men' for many women.

The political parties do not consider the equality of women and men an issue of democracy, human rights, and social development. It continues to be a subject of rhetoric. Until strong political pressure

is applied to political parties and their leaders for gender equality in political decision-making, under-representation will continue. Turkey is a candidate for the European Union, and our Parliament is adopting new laws in the field of democracy. As the European Parliament and Commission have said, "there is no access to the E.U. for countries that lack equal opportunity for men and women." I am sure that equal representation must not only be promoted by law (our Constitution and laws mostly state this), but in practice too. Although gender equality is not high on the political agenda today in Turkey, I am sure it will be in the very near future.

Women's branches of the political parties have very limited legal rights. The participation of women in the political decision-making process within their parties and in the local and national Parliaments is extremely low. The Law of Political Parties prohibited women's branches between 1980 and 1995. According to most party statutes, women's branches have no authority, no money, no representation in party decision-making, and are not allowed gender-based political action. They help keep women in the 'kitchen' of the party. In practice, women's branches do not even have the authority to suggest women candidates for the election lists or party executive boards. It is apparent that women in women's branches are almost isolated from politics. The women's branches existence and function can be debated. In developing countries, where the society is more or less conservative or influenced by religious and traditional motives, existence of women's branches could be supported, but the functioning of the women's branches should be improved. Serious political education programs should be implemented and mentoring systems should be put in place. Mentoring systems include aspects of political education and practical information. For example, a member of the women's branch would have an experienced politician for a mentor who would introduce her to certain political activities so that she can experience politics in practice. Through amendments to the law on political parties, these branches should prepare women for politics and develop party policies on gender equality.

For political leaders in Turkey, gender equality is not a formula for success. They do not believe that the effort to provide gender equality can popularize them. They can support social development. Turkey's population is 52% women, and 60% of the population is below the age of 30. The young people of today are more enlightened than we were at their age. They are more individualistic too. There would be more young women in politics if they could see the light at the end of the tunnel. I am sure they do not want to be trapped in women's branches where they can only do social work.

Women NGOs and women in political parties are still incapable of networking for better cooperation in reaching a common agenda. Developing policies and strategies for women's participation in political decision-making bodies need closer cooperation and networking between the different women's organizations. In Turkey, women's organizations that focus on one specific area of gender discrimination were late to understand the strategic importance of women's participation in political decision-making processes for the solution of all other gender-related problems and inequalities. Until the last election, KA-DER was quite alone in the struggle for women's participation in political decision-making. Lack of any financial support by national and local authorities for women NGOs is another obstacle.

There are no positive actions or support policies developed by the political parties or national legislation that encourage women to be candidates and increase their chances to be elected. In Turkey, women are selected as candidates by party leaders and generally are placed on lists where they have no chance to be elected. The very few women who are elected prefer to be loyal to their party leaders rather than to represent women. To realize the real political participation of women, women's branches of the political parties should have legal authority in the selection of women candidates, and a gender quota policy must be adopted. Such policies will also attract more women in politics and enlarge the women base of parties.

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The Path to Solutions

At KA-DER we continue to advocate for the empowerment of women in political decision-making and leadership.

In coordination with a group of women's organizations, we prepared with women lawyers "The Constitutional Amendment Package and Equality Package," which outlines changes for the Political Parties and Elections Law. We distributed it to the members of Parliament.

KA-DER met twice in two years with the women members of Parliament, demanding implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and asking for their support in women's branches.

With the sponsorship of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, KA-DER organized a "Searching Conference" on how to increase women's participation in politics. The conference revealed that:

1. Maintaining equal distance from all political parties is of great importance.
2. A quota policy is important to prepare parties for women.
3. The women's movement needs further collaboration and networking.
4. KA-DER needs to address the whole of society, both men and women.

KA-DER started the project, "Women Using Computers," to train women how to send e-mails and surf the internet. These women could be interconnected through e-mails, creating a KA-DER network of women voters. We also implemented the "Interactive Women" project to train women in political parties.

Before the elections, we offered training to women candidates on how to run a campaign, what the mayor and local assembly do, self-confidence, and gender issues. KA-DER prepared billboard ads, radio spots, and flyers, calling women to come forth as candidates. KA-DER has a new project to educate women trade union members in leadership.

In a project carried out by another NGO that teaches illiterate women how to read and write, KA-DER will have a short training after each teaching session to educate women on how to be a good citizen, why it is important to have women politicians, and why they should vote for women candidates. We also have interactive training and discussion programs on gender equality issues with youth branches of the political parties.

KA-DER collaborates with women lawyers from the Istanbul Bar to train police officers on laws concerning violence against women and how to treat women who file sexual harassment and violence complaints. The aim is to encourage the police to treat women complaints fairly and increase their awareness of gender equality.

KA-DER organized a meeting over breakfast to inform opinion leaders on gender issues. Representatives from the local authorities, Parliament, universities, unions, chambers, NGOs, media, and columnists were invited to participate.

KA-DER has also started the project, "Women in Charge," with support from MATRA (from the Netherlands). In five cities, 100 trainers from political parties, government organizations, NGOs, and trade unions will be trained during a two year project. The aim is to encourage and educate women to stand for candidacy in the local and national government.

Action Plans, Time Bound Targets, Implementation Programs are Required

The process of gender equality in political decision-making should be carried out in harmony with other measures, defined and declared in CEDAW, the Beijing Action Platform, and Beijing+5 Final

Document, which are all ratified and/or confirmed by Turkey. We recently made an amendment to our Constitution stating that international documents signed by the State of Turkey are above the local laws of its kind. Action plans, time bound targets, and implementation programs should be prepared in order to realize the policies that aim for gender equality.

Gender Sensitive Legislation

Turkey must urgently provide a legal foundation for gender equality and act to support this process. Higher priority must be given to the following legal steps:

1. Amendment of the Constitution to support positive action for gender equality in general and a minimum 30% gender quota in particular.
2. Amendment of the laws on political parties and elections, empowering the women's branches, as well as allocating a minimum of 20% financial support from the government to the political parties for women's branches.
3. Implementing an 'Equality Law' that provides a framework for gender sensitive legislation, mainstreaming policies, and gender budgeting.
4. Implementing a law for balanced gender representation in governmental appointments to decision-making boards or committees.
5. The formation of a new standing commission for gender equality in the national Parliament.

Reorganization of National Mechanisms for Gender Equality

The National Mechanism of Turkey (Directorate General on Status and Problems of Women – DGSPW), which is responsible for gender equality policies and the development and follow up of their implementation, should be under the Prime Minister and supported by legal authority and resources.

Related ministries, public institutions, municipal, and local administrations should have a gender coordination unit that works with DGSPW.

All institutions involved in research, data collection, budgeting, and auditing should be encouraged to be gender sensitive and to collaborate with projects on gender inequality.

An advisory committee with the participation of women NGOs, trade unions, and academicians should be formed, which will work in cooperation with DGSPW.

Support for Women's Organizations and Other NGOs

Financial support must be given from the national and/or municipal budgets to women organizations that work for gender equality and other projects that support the participation of gender sensitive NGOs in policy-making and the implementation of other gender related issues.

Positive Messages, Collaboration, and Resources: Mobilizing Support for Women Candidates

By **Lael Stegall**, President of Social Change International, USA

I congratulate the Kosova Women's Lobby, The STAR Network, the National Democratic Institute, and its many allies in hosting this important conference on "Women's Leadership – Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making" When I first came to Kosovo – ten years ago, we talked only in quiet voices about women and politics. A few years later, there might be 8 or 10 of us in the room talking about how to advance women's FULL participation in the new political life of Kosovo. And now - just look around this room - there are almost 200 of you sitting here for two days to craft new approaches to the full participation of women in decision-making. And, we know your success will not only be supporting equal numbers of women but, it will also be about building a democratic and economically prosperous Kosovo.

In your planning for the conference, you stressed the importance of sharing lessons – successes and failures – that women, worldwide, have experienced in this quest to change patterns of tradition and discrimination which left women significantly out of decision making in the political life of their nations.

My presentation today is about a successful strategy that grew out of a serious sense of failure that American women were feeling twenty years ago when barely 5% of our elected officials were women. While women's activism was growing and there was national excitement about issue advocacy and women's equality — women were still failing miserably in getting elected to public office. There were only 12 women in the US House, no woman in the Senate (elected in her own right) and no woman had ever been elected governor of a large state. Republicans and Democrats alike: there were very few women in positions of power.

To address this issue, about 25 of us – a group of politically active women - came together to create a grassroots network of donors that would give women candidates early support to establish their credibility as "winners". After careful research on past failures and gaps, we decided to focus on a direct program of electing pro-choice Democratic (our only issue criteria) women by raising money for their campaigns, helping them to organize effective electoral action, and to mobilize voters in support of their candidacies. Founder, Ellen Malcolm, came up with an imaginative title for our program while taking a shower one night! **EMILY's List – Early Money is Like Yeast – It Makes the Dough (money) Rise**. This is linguistically a very American phrase and refers to the yeast in flour which makes bread dough rise. It means investing into something that will grow and get much bigger! And that's what we wanted to do! EMILY's List would be a list of women committed to supporting other women to get elected. Together, we would form a strong force for change.

Indeed we did as now, nearly 20 years later, that list has 73,000 names on it making EMILY's List the largest political action committee in the US. There has been a stunning record of electoral success – the election of 11 Democratic women senators, 55 women to Congress and 7 governors. Your guest, Jean Carnahan of Missouri, was one of those proud successes when she was elected a US Senator!

A brief description of how Emily's List (EL) works: donors are recruited to give \$100 in an election season to be a "member" of EL and then commit to support at least two women candidates during that season with financial support. Since we wanted to support truly viable candidates, EL would interview carefully potential candidates and pick the strongest as recommendations to members. Once a candidate was endorsed, members would not only give funds directly to their campaigns , but the organization provided practical and professional support - media training, fundraising training, campaign organizational skills, and issue education. What's important is that we picked a positive and unique name for our network, reached out to large numbers of women (and men) and made very

serious criteria for how we would advance and support women in elections. Eventually, we gave strong attention to mobilizing voters through our Women Vote program.

Let me share with you three basic principles from the EMILY's List experience that I think are very appropriate and adaptable for women in Kosovo. Your electoral system is new and different and, thank goodness, you do not have the burden of raising funds for campaigns as we do in America. But, there are important lessons out of the EMILY's List experience – that can apply to you as you develop strategies for increasing the numbers of women participating in your parliamentary system. Here are a few:

1. Positive Messages and Focus.

- Use positive language and emphasize the strong, positive qualities women bring to public life. Voters, women and men need to hear this message to counter the negative language that often describes women who assert themselves politically. And, sometimes, other women are our most vocal critics. Emily's List did important voter research and indeed, uncovered strong data that voters saw women as knowledgeable, trustworthy, experienced in community issues, and tough on crime and fiscal responsibility. That early research on the positive qualities of women's leadership has been central to EL's success. You might discover the same attitudes in Kosova.
- Professionalism and pride also marked our work as we built EMILY's List into an energetic positive organization that sought to put the very best expertise and resources behind women candidates who had strong potential to win elections. Campaign slogans and candidate materials were positive, with bright graphics and, forward-thinking messages.
- Focus – focus – focus your voter mobilization and electoral work on a few strategies that you will repeat – repeat – repeat. Pick 2-3 criteria that can unite candidates and take that message to the parties and the public. Sometimes activists try to change the world all at once and drown their public in too many messages on too many issues. Then, our critics complain that "we push too hard, want too much, aren't satisfied with anything..." Have you heard that before?
- Work with candidates, get them elected and continue to work with them so they can be effective as decision-makers and be re-elected and be appointed to positions of even more power within the system.
- Take the same positive messages to voters who also need encouragement to vote their principles in community. Linking up women's electoral work with voter mobilization can be a winning combination. Emily's List WOMEN VOTE work has now become extremely important in giving strategic focus to Get-Out-The-Vote strategies that will bring winning margins of women to the polls in support of candidates. I know your colleagues at NDI can help you on this.

2. Collaboration.

- "All of us" is more powerful than any one of us, or one group. Stick to your basic criteria and avoid the usual labels which "ghettoize" women. Again, our critics like to accuse women of bickering and being "our own worst enemies." Stress diversity - geographic, party-affiliation, ethnic, age – this is forward thinking and helps to diminish the obstacles.
- Use inclusive language and reach out to women who may not traditionally self-identify as progressive, social democrats, feminists. By focusing on the issue and concerns, it's easier to reach rural women, young women, traditional women, and women from traditionally opposing parties.
- Numbers speak! Building a network that has growing numbers of women is inspiring and makes others want to be a part. Emily's List quickly became a sparkling- interesting network that women from around the country could proudly say "I belong" and feel a strong sense of sisterhood or camaraderie with women throughout the country. EL gave women an identity that far surpassed the Democratic Party. Indeed, EL inspired Republicans to create a "Wish List" and there are EL equivalents in the UK, Thailand and several other countries.

3. Resources

- Be resourceful to women candidates, public officials, other civic engagement groups and women's organizations, and voters. Become known as a source of professional, superb advice and research.
- Candidates and parties will develop important respect for your work when they see you offer outstanding services that are needed and make a difference. Examples: provide media training for women so they can use microphones and make the best of a television interview or camera experience; provide issue research that is easily accessible for candidates; help candidates develop good campaign materials and a campaign plan. In short, become known as the smartest political strategists in Kosovo!
- Money. Those of you who know me understand that I believe strongly that women must think seriously about financing their work (we are worth it) – craft real budgets, and learn to ask for money. You need financial resources to have cutting edge computer technology, film equipment, conduct research, and hire highly effective staff. Volunteers are critically important (especially in raising money and in the government). But, there is no substitute for core competence and professionalism and this takes hard cash. While I envy you that money is much less important in your electoral campaigns, I do know that you must be tough and business like and think of your campaign to empower women as a serious investment that needs financial resources.

In conclusion, you are building a new climate of electoral democracy and that is an asset that many of the older democracies do not have. You can take the best of ideas and make them work for Kosova and for women. You are tenacious, smart, and courageous. I have every confidence that those of you in this room can harness the power of women to mobilize citizens and voters in support of women who will build a strong and democratic Kosovo — in the halls of government, in the courts, municipalities, in business

An early history lesson for me in Kosovo was about the Sisters Qiriazi who did so much to advance education for women. If they were with us today, I think they would say: "Let's get organized!" Perhaps it is time for a Qiriazi List!

Bringing More Women into Politics – Quotas and Votes for Women

By **Vjosa Dobra**, activist for women's rights and Head of the RTK Board, Kosovo

Today is an emotionally charged day for me because years ago, when the women of the former Yugoslavia would gather, I felt sad that we in Kosovo could not gather and speak freely. Today we are dealing with different problems connected with women in Kosovo, but the most significant achievement is that today we can gather freely, talk, and discuss the problems that women face on their way into politics.

We are here today because we are unhappy with the current developments and women's participation in politics.

I would like to start with a short history of women's participation in politics in postwar Kosovo. After the UN took over the leadership of Kosovo under Resolution 1244, a joint government was created to transfer power from the internationals to the Kosovars. This process started in early 2000 and still has not ended; actually, it is stuck in the middle of the road. As part of this process, the first "common administration" was created, which was comprised of 40 co-directors of governmental departments (20 Kosovars and 20 internationals).

This government only included 3 women: one Kosovar woman and two international workers. It is important not only to mention the number of women in the government created after the war, but also the model of governance and how the role of women in decision-making was ignored. This model is still applied by the current government of Kosovo. All of this happened at that point in time when the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1325. This resolution posed strategies and concrete actions for the equal and efficient involvement of women in all aspects of conflict management as well as the pacification that takes place after conflicts. Resolution 1325 was adopted by the end of October 2000 but was not applied to Kosovo, although Kosovo would have been the best place to promote such a resolution.

The first elections in Kosovo were local and included only 8.7% women in the list of winning candidates. In the national elections, a step forward was taken with the application of a 30% gender quota in the lists. At that time, I was continuously in contact with Lesley Abdela, and in an e-mail Lesley suggested that we look into inserting a 30% gender quota in the electoral law. We started our efforts to achieve this goal, primarily by organizing women from civil society, who asked in two conferences that we have quotas in electoral lists for the general elections. Women from civil society argued that this approach was not only in accordance with the Platform for Action of Peking (1995), but it answered a significant need in Kosovo because the absence of a quota would result in the same outcome as the first local elections. Therefore, quotas were necessary at that point in time. They were necessary because the Kosovar patriarchal system had been incorporated into the international administration of Kosovo; therefore, it was not interested in the percentage of women on candidate lists. In these conditions, gender quotas are the best and most efficient manner to bring women to the electoral lists and to get them elected.

The establishment of quotas in the electoral law was the result of a prolonged negotiation with political parties. Resistance to these ideas came not only from men in political parties, but also from certain women whose "inferiority complex" led them to think that if quotas were used, women would gain entrance into election lists simply because they are women rather than by merit or ability. This would make them feel like second class citizens.

However, quotas were quite successful in Kosovo, and, independent of what is generally thought, I greatly admire the 35 women who now are members of the Kosovo Parliament. I am certain that they do a good deal of work, considering the limited authority of our Parliament. I am also believe in maintaining the gender quota because I think that little work has been done with our voters and that

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they, both men and women voters, must change their attitude about voting for women. In the first and second election we saw that only 8.7% women were elected, although 52% of the voters are potentially women voters.

We find it disturbing that women are not voting for women. Much work is to be done in this direction, starting with raising the awareness of women voters on the importance of their vote. We can learn from the successful experiences of other countries. Two of the most powerful experiences that I have had the opportunity to study are those of Rwanda and Northern Ireland.

In Rwanda's last elections, three ballots were presented: one pink, one blue, and one green, respectively representing lists whose candidates were women, youth, and handicapped individuals. Women who wanted to vote for women used the pink colored ballot. As a result, today in Rwanda 49% of the central and local assemblies are made up of women.

Northern Ireland women, who were left out of decision-making and negotiations of the peace process, organized their own party in 19 days. They then went door-to-door to attract different women to gain seats in the Parliament and to become part of the future peace negotiations in Northern Ireland. Both of these experiences could be valuable for us.

Allow me to close my speech by stressing once more that raising the number of women that will win in the next elections is not just an issue of developing democracy in Kosovo, but has to do with the very future of Kosovo. Keeping in mind the substantial qualities and achievements of Kosovar women, a larger number of women in the next Parliament will give peace and stability a chance in Kosovo and the region.

Better organization (although we are already very organized), more solidarity among candidate women, and material support are necessary and urgent steps if we are to have more women in Parliament and build peace and stability in Kosovo and the region.

Thank you.

Men and Women Voters – Who Thinks of Them?

By Flora Macula, UNIFEM Office Kosovo

I would like to approach the issue of voter mobilization in support of women candidates from two directions, but mostly from the perspective of the women voter. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that every citizen has the right to take part in government directly or through a representative. So, we all have the right to govern, but is this our reality? Is it true that the government has a good relationship with voters and takes their needs and demands into account? I would like to address these questions on behalf of all women, even that woman who is far away from this hall and does not understand electoral campaigns. So, what is happening in the relationship between the citizen and the government? Are those who have the responsibility to lead working well? Are they answering the needs and demands of our reality?

How close is the government to the people? How many women in government are working in the field with women? Do women politicians know what is happening in the field? Hegel says that something lies between the individual and the state – and that is civil society. Therefore, we must ask as well: how much real work has been done by our civil society to bring practical concerns and the strategic interests of women to the government? I think we should discuss this issue at length because every decision made from above must aim at changing something below, which will ultimately raise the quality of life. But do we, women of Kosovo, have a high quality of life?

A fundamental issue that must be discussed when one talks of the relationship between voters and candidates, even if they are women, is the nature of the electoral law in Kosovo. With an electoral law that allows for closed lists, I, as a voter, do not know who I am voting for. I do not know who to hold accountable and who to contact. But today I am not here to discuss just the electoral law; therefore, I will discuss some other issues that men and women voters face in Kosovo today.

I think that the population in general, especially women, are quite aware of the problems that Kosovo's political system is facing. Women might not know the regulations dealing with elections, and they might be oblivious to the huge power they have as voters (52% of the population could change the government and the Parliament), but they are aware that the political parties are fighting a huge battle over political power. I am sorry to expose this reality, but we must understand the problem correctly. Also, we must be aware that this does not just happen here, but everywhere in the world. We are going through a very difficult phase, a transition phase, a phase of post-war rehabilitation after occupation. I know that there are many women who have not worked in fifteen years, have no income, have not known where their children were, and do not know what the next day will bring. These women are waiting for the government to answer their needs.

When we question why women and voters do not vote for women candidates, we should also ask: how much communication is there between elected and voting women? Do they communicate only before the elections when meetings are organized during the electoral campaign? Usually mostly men attend these meetings since women stay at home and men deal with politics.

As a voter, I want to remind women members of Parliament that they could be elected for one or more of the representative mandates. However, eventually they will just be women voters again and will have to fight for their rights and the rights of their children.

Another issue is the framing and structure of power in Kosovo and how it affects relations between the electors and the elected. It is not by chance that the first elections in Kosovo were local elections. Local power structures are closer to the people and often capable of fulfilling basic needs that citizens might have. That is why we should investigate the nature of the connection between local and central government and between the governments and the people. We must evaluate if the actual system needs more decentralization and other reforms.

If elected women want to win the vote of women, they must focus on connecting practical needs with strategic interest. This approach is also used by UNIFEM in all its programs relating to the achievement of gender equality in Kosovo and elsewhere.

UNIFEM in Kosovo designs its own programs and strategies by answering women's demands. My mentor who is here today has always told me, "Flora, listen to the voice of the women." This approach has brought results. UNIFEM has always tried to empower Kosovo's women by pushing for the use of global mechanisms to change the situation at the local level. Some of these mechanisms are the Convention for Eliminating All Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Security Council Resolution 1325, Peking's Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals, and other European, regional, and global standards.

These mechanisms give some orientation to local efforts for achieving gender equality and can be useful tools for change, considering the context of the community where the change is to take place. Such mechanisms play an important role in reaching equal and effective women's participation in decision-making in topics that have an impact on their life, including voter participation.

I would like to close my statement with a call to parliamentary women. In the elections of October 2004 I will vote for a woman, but I will also hold her accountable for how she fulfills her duties towards me as a citizen and a woman. Therefore, think for us; think for all women, whose eyes are looking up to you.

The Challenge of Focusing on Voters' Preoccupations – Supporting Women in Politics

By **Bernard Zeneli**, Head of the Political Science Department, Prishtina University, Kosovo

I accepted the invitation by the organizers of this conference with pleasure because the focus of this session has bothered me for a while: the issue of mobilizing voters to support candidates, especially women candidates. Before I get into the details of my presentation, I would like to emphasize my gratitude for the invitation and the positive feeling I get when addressing an audience like this.

Preliminary analysis of the political situation that has developed in the last few months in Kosovo shows that, in general, citizens are disappointed with Kosovo's current process. In addition, if the October elections have low voter turnout, the responsibility will fall on the frail and young Kosovar political elite.

Elections for political positions are usually a challenge in all political systems, whether or not they are democratic. The challenge to the Kosovar system is quite significant because the political battle is not taking place within the framework of an established state. First, Kosovar citizens must convince themselves and others that they are capable of living with the necessary disorder of a democratic system and then prove to the world that they can lead a multiethnic democracy. With this additional challenge, voting becomes a serious responsibility. When people reflect on this process and see that the Kosovar political class is still in its formative stages, their lack of confidence makes them hesitant to vote.

In general, women politicians cannot escape this situation either. They have been part of the same process that has brought the current situation to Kosovo. The challenge that I tried to explain earlier escalates when policies oriented towards women or voting for women candidates is included. Women candidates face a greater challenge: they need to attract voters' attention as well as prove that they are worthy of the vote.

Kosova Women's Lobby and Kosova Women's Network gave proper attention to the movement to change voter behavior in Kosovo. Although their campaign was very successful, it took the right form too late. As a result, it failed to change the electoral system. It is time not only to accept this fact, but to use it during the electoral process. As it is, the gender quota ensures that 30% of the Parliament will be women. The challenge is to ensure that this 30% becomes real and not just an electoral mechanism. The challenge is to get voters to vote because this 30% exists, not the opposite. I believe that no more time should be wasted in trying to change the electoral system. In the end, the vote is what matters. Kosovo's largest problem is that the vote is disappearing. The success of the electoral campaigns, with women in the center, will depend on generating as many votes as possible. Obviously these votes will go to the respective parties, but, on the other hand, it will be understood that the success of the party depends on women candidates' campaigns.

Political developments in the last five years remind us that we have yet to understand the social basis of Kosovo's voting process. Although this is not the right place to discuss this issue, it is important to point out that although Kosovo's post-war voting system is proportional, voting as a social or cultural act and as a social behavior is majoritarian.

Through an initial analysis of these phenomena, we can reach some immediate conclusions:

1. Proportional voting, while more compatible with a multicultural Kosovo, has failed. This is connected to the lack of a voting culture. Although the international community in Kosovo may have been aware of this, they have done little to modify cultural behavior to fit proportional voting.

2. Prior to 1999, voting in Kosovo was not seen as a process that could change the form of government or transfer power from one political class to another. Voting was part of the Albanian majority's resistance to the regime that supposedly represented what remained of Yugoslavia. Voting in Kosovo at the end of the century either did not happen or supported quasi-imaginary institutions. However, the method of voting was majoritarian, in support of a majority that demanded independence, a state, a democratic system, or something else.
3. Majority voting in Kosovo was not considered capable of altering political power, it was an obstruction. It provided rationality to the majority and created groups that could stop or start specific processes. It is important to emphasize that this process did not lead to the bursting liberation movement and the situations we experienced in Kosovo at the end of the century.
4. I cannot stress enough this characteristic of Kosovars' voting behavior: voting is not a mechanism of change, but rather one of resistance. Strategists that give direction to voters and try to get them to vote in the October 2004 elections should understand this. Strategies in support of candidates should not be obsessed with changing the electoral body. They first must adapt to the completely foreign nature of proportional voting and the oddities of voting in Kosovo. To put it simply, strategies to support candidates must coincide with those of the parties in which they will compete. Mobilizing and lobbying efforts should encourage parties to place candidates that support policies for women and gender issues on top of proportional lists.

An analytical view of the current situation in Kosovo clearly shows the importance of political leaders for the political life of the parties. Kosovar voters are not yet as attentive to issues that address their personal life as they are to political leaders and their popularity. Therefore, campaigns supporting women candidates or women's issues must focus on leaders and issues. In their speeches and when electoral lists are presented, men in leadership positions must clearly demonstrate that the 30% gender quota is a necessity. Women candidates should not only support their respective leaders, but also show the right enthusiasm and maturity to regenerate a lazy electorate that has little hope in the Kosovar political class' ability to bring change. Even if we are in a situation in which votes do not translate into policies, it appears that it is time for candidate lists to coincide with the policies that each party espouses. It might seem too early, but the environment of Kosovar politics necessitates this. On Election Day, these political parties should not to be judged simply on their stance towards final status, but also on their plans for the situation that will follow status. Political parties in Kosovo are not clear in their vision of what will happen post mid-2005; therefore, the chance to mobilize voters by playing this card is slim. On the other hand, women voters, about 50% or more of the electorate, could be mobilized around the issues that matter to them independent of the status issue. This strategy is a good training ground to move from leader-oriented politics to issues-oriented politics and to the transformation of public policies.

Nowadays in Kosovo, emphasis has been placed on building institutions. Very little has been said or analyzed regarding the challenge of drafting policies for politics. Kosovo is not reaching its expectations because we are not working with the people. Let us not forget a very important fact: there are structures that fulfill certain functions, but both structures and functions are the work of people. We are working on establishing institutions and investing them with functions, but no work is being done on Kosovars. Let us not forget that significantly less people in Kosovo identify themselves truly as Kosovars. Let us not forget that UNMIK and the local government have clearly failed in forming an administrative class and a society that still believes in developing Kosovo. I am under the impression that the future and the development of Kosovars will fall on women, and the time has come to think seriously about this process. If women candidates and gender related issues were to come to the center of this process, the campaign's success would not only be more certain, but Kosovar political life would work towards the future and security of the region. Politics cannot be understood without the citizen – in Kosovo the process of citizen formation must take a Kosovar flavor.

“Not giving up”

Closing Remarks by **Dale Pfeiffer**, USAID Mission Director in Kosovo

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen (are there any other men here, except me?). It is my pleasure to represent USAID and speak at the closing of your two-day conference.

You know the numbers and the challenges facing women in politics here, in the United States, and around the world. Women are more than half the population – so why aren’t women making at least half of the decisions? Perhaps the United States offers some ‘lessons learned’ about women in politics. We know from our own history that progress comes incrementally and sometimes too slowly, when it comes to recognizing women’s rights and offering equal opportunities. Sometimes – it takes small steps to start change.

Let me give one example of how one simple woman made a difference. Our civil rights movement in the US, to gain equal opportunity and rights for African Americans, is said to have started in 1955 with the arrest of one housecleaner, a black woman named Rosa Parks, when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a white man. Some news media said she refused to give up her seat because she was tired from cleaning all day. She said in an interview, years later, that, and I quote, *“The only tired I was, was tired of giving in.”*

Her action resulted in a boycott of her city’s bus system by every black citizen—70 percent of all bus passengers, and within a year, segregated seating was challenged in a federal lawsuit and the Supreme Court ruled that the bus segregation policy was unconstitutional.

That’s change, that’s significant, that’s organization, and that started with one woman taking a stand and not “giving in”.

Women have something to offer Kosovo. You have been developing a strategy, an action plan to bring women into the political decision-making process. What can I add to that?

I won’t say the things you’ve heard before about women being peacemakers – though I will remind you that eleven women have won the Nobel Peace Prize including Mother Teresa. And there are two winners whom I think offer Kosovo a lesson on resolving the Albanian-Serbian divide. That’s the two Northern Irish founders of the nonviolent Peace People organization, who bridged their own religious divide and worked to resolve the longstanding violent conflict in their land. By focusing on their commonalities, not differences, people can be brought together.

I won’t pretend to say that women speak with one voice. That would be boring and non-productive. You’ve talked about that problem, about how women may not even be supporting other women who do run for office. Women hold a variety of opinions. But women also share life experiences that can bring different perspectives into the political debate.

The Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University concludes that elected women tend to be more open to working with citizens and to including all points of view in their job of representation. Women legislators also tend to favor an open style of governing, with discussions and decisions occurring in the public view. That’s something you can offer to local government, to political parties, to the Assembly.

You’ve talked about gaining better cooperation between women’s NGOs and women in political parties – that’s part of the negotiation and work together that goes on in government and civil society. The negotiation is seeing what you can do for each other, not just thinking about how women NGOs should help women in politics. All NGOs need to be better at cooperating with each other, and with political parties, to achieve shared goals.

You've explored one solution, that of working with media to show the contribution women NGOs are making, and the contribution and role women are making in politics in the committee rooms, an area that is not as visible as speaking in the Assembly. That will help raise recognition of women's contributions and the names of women in politics. It also will help raise men's awareness that women are players in politics and civil society, and to be reckoned with.

And women need to look at what they can bring to political parties and to the democracy as a whole. Make yourselves invaluable to political parties. In the US, the American Association of University Women promotes equity for all women and girls, lifelong education, and positive societal change. They have over 100,000 members, 1,300 branches and 550 university partners nationwide. Members have examined and taken positions on the fundamental issues of the day - educational, social, economic, and political, and they publish issue papers, analyzing issues from all aspects, which help politicians and citizens make informed decisions.

But what the association is most recognized for is their voter education campaign at every election – not just organizing public debates but publishing a guide for voters on all candidates and issues. Voters and the media look for those guides, to study, to learn about candidates, and to make informed choices – even though the association does not make a recommendation. They're powerful because of their voters' guide, and political parties recognize that – and so they listen when the Association advocates a position.

The National Organization for Women, nicknamed NOW, is the largest organization of activists for women's equality in the United States. Notice their name is the National Organization FOR Women, not OF women. They have male members, and one of their first officers was a man. Today NOW has 500,000 contributing members and 550 chapters in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. When it was founded in 1966, NOW had 28 members and a budget of \$140. You can do that!

Many of these members then founded the National Women's Political Caucus in 1970 – with the objective of fielding women candidates, influencing both major American political parties to support women, and to organize women at the state and local levels, based on the development of local caucuses. Two-thousand women started that – so it means you have to convince your mother, your sister, your neighbor to join your efforts. It all starts with one person. You have to be the Rosa Parks who becomes tired of giving up.

With just one arm (*note – at the time of the conference Mr. Pfeiffer's right arm was in a cast due to a break*), I've had to learn to do things with just one arm. This gives me an analogy – you need two arms to be efficient. Society needs two arms – a male and a female arm. I have a feeling the male arm is the left one, and Kosovo is right handed!

Thank you.

Closing Remarks

By **Kaqusha Jashari**, Social Democratic Party of Kosovo and member of Kosova Women's Lobby

This conference, "Women Leadership – Strategies for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making," and its goal to raise awareness of women's position in Kosovar society, gender inequality, and the need for women's active participation in electoral activities comes at the right time: just before the second Parliamentary elections.

The initiative of Kosova Women's Lobby to hold the conference, organizing by STAR Network, and support from the National Democratic Institute show many groups' commitment to increasing women's participation in political decision-making in Kosovo.

Even now, five years after the war, we still feel the grave consequences of the difficult period in the 1990's, which have hit the most sensitive groups hardest, such as women, children, and minorities. This conference is an effort to contribute concretely to the engagement of women in building a new and democratic society and to the empowerment of Kosovo's new institutions.

The problems that Kosovar society faces in transition – economic, political, social, and ethnic disturbances; the fall of living standards; and especially poverty – are distracting attention from other issues, such as the status of women in society and gender equality. It is impossible not to notice that we in Kosovo are faced with inequalities other than those that are gender based inequalities such as the profound stratification of society into rich and poor and the problems of majority-minority relations.

This two-day conference has revealed the disparity of gender status between different countries – developed ones and those in transition. In our region, a low rate of women's participation in decision-making is evident compared to a country like Croatia, which has accomplished significant progress. In this region, we face a deterioration of the social condition, instability in the job market, a rise in violence towards women, and other negative phenomena.

In the context of building a democratic society and facing these problems, there have been certain efforts to achieve gender equality, especially through creating many NGOs and increasing the engagement of women in political parties. As a result, certain political and governmental commitments have become evident.

The principle of gender equality has been included in legislation with the Law of Gender Equality, which was approved by Kosovo's Parliament. This law is a positive step in eliminating certain forms of discrimination towards women.

Under international influence, women's participation in the Parliament is up to 30%, but this has not happened in the administration. Including women in socially important decision-making roles is part of respecting human rights. Women's participation in institutions is important for the democratization of society and its economic and social stability.

Therefore, in order to move towards accomplishing gender equality, especially in political decision-making, I think that a greater commitment of governmental structures is necessary, both at the central and local level. Social pressure is necessary to make these structures more proactive. That is why gender awareness raising campaigns and dialogue between governmental institutions, political parties, and civil society organizations are necessary. The media has an important role to play here because it can powerfully influence public opinion. The efforts of governmental structures, NGOs, and the media would be greatly facilitated by gender-based data collection, analysis, and statistical preparation, which would enable the evaluation of all these institutions' accomplishments.

PLATFORM FOR ACTION TO EMPOWER WOMEN IN POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING



Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-making

Approved on July 13, 2004

This platform is based on:

1. Recommendations from the conference "Women's Leadership – Strategy for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making" Prishtina, 18-19 June, 2004
2. National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality
3. NDI Global Platform "Win with Women – Empower Political Parties"

This platform was devised by the Working Group on Recommendations, which emerged from the conference, "Women's Leadership – Strategy for Empowering Women in Political Decision-Making," and at a round table session on the platform in Prishtina on July 13, 2004.

This action platform will be made public and will be presented individually to all government and civil society institutions that work to achieve women's equal and effective participation in political decision-making.

General		
Recommendations	Institutions in charge	Potential programs/activities
1. Implement an electoral system that ensures more direct accountability between the electorate and those elected, as well as better representation of different parts of Kosovo, while preserving gender balance.	The Parliament, NGOs, media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Develop an extensive and creative public campaign on the importance of such a system for the development of democracy in Kosovo.b. Develop an advocacy campaign for changing regulations on the electoral system.
2. Include gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the Kosovo educational system.	Ministry of Education, women's NGOs, donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Establish a Gender Study Department at the University of Prishtina.b. Develop a campaign for changing curricula and text books so they are gender sensitive.c. Establish central and local institutions to analyze and propose policies for the achievement of gender equality.
3. Further develop support systems for women and families, including child-care institutions as well as institutions for the disabled.	The Parliament, government, donors	

Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-making

I. More women included in governmental decision-making (this includes the Parliament,		
Recommendations	Institutions in charge	Potential programs/activities
1. Complete the legal framework that ensures full equality between men and women, including the prevention of discrimination against women in employment and their promotion within the public service.	The Parliament, Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality, Kosovo Women's Lobby, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs, legal system, Ombudsperson's Office	Advocate for a minimal 30% gender quota to ensure that women are employed in the public service and are represented at the same level in decision-making positions in the public sector.
2. Place special emphasis and monitor the implementation of existing laws and regulations.	The Parliament, Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs, legal system, Ombudsperson's Office	
3. Establish governmental instruments at the local and central level for the implementation of the Gender Equality Law.	Central and local government, Municipal Gender Officers, Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues within the Prime Minister's Office	a. Women's NGOs, members of political parties, and Members of the Parliament write a letter to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in Kosovo to ask that he cooperates with the Parliament on the implementation of the Gender Equality Law. b. Develop an advocacy campaign to ensure the inclusion of the provisions of the Gender Equality Law in the decentralization processes, starting with the Local Government Law
4. Appoint a greater number of women as ministers and in other senior offices within the government.	Political parties, women's forums in political parties, central and local governments, the Parliament, Parliamentarian Committee on Gender Equality, Kosovo Women's Lobby, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs	a. Advocate with at least one party in order to obtain its commitment before elections that it will appoint women to at least 30% of the leading positions in government. If a party makes such a commitment, women's NGOs will support this party during the elections campaign. b. Prepare a list of women with the necessary qualifications to be appointed to leading government positions and submit it to all political parties. c. Encourage women with political expertise for senior posts in government to develop relationships with men and women who can support their potential appointment to these posts.
5. Increase women's participation in decision-making positions in all sectors of life, especially in key sections, not only in those perceived as dealing with women's issues.	The Parliament, Prime Minister, women's forums in political parties, Kosovo Women's Lobby, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs	
6. Provide human and financial resources to women elected and those holding leading positions in government as a means of enabling them to carry out their role as representatives of the electorate and government.	The Parliament, Prime Minister, women's forums in political parties, women's NGOs, donors	a. Develop training programs for women in elected and appointed positions, including leadership skills training. A possible model is Hope Fellowship. b. Establish a library with literature and materials that would serve women in leading positions.

Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-making

I. More women included in governmental decision-making (this includes the Parliament,		
Recommendations	Institutions in charge	Potential programs/activities
7. Develop programs that enable women politicians in senior posts at the local, national, and/or international levels pass their experience and knowledge to women who aspire to become politicians and newly elected candidates and officials.	Political parties, Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues within the Prime Minister's Office, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender Affairs, women's NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encourage women and men to become mentors of women on their way to leadership. b. Develop a pilot-project in which 2-3 politicians at the central and local levels would mentor a group of young women who are interested in getting more involved in politics.
8. Develop programs to involve young women in politics.	Political parties, women's forums in political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs, youth NGOs, donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop a program that would enable and encourage young women to follow the work of the Parliament of Kosovo and local assemblies. b. Develop a program in which politicians at the central and local levels would visit secondary and higher education schools to speak with young women on the importance of their participation in political life. c. Develop a program in which women Members of the Assembly hire young women from youth forums of their political parties or elsewhere to conduct research on issues that are relevant to the electorate, or to help build the MPs' relationship with the electorate.
9. Empower and increase the capacity of the Committee on Gender Equality to ensure gender mainstreaming in all aspects of the Parliament's work	Parliamentary Committee on Gender Equality, donors, women's NGOs	
10. Strengthen the cooperation between the Gender Equality Committees, Municipal Gender Officers, and women's NGOs to increase the number of women in decision-making positions in local governments.	Gender Equality Committees within municipal assemblies, Municipal Gender Officers within local governments, women's NGOs, donors	
11. Improve the status of Municipal Gender Officers to increase their participation in decision-making in local governments.	Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities and Gender Issues within the Prime Minister's Office, Association of Kosovo's Municipalities, Gender Equality Committees within municipal assemblies, Municipal Gender Officers, women's NGOs	
12. Strengthen communication and cooperation among governmental mechanisms on gender equality at the central and local level.	Office on Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues within the Prime Minister's Office, Inter-Ministerial Committee on Gender Issues, Gender Equality Committees within municipal assemblies, Municipal Gender Officers within local governments	
13. Monitor and assess women's representation in political decision-making through the collection, analysis, and distribution of quantitative and qualitative data on women and men employed at all levels and in all fields of the public sector.	Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues within the Prime Minister's Office, women's NGOs	

Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-making

II. Win with women – empower political parties		
Recommendations	Institutions in charge	Potential programs/activities
1. Mainstream gender in the platforms of political parties using existing national and international documents, such as the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council, the National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality, and the Gender Equality Law.	Political parties, women's forums in political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, other NGOs	Political parties should develop regulations and checklists to ensure gender mainstreaming in all aspects of their work.
2. Ensure opportunities for women's equal and effective participation in leadership positions in political parties. 3. Ensure that women enjoy full participation in all internal party structures that develop party's policies and in the nomination process for appointed and elected positions.	Political parties, women's forums in political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Eliminate all obstacles within party structures and procedures that directly or indirectly discriminate against women's participation in party's decision-making. b. Advocate for a critical mass of at least 30% women in all levels of political party decision-making structures. c. Develop and maintain a database on women with necessary qualifications for leadership positions within the party, as well as for elected and politically appointed positions.
4. Monitor the implementation of political parties' regulations and other documents to assess whether they promote gender equality.	Women's forums of political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Develop 'a report card' to assess how a political party implements the gender perspective in all facets of its activities, a practice used in developed democracies. b. Develop other monitoring instruments for the political parties' activities.
5. Include the promotion of women candidates in the official policies of political parties. Encourage women to compete for decision-making positions at the national, regional, and local level.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties, Kosovo Women's Lobby, Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs	Develop strategic plans for recruiting, training, and supporting women candidates.
6. Secure real financial and human support for women candidates. Men and women candidates that have approximately similar chances of winning the elections should have equal access to party resources.	Political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs, other NGOs, donors	Establish a support program for women candidates based on the models of Emily's List and Women's Campaign Fund (USA).
7. Increase the individual capacity of women candidates to become winning candidates.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Offer training on specialized skills for electoral campaigns tailor made for women, on subjects such as policy development, debate techniques, organization, working in networks, advocacy, public speaking, leadership, field organization, strategic planning, gaining self-confidence, and securing funds. Include training on message preparation and the media to help women feel more secure, clear, and prepared. b. Establish a center that offers training and technical assistance for elected women candidates.
8. Political parties should engage more with women voters while drafting political agendas, developing political proposals, and lobbying for those proposals with the government.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Work with party leaders – men and women – so that they discuss issues related to priority concerns for women voters. b. Increase contacts with female voters by using the political party platform to develop a message on and about women. c. Create an information center in party headquarters that will document outreach initiatives targeting women voters. c. Establish a contact group between political parties and women's NGOs that would hold regular meetings.

Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-making

II. Win with women – empower political parties (continued...)		
Recommendations	Institutions in charge	Potential programs/activities
9. Empower women's organizations or forums within political parties.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties, women's NGOs, donors	
10. Adopt democratic and transparent rules in party by-laws and regulations and ensure their implementation. Promote transparency in the selection process for candidates to establish clear and comprehensive selection criteria.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties	

III. The role of NGOs and the media in empowering women and girls in political decision-making		
Recommendations	Responsible institutions	Possible programs/ actions
1. Use the media effectively to enhance women's participation in political decision-making by increasing the visibility of women candidates and politicians, as well as by raising public awareness on women's participation in politics.	The media, women's NGOs, women's forums of political parties	Produce TV and radio programs on the work and lives of successful women politicians.
2. Civil society should engage in continuous and important efforts to increase the participation of women in political decision-making.	The media, Kosovo Women's Network, other NGOs, donors	a. Publicly support women candidates at the central and local levels. b. Publish promotion materials to inform the public about women candidates and the support provided to them by women's NGOs.
3. Train civil society members to respect the rules of the media world, which will ensure correct and effective reporting on women's participation in political life.	Women's NGOs, the media, other NGOs, donors	Train NGOs on using the media as an important tool to empower women in politics.
4. Raise the awareness and capacity of journalists on the importance of women's participation in politics and governance.	Women's NGOs, women's forums of political parties	a. Train journalists and other members of the media on gender-sensitive reporting. b. Conduct research to establish how people from different regions receive information and what media they trust the most. c. Monitor the media to assess the results of the efforts to bring more women into politics.
5. Encourage and acknowledge the work of NGOs and journalists that provide positive coverage of women candidates, as well as coverage of their political ideas and beliefs, especially during the elections period.	Women's NGOs, other NGOs, political parties	
6. Political parties should create partnerships with NGOs in order to raise the capacity of women leaders and build coalitions on legislative initiatives.	Kosovo Women's Lobby, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs, political parties, women's forums of political parties	
7. Strengthen the cooperation between women in politics and women's NGOs to benefit the advancement of women in Kosovo.	Kosovo Women's Lobby, Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs	Enhance and empower the efforts of Kosovo Women's Lobby.

Platform for Action to Empower Women in Political Decision-making

IV. Mobilizing citizens to support women in politics		
Recommendations	Responsible institutions	Possible programs/ actions
1. Identify the priority concerns of women voters and present these concerns to the political parties, as well as to women and men candidates. Make special efforts to reach out to women in rural areas.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct research in different regions to identify women's priority concerns. b. Develop advocacy campaigns similar to the KWN "Political Parties Work for Women" campaign.
2. Present political proposals to political parties' leadership as effective solutions for the problems that women face.	Women's forums of political parties, Parliamentary Committees, Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs	Develop a check list for all political parties to see which are the specific concerns of women and address these concerns.
3. Promote women candidates by showing how their proposals address voters' needs and priorities.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties, Kosovo Women's Network, other NGOs	Increase the number of meetings between women politicians and the electorate before, during, and after the elections.
4. Encourage the electorate to assess candidates on the basis of the programs and policies that they support.	Kosovo Women's Network, women's NGOs, youth NGOs, other NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Establish a women voters' network that is clear on the aims and policies that they propose. Demonstrate the power of this network to elect the candidate that supports their recommendations. b. Invite candidates and politicians to forums to discuss women's concerns and problems with the electorate. c. Organize a public education campaign to raise voter awareness on the importance of engaging citizens in discussions with political parties.
5. Develop resources that serve to strengthen ties between women candidates and the electorate.	Political parties, women's forums of political parties, women's NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Conduct research on how do women vote. b. Create a database of women who seek more involvement in politics.
6. Create stronger ties between NGOs, not just between those of women, to work on voters' mobilization.	Kosovo Women's Network, other women's NGOs, other NGOs	Organize wide and creative public education campaigns to motivate voters to vote, especially women voters and voters in rural areas.

APPENDICES 1-4



Fact Sheet on Women in Kosovo

Informal statistics show that women comprise 52% of the population in Kosovo, 48% are men. Half of the population is under 25 years old.

Education

Kosovo's education system is considered one of the poorest in Europe, and it is currently undergoing a series of reforms.

School attendance by children is a big concern, especially in rural areas. Generally speaking, the gender gap widens as education advances. The following statistical data was taken from the Kosovo Demographic and Health Survey, 2003.

Table: Persons currently attending school by age-group, sex, and residence

Age Group	Urban			Rural			Total		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
5-9	64.9	66.9	65.9	71.0	61.1	66.3	69.4	62.7	66.2
10-14	98.1	96.8	97.4	99.1	96.5	97.8	98.9	96.5	97.7
15-19	73.0	68.4	70.7	69.9	48.5	59.8	70.7	54.0	62.7
20-24	19.6	20.8	20.2	14.2	10.9	12.5	15.8	13.5	14.6
25-29	5.5	7.8	6.7	4.0	0.4	2.0	4.4	2.4	3.3

Health

Services available to women and the quality of services: Issues around health care and antenatal care in Kosovo are not well documented. Based on the available information, access to health facilities and professional assistance for maternal health is almost universal. United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Micronutrient Status Survey findings show that 95% of women have access to antenatal care.

The frequency of antenatal care visits varies. Based on MNS Survey Kosova 2001, 33.3% of pregnant women have only one antenatal care visit during their pregnancy, 21.8% have two visits, 19.9% have three visits, and only 25.1% have more than three visits, which is considered the optimal number of antenatal care visits during pregnancy.

The UNFPA survey shows that services provided in Kosovo's health facilities and especially in private clinics are usually understood as an ultrasound check up, and, in many cases, only as a means of diagnosing the pregnancy and differentiating the gender of the fetus. Based on this survey, poor attendance of pregnant women to antenatal care facilities and poor quality of antenatal care services are amongst the main causal factors contributing to high prenatal mortality and morbidity rates for newborns and new mothers in Kosovo.

APPENDIX 1

Fact Sheet on Women in Kosovo

Birth rate: Kosovo has the highest birth rate in Europe. UNFPA research shows that at all education levels, urban women want fewer children than rural women. Research also shows that on average women want 22% more boys than girls in their ideal families.

Maternity death rate: UNFPA, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the Institute of Public Health have no official data on the maternity death rate. The hospitals are currently collecting such data, which will be released in due time.

Use of contraception: According to UNFPA Kosovo Demographic and Health Survey 2003, contraceptive ever-use has increased quite considerably since 1999. While urban withdrawal rates are higher than in rural areas, rural rates remain high with more than 20% ever-use; this is far higher than for any other method. Overall, 32% of women 15-49 years old are currently using some family planning methods.

Economy

According to figures released by the World Bank, over 70% of the Kosovar population is unemployed, 50% live in conditions of poverty, and 12% live in conditions of extreme poverty.

The United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has registered more than 50,000 businesses. Women-led businesses comprise only 6% of this number.

One of the main obstacles that women encounter when applying for loans is that they rarely own property, so they cannot present collateral.

There are no women that lead banks and there is only one woman that leads an insurance company in Kosovo.

Employment

According to data by the Ministry of Work and Social Welfare, 287,265 people are registered as unemployed with this ministry and 45.5% of them are women. Only 36% of women are employed and active (compared to the 59% of men that are employed). Women are mainly employed in the public sector, educational institutions, and health care. Nearly 50% of people employed in these sectors are women.

UNFPA Kosovo Demographic and Health Survey 2003 shows the following trend in recent years. Men's participation in the job market has fallen from 88% to its current level of 76% during the past four years. In contrast, the women's rate has risen from 33% in 1999 to its current level of 39.9%.

Women in political decision-making

The current election regulation requires that 30% of candidates are women. The closed list system ensures that nearly 30% of the elected positions go to women.

Thirty-five out of 120 members of Parliament are women. They comprise 28.3% of the Parliament. Eight of 19 heads of parliamentary committees are women. There is one woman member of the Parliament's presidency. None of the 14 political party groups represented in the Parliament is led by a woman. There is a Parliamentary Committee on Gender Issues. There is only one woman minister (the Minister of Health) in the current government.

Municipal Government

In accordance with the UNMIK regulation on women's representation in governmental institutions (30%), 28.8% of the municipal assemblies' members are women.

There is only one woman head of the municipal assembly (Artan/Novo Berd municipality) and two other women are chief executives of municipal governments (in Kastriot/Obiliq and Dardan/Kamenicë municipalities).

Starting January 2003, municipal gender officers were assigned to every municipal government. There are Gender Equality Committees in 15 municipalities.

Women are largely missing from the leading structures of political parties at the central and local level.

Women in police and security forces

Only 15.5% of the employees in Kosovo Police Service are women and women comprise only 2% of Kosovo Protection Corps.

Media

One of the three Kosovo-wide TV stations, RTV21, is mainly owned and run by a woman. In the media sector (print and electronic media), only 13 out of 119 women or 11.9% hold the position of directors. There are a substantial number of women journalists.

Judicial System

There is a lack of information about women's representation in this field. While in 1989 20.6% of lawyers were women, in 2000 women comprised only 19% of this profession.

According to ABA CEELI, in 2002 6.7% of the 245 lawyers who are members of the Kosovo Chamber of Lawyers are women.

The Parliament has passed two very important laws: the Gender Equality Law and the Anti-Discrimination Law.

Main sources of information:

UNDP, *Kosovo Human Development Report*, 2003

UNMIK Office for Gender Affairs, *Women and Men in Kosovo*, 2003

UNFPA, *Kosovo Demographic and Health Survey*, 2003

APPENDIX 2

Political and Governmental Institutions and Efforts on Gender Equality in Kosovo

Political and Governmental Institutions and Efforts on Gender Equality in Kosovo

The **Parliamentary Commission on Gender Equality** was established in 2001 directly following the first general elections. The commission is comprised of 11 members of Parliament (ten women and one man) representing all parliamentary groups, including those of ethnic minorities. Since its creation, the commission has mainly worked to prepare the Gender Equality Law that was approved by the Parliament in February 2004, and signed into law recently by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General.

For more information: Information Office in Kosovo Parliament: +381 (0) 38 504 604 5810

The **Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues at the Prime Minister's Office** was initiated in 2000 as part of the United Nations Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) Department of Public Administration and Social Affairs. It was then transferred to the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG). The office employs one person who focuses exclusively on gender issues. The office provides advice to the Prime Minister on issues within its mandate and spearheads the Inter-Ministerial Group on Gender Equality. This office is open and receptive to initiatives by women's NGOs and relies on their expertise and connections.

For more information contact: Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues: + 381 (0) 38 200 14 530

The **Inter-Ministerial Group on Gender Equality** was established recently and includes gender focal points in each ministry. So far only five ministries have appointed a gender focal point. The group discusses and provides mutual support on mainstreaming gender in all aspects of the government's work.

Municipal Gender Officers (MGOs) were appointed in 2003 with pressure from the UNMIK Office for Gender Affairs, which still mentors and assesses their work. However, they formally report to the chief executive of the municipality. MGOs' mandate is to advise the municipal government on gender-sensitive policies and programs, but there is still a lot of confusion as to the job description of MGOs. In addition, very few resources are available to them. Most of the people hired as MGOs have no prior experience or exposure to gender-base analysis of issues and policies.

For more information contact: Office for Good Governance, Human Rights, Equal Opportunities, and Gender Issues: + 381 (0) 38 200 14 530

Municipal Gender Equality Committees were established in 15 municipalities as a result of a joint effort by UNIFEM and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Democratization Department. The committees include representatives of the municipal assembly, the municipal government, and women's NGOs in that municipality. The committees' mandate is to mainstream gender in the work of the municipal assembly and government and to foster citizens' participation in the work of local government on gender-related issues.

For more information contact: UNIFEM office: + 381 (0) 38 224 651

Women's Forums of political parties operate mainly within their party and their cooperation with women's NGOs or other political gender-related efforts is very limited.

The **Gender Equality Law** was prepared by the Parliamentarian Committee on Gender Equality and is a much-needed step toward ensuring women's rights in Kosovo. The draft law went through a public discussion process, but the committee did not reflect upon an important number of the comments and suggestions provided by the local and international experts and organizations. Therefore, as approved by the Parliament, the law is flawed and prescribes some measures that could not be implemented either because of human rights concerns or for budgetary reasons.

For more information contact: the Information Office in Kosovo's Parliament: +381 (0) 38 504 604 5810

APPENDIX 2

Political and Governmental Institutions and Efforts on Gender Equality in Kosovo

The **National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality** was developed by a joint group of women's NGOs and women politicians. UNIFEM provided technical and financial assistance to this effort. The plan provides thorough and concrete strategies and actions for achieving gender equality in priority areas of concern for women and girls in Kosovo. Due to an effective advocacy campaign by women's NGOs and UNIFEM, the Prime Minister's Office endorsed the plan and has signed it into a governmental decree.

For more information contact: UNIFEM office: + 381 (0) 38 224 651

Prepared by STAR Network of World Learning/Kosovo

APPENDIX 3

Key Women's NGO Networks in Kosovo - Trends

Key Women's NGO Networks in Kosovo – Trends

The following is a brief description and analysis of some of the main women's NGO networks. Their work is very important for achieving gender equality in Kosovo.

Kosova Women's Network (KWN). Established in January 2000, KWN has grown into a leading women's advocacy network both in Kosovo and the region. KWN is comprised of more than 45 successful women's NGOs from all regions of Kosovo. The network includes NGOs that represent ethnic minorities. KWN provides a forum for information exchange among Kosovo women's NGOs as well as between local NGOs and international organizations and agencies that support gender-related programs. This network focuses on efforts to achieve gender equality, women's rights, women's political participation, and building partnerships between women's NGOs and governmental institutions. The network is one of the few organizations in Kosovo that is actively involved in regional and international advocacy efforts on behalf of Kosovar women.

Contact person: Igballe Rogova, Executive Director, rrggk_kwn@yahoo.com, +381 (0) 38 245 850

Kosova Women's Initiative (KWI). KWI was initially a United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) program implemented by International Rescue Committee with funding from the U.S. Department of State. Between 1999 and 2000, the \$10 million grant-giving program distributed grants to various women's NGOs throughout Kosovo. The program yielded mixed results and caused tension between international donors and leading women's NGOs. During 2002 and 2003, KWI was transformed into a locally-focused network with seven regional councils that served as grant-making boards. These councils, comprised of women from all ethnic backgrounds, supported small-scale projects implemented by women's NGOs. Now, KWI has nearly ceased to be a grant-giving organization. Instead, the network has started to implement programs in new areas, such as women's economic development and political participation.

Contact Person: Visare Gashi, Executive Director, kwi_org@yahoo.com, +381 (0) 38 245 040

Kosova Business Women's Network (KBWN). KBWN was established in 2001 following a Kosovo-wide "Women in the Economy" conference. The network supports women's engagement in the private sector through information sharing, experience exchange, networking, training, and advocacy. KBWN is currently engaged in an institutional capacity building effort that will enable it to provide better services to its members and undertake successful advocacy efforts on issues of women's economic empowerment.

Contact Person: Ilire Rizvanolli, Program Manager, rrgak@yahoo.com, + 381 (0) 38 541 831

Kosova Women's Lobby (KWL). KWL, established in September 2003, is an informal coalition of women leaders from NGOs, political institutions, the media, and the private sector. This coalition debates and undertakes strategic interventions from a gender perspective on major political, economic, social, and cultural issues. KWL has been instrumental in bringing a gender perspective in advocating for progressive reforms on major issues that concern Kosovar society. The most recent example is KWL's contribution to a Kosovo-wide campaign to change the electoral law.

Contact person: Luljeta Vuniqi, lvuniqi@kfos.org, Kaqusha Jashari, kaqushaj@hotmail.com

Serbian Women's NGOs Network of Kosovo "Zora". "Zora" was established in 2003 with support by a Belgrade-based women's network and Kosova Women's Network. This network aims at strengthening Serbian women's NGOs in Kosovo. Previously, Zora was engaged in a joint exchange and training program with KWN. The network is still in its initial steps and lacks resources.

Contact Person: Ramila Kapetanovic, Network Coordinator, radakap@yahoo.com, + 381 (0) 63 8174 915

Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian (RAE) Women's Network. Established in 2001 with help from the Kosovo Foundation for an Open Society (KFOS) Women's Program and KWN, RAE Women's Network remains a poorly organized network. Despite several attempts by KFOS Women's Program to provide funding and training to this network, the network still faces difficulties in keeping the members active and expanding its activities.

Contact person: Emsale Mergjollari, + 381 (0) 29 26 106, emsalemergjollari@hotmail.com

Key Women's NGO Networks in Kosovo - Trends

Recent trends in the development of women's NGOs

Following the aftermath of the NATO intervention in Kosovo, a large number of small and larger women's groups and organizations were formed throughout Kosovo. This was partially due to the large amount of funds available from international donors for gender-related programs. Four years after the end of the war, certain noticeable trends appeared in the development of the women's NGO sector in Kosovo:

A number of leading women's NGOs have gained **a high public profile** due to the relevance of the issues they address, the substantial engagement of the community in their activities, the quality of their leadership, and their ability to enter successful partnerships with respective governmental institutions both at the local and central level. In most cases, the media has provided wide and positive coverage of activities undertaken by women's NGOs.

Right after the NATO intervention, most women's NGOs acted as Jacks of all trades. However, in the last two years, most women's NGOs have demonstrated a **specialization** not only in terms of program areas, but also in the type of the activities in which they are engaged. For example, there are now specific NGOs that provide services to victims of violence; support women heads of households; conduct trainings; and, provide education to women and girls. It is becoming increasingly rare for a single organization to both provide health education to young mothers and run an income-generating activity to employ women heads of households.

Although most of the women's NGOs complain that there is still not enough cooperation between them, **networking** among women's NGOs is increasing. Several NGO networks have been established both at the Kosovo-wide and at the local level. However, these networks serve more as a forum for information and experience exchange; joint programs are still rare.

In the last two years women's NGOs are **undertaking more advocacy efforts** both at the local and Kosovo-wide level. Some of the women's NGOs and networks have moved from service-providing to pressuring the government to embark on policies and programs that benefit women. Still, most women's groups are just beginning to see their role as actors of change in society, and they **lack skills and expertise on how to effectively affect policy changes** at all levels. Furthermore, there is **little capacity to monitor the implementation** of the approved laws and policies.

A recent positive trend is **the growing cooperation with governmental institutions** both at the local and central level. There is still a lot of reciprocal misunderstanding between the two sectors, but some parts of the government, including the Prime Minister's Office, are looking at the women's NGO sector as a resource of expertise and as a partner in implementing programs on gender equality. One major achievement in this respect is the close cooperation established between the Kosova Women's Network and the Office for Human Rights, Equality, and Gender Issues at the Prime Minister's Office.

Recently, one could notice **a closer cooperation between women's NGOs and women politicians** as individuals. Kosova Women's Lobby is a clear result of this trend. Despite this, **cooperation with the political parties and the Parliament remains weak**. This deeply affects efforts by women's NGOs to influence political change that will benefit women and communities in Kosovo.

The **cooperation between women's NGOs and the international agencies, organizations, and institutions that work on gender-related programs has produced mixed results**. On one hand there are organizations like UNIFEM, Kvinna till Kvinna, and STAR Network of World Learning that see women's NGOs as key partners in all stages of program development and implementation. On the other hand, relations with some offices and institutions within the international administration remain strained; this often results in lost energy and sometimes damages the public image of gender equality programs.

APPENDIX 3

Key Women's NGO Networks in Kosovo - Trends

With the exception of a few women's NGOs, most organizations are focused on day-to-day work and their programs. Even though they could benefit from the experiences and resources available in the larger women's movement, they leave **very little time and resources to international networking**.

The most obvious negative trend is the **reduction of funding** for gender-related programs by international donors. This and donors' tendency to change funding priorities often poses a serious threat to the sustainability of efforts in the area of gender equality in Kosovo. Still, substantial funds for gender-related programs will be available for the next three years.

Prepared by STAR Network of World Learning/Kosovo

Speakers' Bios

IGBALLE ROGOVA

Igballe Rogova was co-founder and Program Director of the rural women's group "Motrat Qiriazi" ("Qiriazi Sisters") in Kosovo. She is a leading figure of the women's movement in Kosovo and an internationally renowned women's rights advocate. In 1999 Igballe co-founded the Kosova Women's Network, a coalition of women's organizations that work on joint advocacy campaigns on behalf of Kosovar women. As part of her work with "Motrat Qiriazi" and Kosova Women's Network, Igballe has assisted and mentored thousands of women and girls from all ethnic minorities in Kosova. Igballe won the Women of the Year Award from the International Network of Women's Organizations, based in San Francisco, and Lydia Sklevicky Prize for innovative work with women's groups awarded by Mamacash, The Netherlands/Open Society Foundation, Croatia/Global Fund for Women, U.S.A. Currently, Igballe acts as the Executive Director for the Kosova Women's Network.

YVANA ENZLER

Yvana Enzler has been Head of the Swiss Liaison Office in Pristina since September 2002. Previously, she worked as the Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Switzerland in Sarajevo; Head of Recruitment and Training, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bern; Counselor, Embassy of Switzerland, Washington D.C; Counselor, Embassy of Switzerland, Rome; Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bern; and, Attaché, Embassy of Switzerland, Brussels. Yvana holds a M.A. in Political Science from the University of Lausanne (Switzerland), and a M.A.L.S. from Georgetown University, Washington D.C. (U.S.A.). She speaks French, German, Italian, English, and Serbo-Croatian.

JEAN CARNAHAN

Jean Carnahan (daughter-in-law of Albert S. J. Carnahan), a senator from Missouri, U.S.A., graduated from George Washington University in 1955, with a B.A. in Business and Public Administration. A civic volunteer and Democratic Party activist, she was the first lady of Missouri from 1993 to 2000. On January 3, 2001, she was appointed to the United States Senate to fill the vacancy caused by the death of her husband, Mel E. Carnahan, who was elected posthumously on November 7, 2000. She served from January 3, 2001 to November 25, 2002, when an elected successor took office for the remainder of the term.

Bibliography

Carnahan, Jean. *If Walls Could Talk: The Story of Missouri's First Families*. Jefferson City, Mo.: MMPI, 1998; Carnahan, Jean. *Christmas at the Mansion: Its Memories and Menus*. Jefferson City, Mo.: MMPI, 1999.

EDITA TAHIRI

Edita Tahiri is the President of the Democratic Alternative of Kosova, a newly formed political party. She is a member of the Parliament and Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee for Transport and Communications. Edita is a leading figure in Kosovar politics; she led the Kosovo parallel government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a decade. From the 1992 London conference through the Rambouille conference in 1999, she was a leading negotiator in all phases of the negotiation process regarding Kosovo. She is the co-founder of LDK (Democratic League of Kosovo) Women's Forum. Edita holds a M.A. in Public Administration from Harvard University, U.S.A. She has also a degree in Engineering of Electronic Technology and Communications. She speaks English, Serbo-Croatian, and Turkish. She is currently a lecturer in the Political Science Department at Prishtina University.

BEHAR SELIMI

Behar Selimi is a M.A. candidate in Politics and the Judiciary at the Law Faculty in Prishtina University. He is currently the head of the Department of Administration and Support Services for the Kosovo Police Service. Behar is a UNIFEM-trained trainer on gender issues.

APPENDIX 4

Speakers' Bios

MIMOZA KUSARI

Mimoza Kusari has a B.A. from the Faculty of Economics at Prishtina University. She is currently an assistant in the micro-economics course at Prishtina University. Mimoza was awarded a scholarship by Ron Brown Scholarship Program from the U.S. Department of State. She finished her M.B.A. with a concentration in e-business at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. During her M.B.A. studies, Mimoza was a founder and the first president of the Businesswomen's Association at Duquesne University. Her working experience prior to her graduate degree includes: RIINVEST Institute, National Public Radio in the U.S.A., and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). After completing her M.B.A., Mimoza worked for the World Bank project for the Ministry of Education; was a business consultant for Kosovo Business Support (a USAID funded project); and, most recently, she worked as the Office Manager for the American University Foundation in Kosovo. She was appointed Spokesperson for the Office of the Prime Minister in October 2003.

GORDANA SOBOL (SDP)

Gordana Sobol holds a B.A. in Psychology. She serves as a professor at the Sveučilišta Faculty in Rijeci. From 2000 to 2002 she was a member of Parliament in the Croatian Parliament. Gordana has been very active in politics since 1990. She is currently Chairperson of the Gender Equality Committee. Gordana has contributed greatly to the increased participation of women in political life in Croatia.

LESLEY ABDELA

Lesley Abdela is Senior Partner in Consultancies for Eye catcher Associates and Shevolution, based in the United Kingdom (www.shevolution.com). She has over 20 years experience working on women's leadership, human rights, mainstreaming gender issues, democracy-building and advocacy in Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and the United Kingdom. She just spent three months based in Iraq as a civil society and democracy consultant to the U.S. based RTI Local Government Programme. Her role included development of Human Rights Associations and Iraqi women's associations and women's leadership roles in politics and public life.

Lesley is a journalist and broadcaster and has written and presented BBC TV and radio programs about women and leadership. She was political editor of Cosmopolitan Magazine 1993-1996 – the first political editor of any British women's magazine. Her articles and TV programs on women and leadership have included:

The Washington Post (US) – "Women and the interim government - in Iraq" – 20 July 2003

The Times Newspaper (UK) – "Women and post conflict recovery in Iraq" – 29 April 2003

Oxfam gender network news – Link – "From the Palm Tree to the Parliament – Training Women for Political Leadership & Public Life" – August 2000

The Guardian Newspaper (UK) – "Men with a Mission – No Women Kosovo" – February 2000

BBC Television documentary on women in UK Politics. Wrote and presented *"Women with 'X' Appeal"* – 1993

28-minute Euro-video about women from 12 member states in the European Union at work and in politics. Research consultant for *"The Glass Ceiling Breakers"*. 1992/3

RAMUSH HARADINAJ

Ramush Haradinaj is the President of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo, the third largest political party in Kosovo. He is a member of the International Relations Committee. He is currently studying law at Prishtina University. He speaks Albanian, English, and French.

SMILJKA MILISAVJEVIĆ

Smiljka is a member of Parliament in Kosovo and represents the Return Coalition. She is also the Second Vice Chairperson for the Committee for Education, Science and Technology, as well as a member of the Committee for International Cooperation. She graduated from Prishtina University in Technology Engineering and Organic Chemistry. She also works as a university assistant at the Technical Science Faculty in Mitrovica. She speaks English.

NAZLIJE BALA

Nazlije Bala is the Head of the Democratic Party of Kosovo (PDK) Women's Forum. After the NATO intervention in 1999, Nazlije worked as the Adviser on Human Rights, Gender Issues, Good Governance, and Disability Issues to the Prime Minister's Office, as the Country Director of the National Albanian American Council in Kosovo, and as the Human Rights NGO Liaison Coordinator for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Mission in Kosovo. She is the founder and temporary coordinator of the women's association "Elena". From 1989 to 1997 she worked for the Council for the Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms in Prishtina. Nazlije is currently graduating from the Political Science and Public Administration Department at Prishtina University. She also attended a year-long program at the Nansen Academy on Human Rights, Democracy, and Peaceful Conflict Resolution organized by the Norwegian Foreign Ministry. In 2000, the Prime Minister of France gave her the Human Rights Award.

AFERDITA KELMENDI

In 1995, Aferdita Kelmendi co-founded a media project that aimed at educating young women in independent journalism and conflict resolution. Aferdita is the Executive Director of Radio Television 21, a multimedia progressive organization, whose mission is to create positive changes in Kosovar society by using technology and information resources of the 21st century, including radio, television, electronic media, and other educational resources for journalism and technical expertise in Kosovo. In 2003, Aferdita was awarded with the Best Manager of the Year Award. Aferdita is a well-known women's rights activist and a leading figure in efforts to achieve gender equality in Kosovo.

LULJETA VUNIQI

Luljeta Vuniqi is the long-time Coordinator of the Women's Program, Minority Program, and Human Rights Program at the Kosovo Foundation for an Open Society (KFOS). She is a sociologist by training and has played an important role in supporting the women's movement in Kosovo. Luljeta has participated in many programs and trainings such as the Democracy and Diversity Graduate Summer Institute in Krakow, Poland; the Forum on Women's Rights and Development in Guadalajara, Mexico; Facilitative Leadership Training in FYR Macedonia; Training of Trainers on NGO Management in Albania; Beijing + 5 Special Session of the UN General Assembly in New York; and the seminar "Building donor partnerships" in Macedonia.

VESNA KESIĆ

Vesna Kesić is a prominent Croatian feminist and an antiwar activist. She has founded and supported several key women's rights groups and efforts in Croatia. Vesna has published many articles and has participated in many public debates in and outside of Croatia, on issues of women and war. Her essay "A Response to Catharine MacKinnon's article 'Turning Rape into Pornography: Postmodern Genocide,'" published in *Hastings Women's Law Journal*, has received worldwide attention.

STANIMIRA HADJIMITOVA

Stanmira Hadjimitova is the Executive Director of the Gender Project for the Bulgaria Foundation. She is also the NGO Focal Point for the Stability Pact Gender Task Force. As of 2001 she is a member of the Civil Council to the Parliamentary Committee on Civil Society Issues. Since May 2001, Stanmira has served as the Advisor to the Global Fund for Women in San Francisco, U.S.A. She was a member of the Assessment Committee of the KARAT Coalition for Regional Action (CEE/CIS Network) and was the Regional Manager for the project "Women Can Do It-III", financed by the Stability Pact Gender Task Force. Stanmira holds a M.Sc. from the Technical University of Sofia and has completed postgraduate studies in International Economic Relations.

APPENDIX 4

Speakers' Bios

FEZAL GULFIDAN

Fezal Gulfidan is a board member of Women's NGO KADER. KADER (Association for Support and Training of Women Candidates) promotes equal representation of women in all levels of the decision-making process in Turkey. In December 2002, Fezal was elected to the General Assembly of DYP at the Party Congress at the national level. She is a member of HUR-TURK, a German – Turkish NGO.

VJOSA DOBRUNA

Vjosa Dobruna is a pediatrician and human rights activist. She is Chairperson of the public broadcast media, Radio Television of Kosova, and President of Safe House for Women in Gjakova. She was one of only three women appointed to the 20-member Joint Administrative Structure of Kosovo under the United Nations mission. She was the National Head of the Department for Democratic Governance and Civil Society from March 2000 through June 2001. Vjosa has collaborated with regional and international organizations on the restructuring of a post-conflict Kosovar society and was Kosovo's "gender focal point" for the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe in 2001. She has served as an adviser to many groups, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Open Society Institute, and the Network of East-West Women. In 2002-2003 Vjosa was a fellow at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government.

FLORA MACULA

Flora Macula is the National Project Manager at UNIFEM/Kosovo. In collaboration with the international project manager and implementing partners, she has designed and implemented projects that covered a wide range of subjects related to gender equality and equity in economics, politics, and public life. Flora wrote a study on mainstreaming a gender perspective into the sectoral programs of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR). Flora initiated and assisted in developing the National Action Plan for Achieving Gender Equality, which was recently approved by the Prime Minister's Office.

BERNARD ZENELI

Bernard Zeneli is the Chairperson and a lecturer at the Political Science and Public Administration Department at Prishtina University. He is a Ph.D. candidate in International and Public Affairs at Northeastern University, U.S.A. Bernard has published many articles on issues of democratic development in Kosovo and has been supportive of efforts to establish gender studies at Prishtina University.

LEAL STEGALL

Advancing social change through politics, philanthropy, and communications has been Lael Stegall's work for more than twenty-five years. She is a respected strategist to public policy organizations and foundations in domestic and international settings. In 1994, Lael and her colleague Jill Benderly, founded the STAR Network of World Learning to support a new generation of women leading economic and political change in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro.

Lael is now the Director of Resource Development for the American University in Kosovo. Her independent consultant practice, Social Change International, has provided capacity building, leadership, and technical assistance to a wide range of social change organizations including UNIFEM and the STAR Network of World Learning, which she recently co-directed. An activist for many years in politics, Stegall helped to found the National Women's Political Caucus, Emily's List, and the Communications Consortium Media Center. She chaired the Women's International Appointments Task Force for the Clinton Administration.

Lael is a trustee of the Beldon Fund, an environmental foundation, an advisor to the Global Fund for Women, Co-chair of Opera House Arts in Stonington, Maine, and serves on the steering committee of Emily's List.

PETRA BLAESSEN

Petra Blaess has finished her studies at Humboldt University Berlin (German Studies, History). She has conducted extensive research on literary issues. In 1990, she became the Chairperson of the Election Commission of the German Democratic Republic (mandate of the Independent Women's Association). Petra served as a TV-journalist for political affairs (editor at Deutscher Fernsehfunk). From 1990 through 2002 she was a member of the German Parliament for the Social Democratic Party. She was a spokesperson for women and social affairs. From 1998 through 2002 she was the Vice President of the German Parliament. Petra currently serves as a senior consultant on parliamentary cooperation (Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe). She is the co-founder and a member of various German and international women's networks.