WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A GLOBAL ANALYSIS

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A GLOBAL ANALYSIS[1]

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper presents a global data-based analysis of women's representation in local government, use of legislated quotas and types of electoral systems in local elections, contributing to a more comprehensive view of women's political participation and a shift in the global narrative from national to local decision-making power, a less known but critical level of governance. Women's rights to equal political participation at all levels of government are recognized in international normative frameworks,[2] emphasized in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action,[3] and endorsed, decades later, in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The importance of equal political participation at *all levels* of government is clear in the wording of SDG target 5.5 – "ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" – and the choice of indicators for monitoring progress in achieving this target.[4] Two indicators on women's representation in decision-making in political life are included: the SDG indicator 5.5.1a on women's representation in parliaments – previously included in the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) monitoring framework – and the SDG indicator 5.5.1b, a new indicator on women's representation in local government.

The new SDG indicator, focused on local decision-making power, expands research and global data on women's political representation beyond national legislatures. The past three decades have focused on parliaments as countries' highest legislative bodies with powers to craft and change national legislation and oversee national budgets. The relatively few women and men members of parliaments are counted and captured globally in SDG indicator 5.5.1a, on a regular basis, by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Year after year, the numbers collected by IPU tell the story of the considerable underrepresentation of women in legislative bodies and the slow and uneven progress in improving their participation over time. The story of women's representation among the millions of local government members, however, remains largely untold. Despite some country case studies and regional initiatives, global data and research on this level of government has been scant, resulting in a major knowledge gap.

The addition of the indicator 5.5.1b to the global SDG monitoring framework recognizes the importance of a whole-of-government approach and of women's voices and leadership at the local level in achieving the SDGs. Local government is the result of the decentralization of legislative, executive and administrative powers from national to local levels for the purpose of improving governance on local matters and enabling a more direct and inclusive participation of different population groups in local decision-making. In this regard, SDG indicator 5.5.1b takes note of a much more numerous and diverse group of women, and the realization of their rights, as well as their roles as local leaders in ensuring sustainable development. Indeed, research indicates that women in local decision-making positions redefine local priorities by being more inclusive,[5] prioritizing family-friendly policies and measures,[6] and, in some contexts, by contributing to increased gender equality in terms of income, employment and parental leave.[7]

This paper presents global data and data-based analysis on women's representation in local government by UN Women as the sole custodian agency for SDG indicator 5.5.1b. Nominated as such in 2016, UN Women finalized its methodology in 2017 and started compiling data from countries in 2018. As per its methodology,[8] the indicator is measured as the proportion of elected seats held by women in deliberative bodies of local government such as local councils or assemblies. The data used are official data on elections results produced by electoral management bodies (EMBs), reported by national statistical offices (NSOs), and compiled by UN Women with the support of UN regional commissions. Unless otherwise stated, this paper employs data on the most recent local election results as of 1 January 2020, available for 133 countries and areas (Map 1).

The analysis indicates that women's representation in deliberative bodies of local government is higher than in parliament, but still not on equal terms with men. Indeed, very few countries have reached gender balance in local decision-making bodies; in the majority of countries, women's underrepresentation is severe. Legislated gender quotas have a significant positive impact on women's representation in local government, particularly in countries in Africa and Asia, and can disrupt the cycle of male-dominated political leadership. Electoral systems based on proportional representation and mixed systems are also associated with higher representation of women at the local level; however, in the absence of quotas, their impact is less significant. Finally, the paper discusses remaining data gaps on women's political participation at local level, including data disaggregation issues, underused electoral data, and the need for new data collection tools to capture women's full and effective participation in local government.

Women's representation in elected local deliberative bodies, as of 1 January 2020
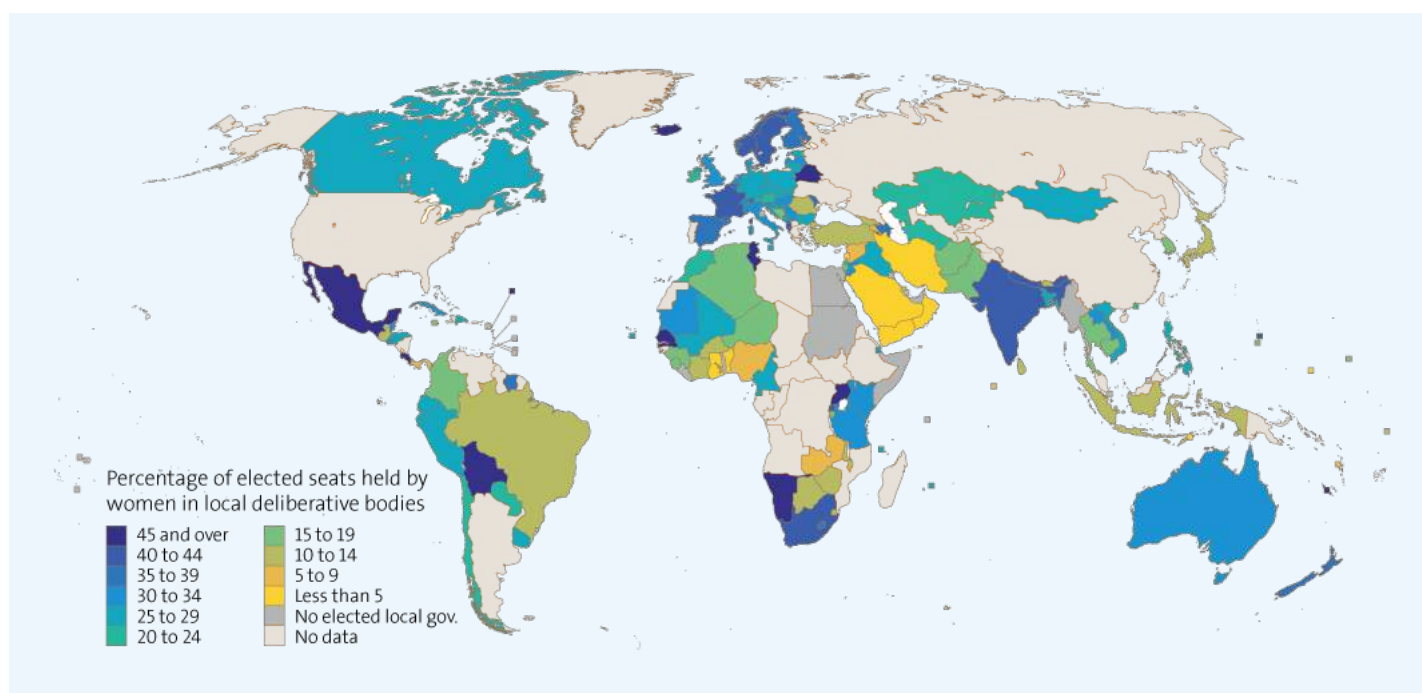
Note: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN Women concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Source: UN Women (2020a). Women in Local Government Database. Data compilation on SDG indicator 5.5.1b. Available at https://localgov.unwomen.org.
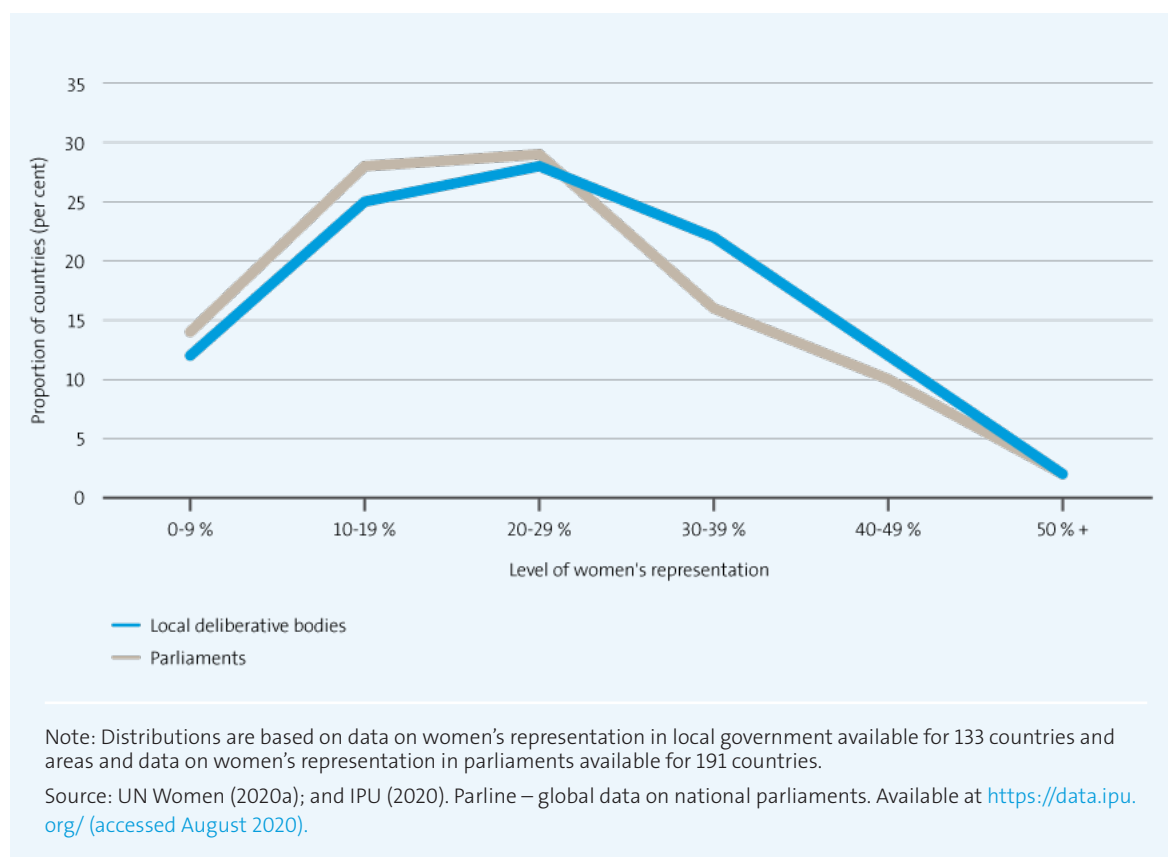
II. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Women's representation in local deliberative bodies is higher than in parliaments, but still not on equal terms with men

Of the 6.02 million elected members in deliberative bodies of local government – counted by SDG indicator 5.5.1b in 133 countries and areas as of 1 January 2020 – only 2.18 million (36 per cent) are women. This places women's representation in local government higher than in national parliaments (25 per cent), but not yet close to parity. Only 20 countries (representing 15 per cent of countries with data) have reached over 40 per cent women in local decision-making bodies and an additional 28 countries have women's representation between 30 and 40 per cent (Map 1). In the majority of countries with data, however, women are severely underrepresented. Seventy countries fall between 10 and 30 per cent women's representation, and 15 countries have less than 10 per cent women's representation, a distribution that is similar to the one observed for parliaments (Figure 1).

FIGURE 1

Percentage distribution of countries by level of women's representation in local deliberative bodies and parliaments, as of 1 January 2020

Note: Distributions are based on data on women's representation in local government available for 133 countries and areas and data on women's representation in parliaments available for 191 countries.

Source: UN Women (2020a); and IPU (2020). Parline – global data on national parliaments. Available at https://data.ipu.org/ (accessed August 2020).

Women's representation is highest in Central and Southern Asia (41 per cent) and Europe and Northern America (35 per cent) – driven up by high levels of women's representation in countries with large numbers of councillors,[9] such as India and France – while lowest in Western Asia and Northern Africa (18 per cent) (Figure 2). Nevertheless, in almost all regions there are countries with gender-balanced local governments (as seen on Map 1), showing that progress is certainly possible across the world (Annex). Examples of countries and areas with the highest levels of women's representation are Antigua and Barbuda (67 per cent), Bolivia (50 per cent), Belarus, Senegal and Tunisia (48 per cent), Iceland (47 per cent) and Costa Rica, New Caledonia and Uganda (46 per cent).

Proportion of elected seats held by women in local deliberative bodies by SDG region,[10] as of 1 January 2020
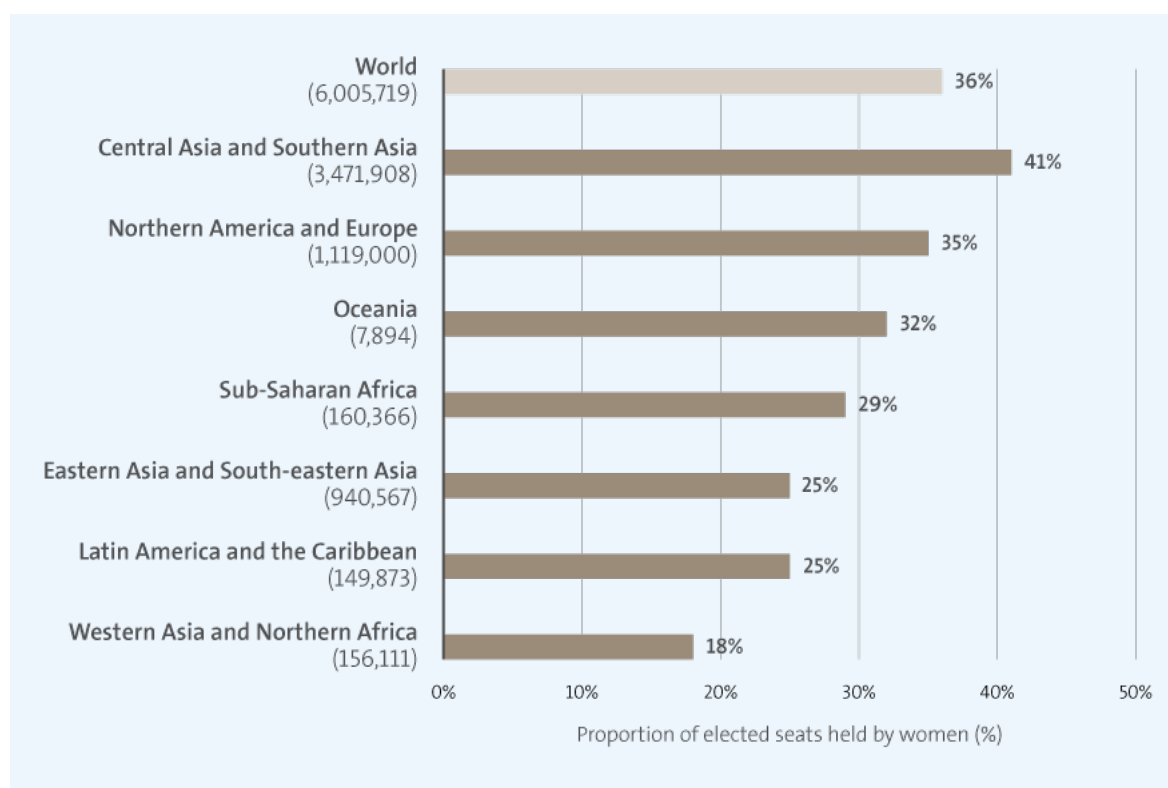
Note: Averages weighted by number of local government members. Number of local government members in the world and each region shown in parenthesis.
Source: UN Women (2020a).

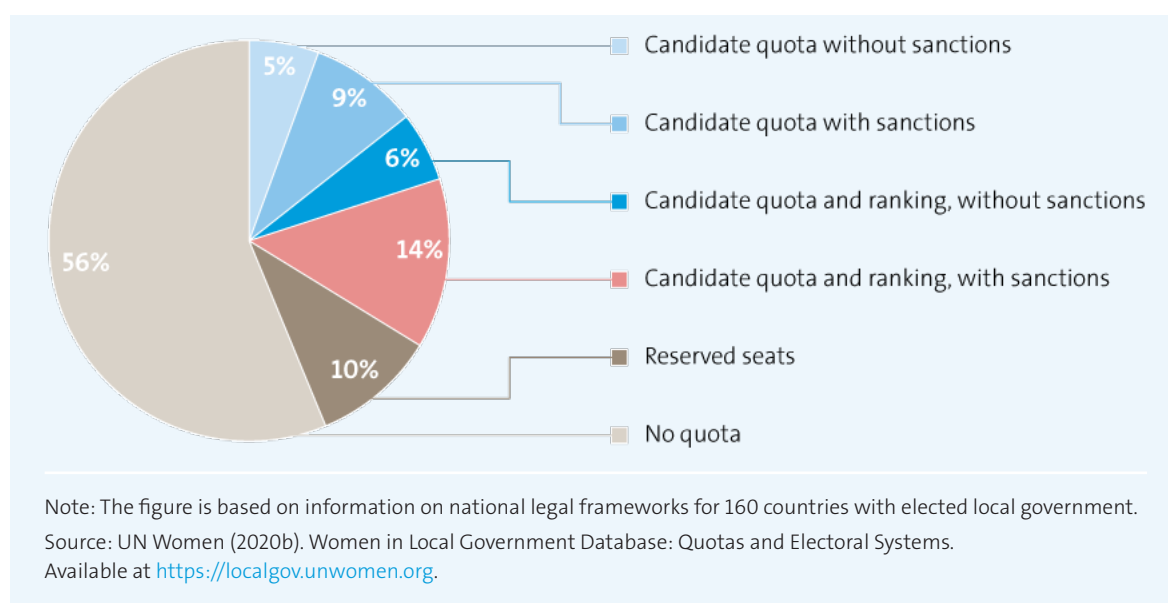# III. THE IMPACT OF LEGISLATED GENDER QUOTAS

Nearly half of countries use legislated quotas to improve women's representation in local government

Forty-four per cent of countries with elected local deliberative bodies implement legislated gender quotas to correct historical gender imbalances in local government and fast-track women's representation. These measures are stipulated in electoral laws; additionally, they may be specified in national constitutions (in 11 per cent of countries with legislated quotas), local government acts (32 per cent), parity laws (15 per cent) or party laws (5 per cent).

As Figure 3 shows, countries implement different types of legislated quotas. Candidate quotas, typically requiring a minimum proportion of women in a candidate list, are used most often, in 34 per cent of countries; reserved seats for women are used in 10 per cent of countries. In candidate quotas,

the targeted proportion of women candidates varies from 10 to 50 per cent, with only one quarter of countries aiming for 50 per cent, while most countries aiming for 30 to 40 per cent. In addition to targeted representation of women, candidate quotas can require the ranking of women and men in a balanced manner across candidate lists, thus giving women a better chance of inclusion in the shortlist of candidates obtaining sufficient votes to be elected to the office. Indeed, this is the case for 19 per cent of all countries. Additionally, 22 per cent of countries have sanctions in place related to non-compliance with target and ranking requirements, including, most often, rejection of the candidate list. Other measures for non-compliance may include fines and loss of a proportion of the public funding for election campaigns. For countries using reserved seats in local elections, the target proportion of seats allocated to women is typically set at one third.

FIGURE 3

Percentage distribution of countries with elected local deliberative bodies by type of legislated gender quota, as of 1 January 2020

Note: The figure is based on information on national legal frameworks for 160 countries with elected local government.
Source: UN Women (2020b). Women in Local Government Database: Quotas and Electoral Systems.
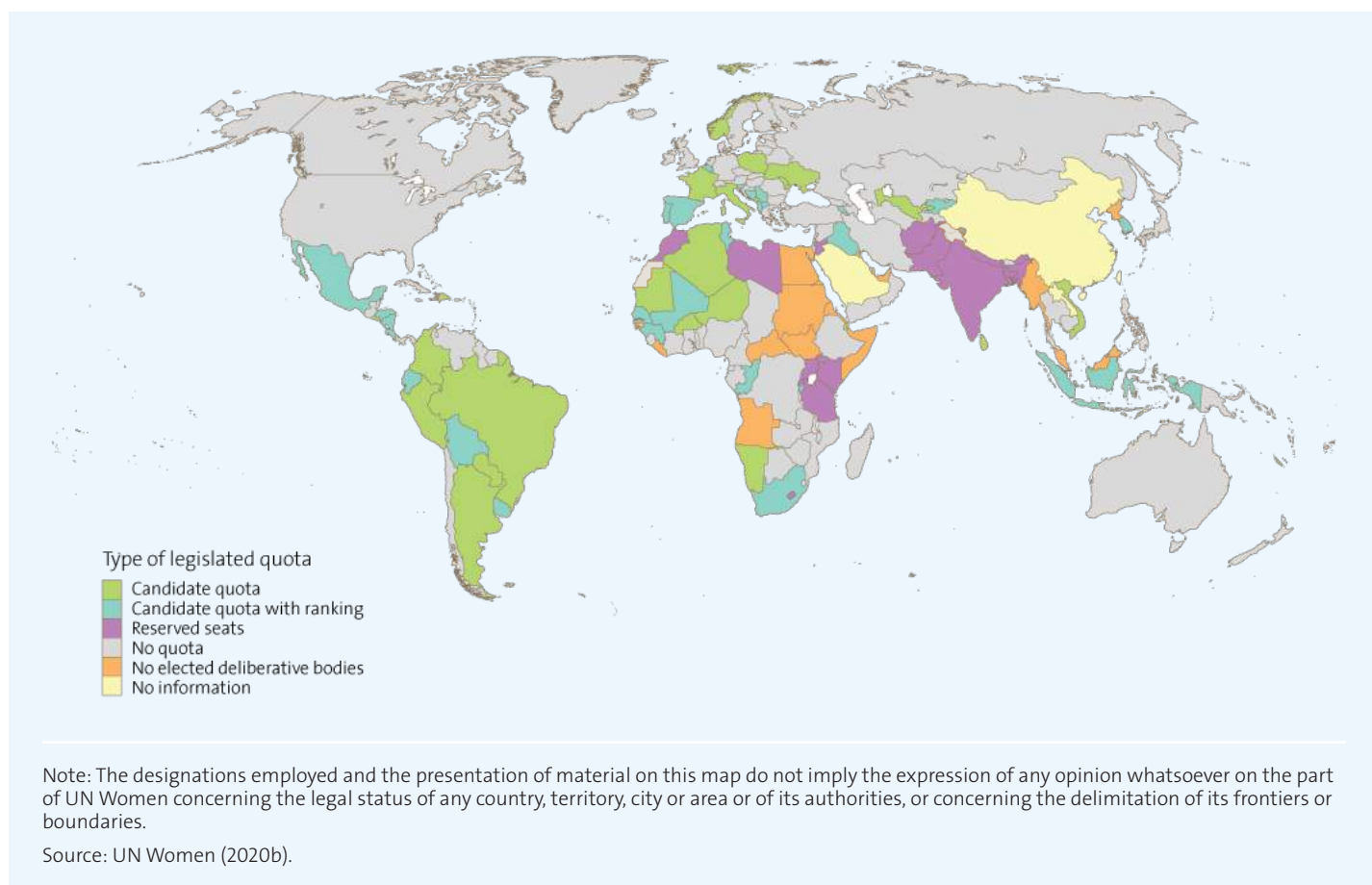Available at https://localgov.unwomen.org.

As Map 2 depicts in green and blue, legislated candidate quotas are most common in Latin America, Europe and in parts of Africa, while reserved seats (purple) are used in some Asian and African countries.

MAP 2
Types of legislated gender quotas used by countries, as of 1 January 2020

Type of legislated quota
- Candidate quota
- Candidate quota with ranking
- Reserved seats
- No quota
- No elected deliberative bodies
- No information

Note: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN Women concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Source: UN Women (2020b).

Countries using legislated quotas have higher representation of women in local government.

Legislated gender quotas are effective measures to increase women's representation in local government. Worldwide, countries with legislated quotas have higher women's representation in local government compared to those without quotas – by seven percentage points on average (Figure 4). Quotas enhance women's representation in the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, Northern Africa and Western Asia, and the rest of Asia, by 16, 13 and 7 percentage points on average per country, respectively.

The adoption of gender quotas has significantly changed country trends in women's representation at local level – not only in developing regions, but also in developed ones. Existing research based on official data illustrates the leap in the election of women after implementing quotas. For instance, in France, the parity law introduced in 2000 changed women's share in municipal councils from 26 per cent in 1995 elections to 48 per cent in 2001 elections.[11] In Slovenia, the legislated quota introduced in 2005 increased the proportion of women elected to municipal office from 13 per cent in 2002 to 22 per cent in 2006.[12] In Spain, quotas introduced in 2007 and 2011 resulted in an increase in women's representation from 26 per cent in 2003 to 35 per cent in 2015 elections.[13]

FIGURE 4

Women's representation in elected local deliberative bodies by use of quota and geographical regions, as of 1 January 2020

Note: Analysis is based on unweighted averages for 126 countries with data on SDG indicator 5.5.1b and information on quotas. Other regions and subregions are not presented due to small number of countries with data and/or with quotas.

Source: UN Women (2020a and 2020b).
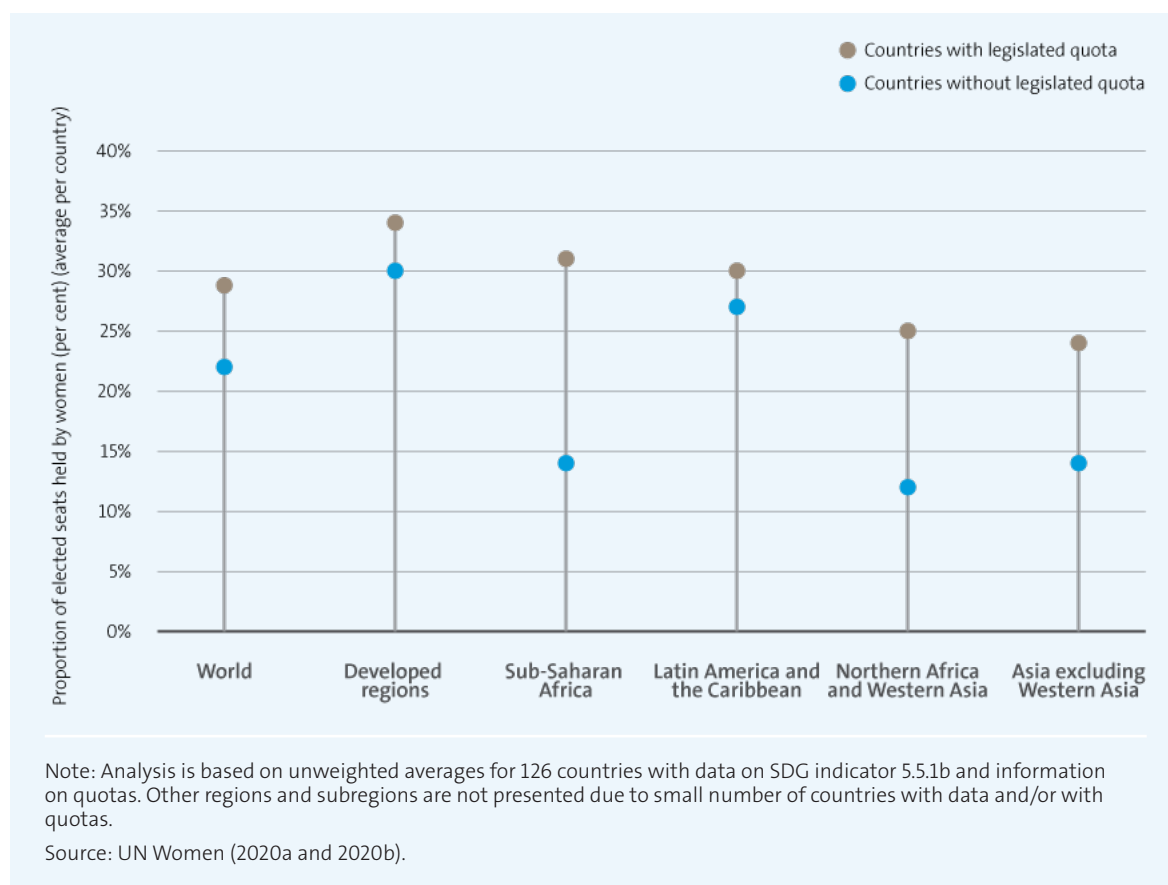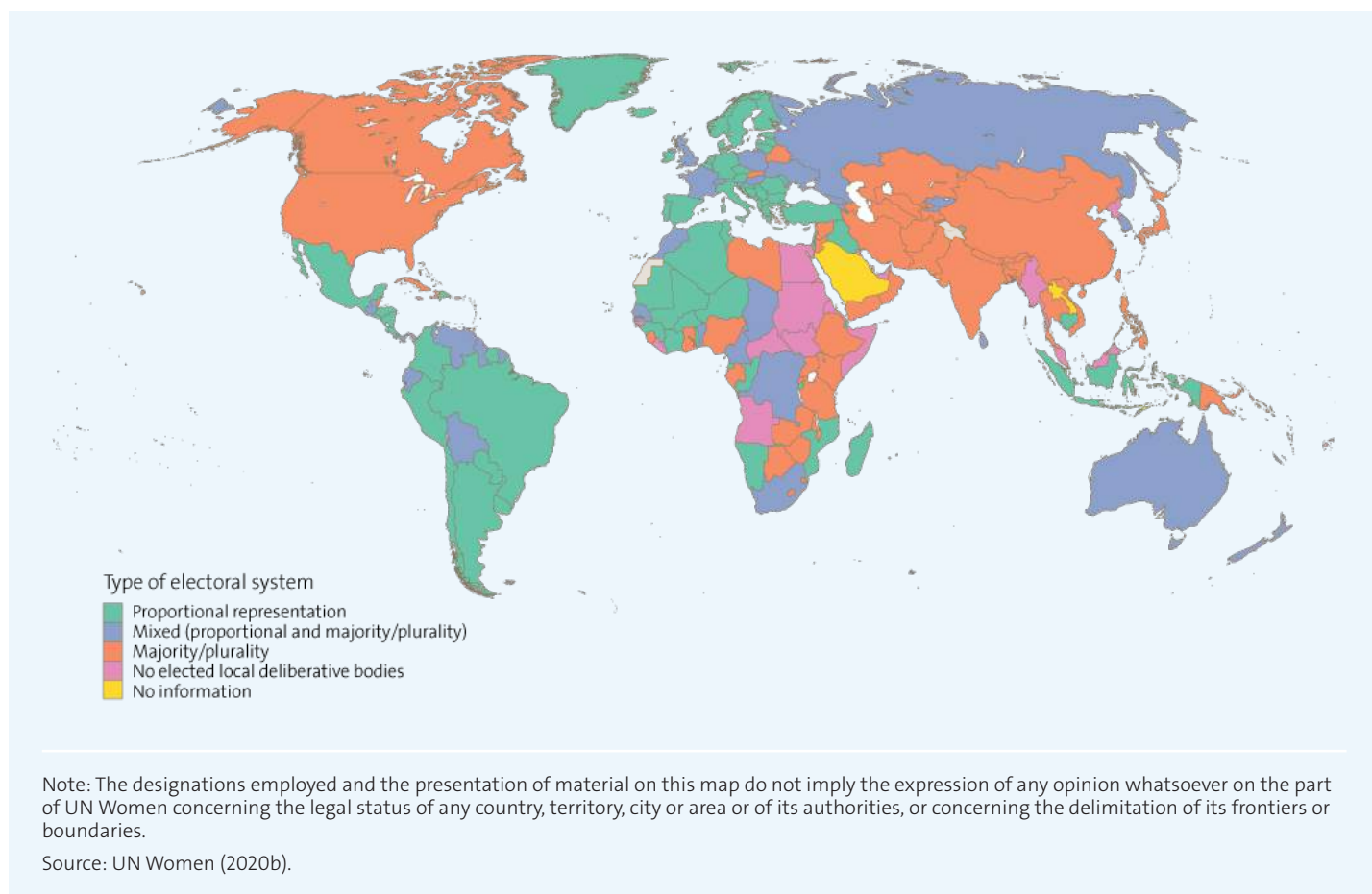
IV. THE EFFECTS OF ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

Electoral systems can significantly impact women's chances of winning elections. Electoral systems vary based on the number of seats per electoral district (single- or multi-member districts), ballot structure (how candidates appear on ballots and how voters express or mark their choices), and electoral formula (how the seats are allocated based on the number of votes obtained). There are many combinations of elements in an electoral system; generally, however, three major types are described in reference to the magnitude of the electoral district: majority or plurality systems (using single-member districts); proportional representation systems (using multi-member districts); and semi-proportional or mixed systems.[14]

Proportional representation systems correlate with higher numbers of women candidates and elected representatives in parliaments, as multi-member districts may encourage parties to include women in addition to men in the candidate lists because balanced tickets may increase electoral chances.[15] By comparison, majority/plurality systems in single-member districts may lower women's representation because male-dominated party selection committees might not select women as sole candidates.

MAP 3

Types of electoral systems used in local elections, as of 1 January 2020

Type of electoral system
- Proportional representation
- Mixed (proportional and majority/plurality)
- Majority/plurality
- No elected local deliberative bodies
- No information

Note: The designations employed and the presentation of material on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of UN Women concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.
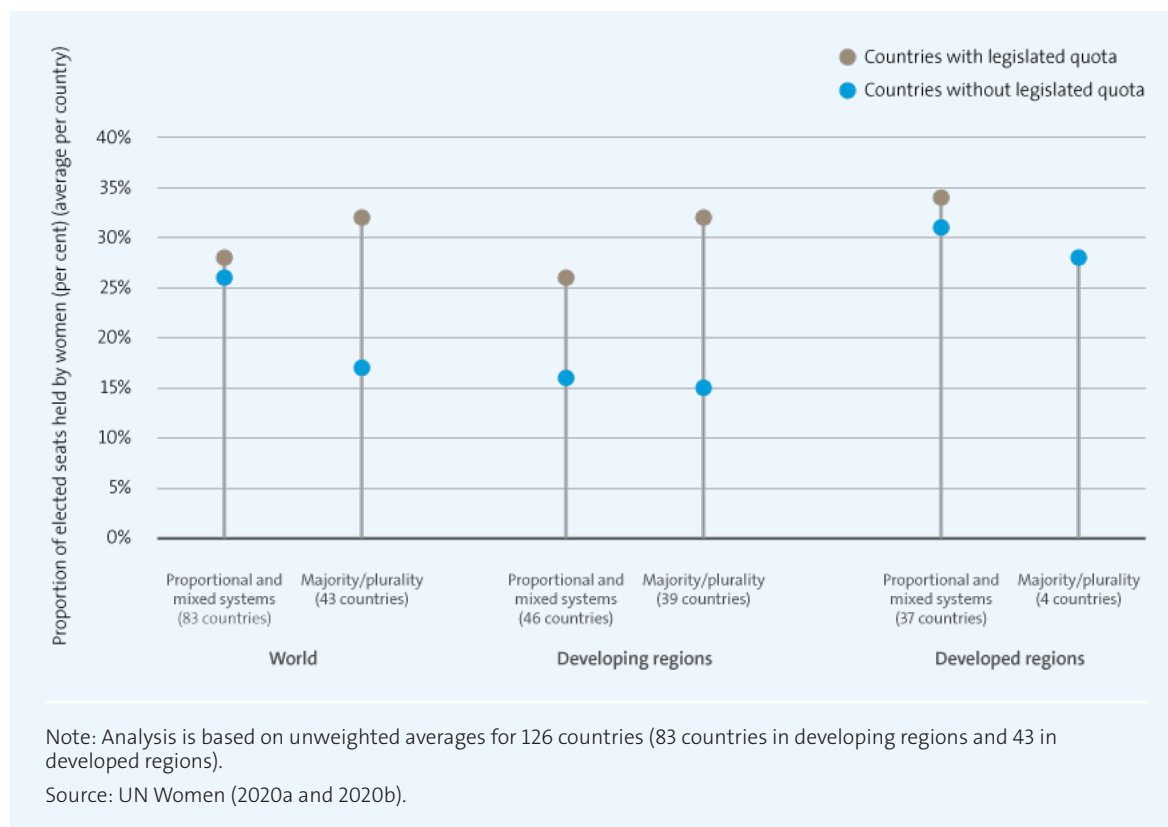
Source: UN Women (2020b).

The majority of countries use a proportional representation or mixed system for local elections

Globally, 44 per cent of countries with local elections use a proportional representation system and an additional 19 per cent employ a mixed system (a proportional representation system in combination with a majority/plurality system). The remaining 37 per cent use a majority/plurality system. As Map 3 depicts in green, proportional systems are more often used in Europe and Latin America, while majority/plurality systems, shown in orange, are more often used in Asia and, to some extent, in Africa.

Compared to quotas, electoral systems have less impact on women's representation at local level

Overall, proportional representation and mixed electoral systems are associated with higher representation of women at local level. On average, women's representation is 28 per cent in proportional representation systems, 26 per cent in mixed systems, and 22 per cent in majority/plurality systems.[16] As shown in Figure 5, however, the impact of electoral systems on women's representation is much smaller when controlling for regional differences and quotas. For instance, in the absence of quotas in developing regions, women's representation is only one percentage point lower in majority/plurality systems compared to proportional/mixed systems, while in developed regions, it is three percentage points lower. Furthermore, in developing regions, the use of quotas increases women's representation to higher levels in majority/plurality systems than in proportional/mixed systems.

FIGURE 5

Women's representation in elected local deliberative bodies by type of electoral system, use of quota and development regions, as of 1 January 2020

Note: Analysis is based on unweighted averages for 126 countries (83 countries in developing regions and 43 in developed regions).
Source: UN Women (2020a and 2020b).

V. BEYOND NATIONAL AVERAGES

Within countries, women's representation in local government varies according to local social norms and power dynamics, as indicated by research case studies. Women tend to be more severely under-represented in less urbanized areas with more traditional gender norms,[17] and in political office or positions with more power, particularly expenditure power, like in higher tiers of local government or executive positions.[18] Local power dynamics, less influenced by political parties[19] and more shaped by local client politics and social networks, and civic volunteerism,[20] can particularly disadvantage those women without support structures and skills-building opportunities, including disabled women, women in economically marginalized groups, ethnic minority groups, indigenous populations, youth and LGBTIQ+ communities. However, global data and research focused on these groups are currently missing.

As highlighted below, current data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b can provide a glimpse into existing disparities within countries.

Women's representation varies by tier of local government

One key element of local decision-making power is linked to local government organization in tiers with specific deliberative, administrative and financial powers and competencies. Forty-seven per cent of countries with local government have one tier, 38 per cent have two tiers and 15 per cent have three or more tiers of local government. As Figure 6 illustrates, in countries with multiple tiers, different patterns of women's representation may exist. The use of legislated quotas can explain some of the patterns. For instance, in Republic of Korea and Viet Nam, a candidate quota is implemented across all tiers resulting in a similar capped level of women's representation across tiers (below 19 per cent in Republic of Korea, and below 28 per cent in Viet Nam). In Morocco, reserved seats are legislated for regional and commune levels of local government. Women gained 38 per cent and 21 per cent of these seats respectively; however, at prefecture and provincial levels, where there are no gender quotas, women gained only 4 per cent of seats.
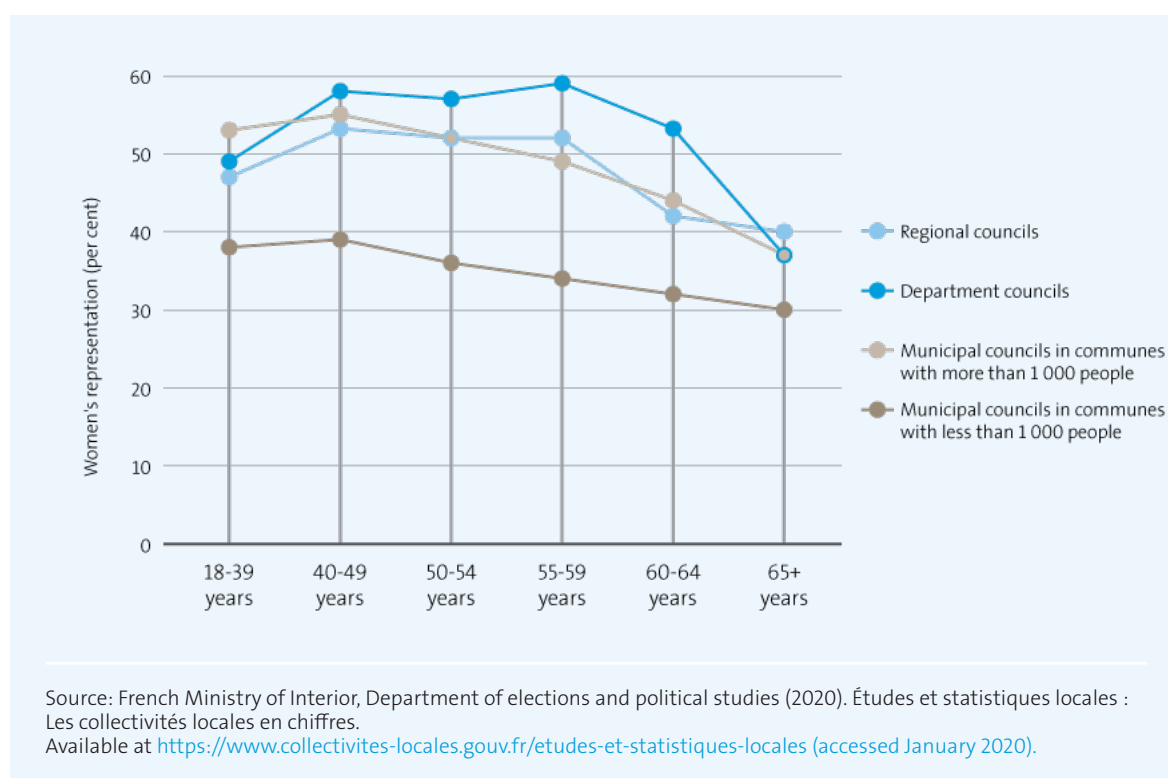
FIGURE 6

Proportion of elected seats held by women in local deliberative bodies, by tier of local government, in selected countries, as of 1 January 2020

Source: UN Women (2020a).
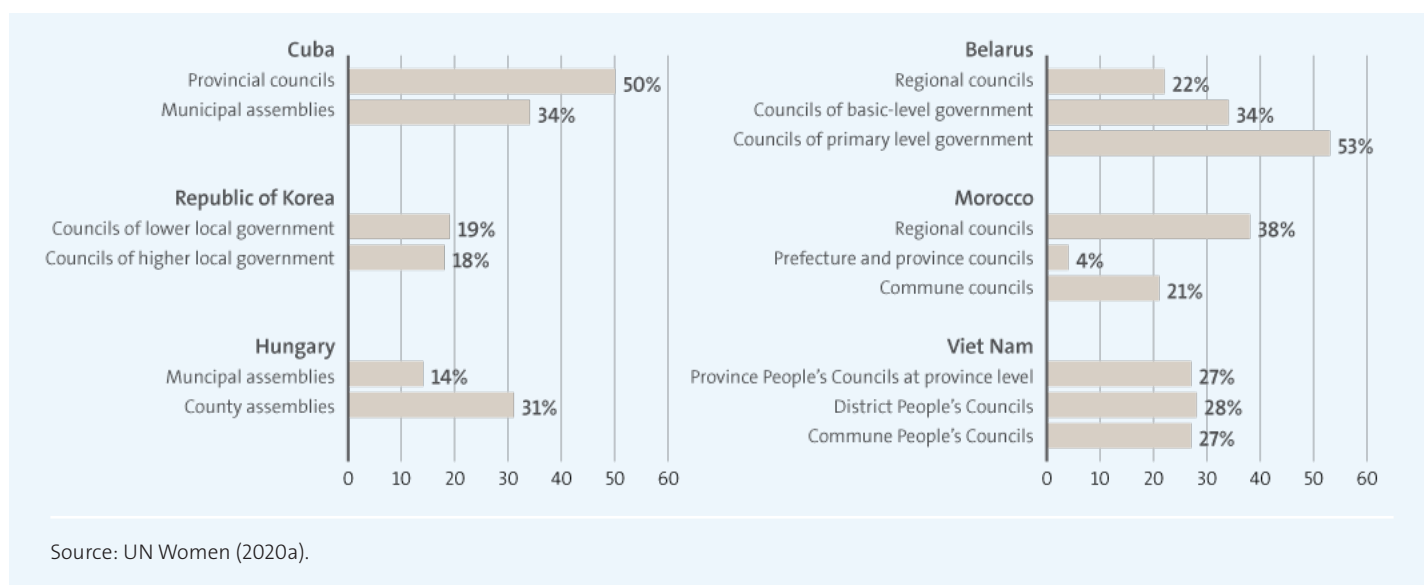
In France, women's representation is systematically lower in the lowest tier of local government, at the level of smaller communes (Figure 7). Likely, this is due to the use of a majority electoral system at that level (versus the proportional representation system used in the other tiers) and/or the persistence of patriarchal values in more rural areas. Data further disaggregated by age show that younger – but also older – women are less represented in local government bodies across all tiers of local government. Women are better represented in age groups from 40 to 59 years than older-age groups, suggesting a generational shift in accessing political office. Underrepresentation is also more pronounced in the younger reproductive-age groups, when women tend to spend more time caring for their children.

Proportion of elected seats held by women in local deliberative bodies by age groups and tiers of local government, France, as of 1 January 2020

Source: French Ministry of Interior, Department of elections and political studies (2020). Études et statistiques locales : Les collectivités locales en chiffres.
Available at https://www.collectivites-locales.gouv.fr/etudes-et-statistiques-locales (accessed January 2020).

Capital city councils are leading the change in women's representation in local government.

As Figure 8 depicts, for countries with data, capital cities typically have higher levels of women's representation compared to the rest of a country. This is probably due to highly urbanized spaces sharing more equalitarian values. According to recent data from World Value Survey in 74 countries, stereotypical attitudes persist everywhere but are more prevalent in rural areas. On average, 47 per cent of rural residents still consider that men make better politicians than women, compared to 34 per cent of urban residents.[21] The disparity between the capital city and the rest of country is not determined by differences in legislated quotas or electoral systems, apart from Armenia, where Yerevan is one of only three cities in the country with a legislated gender quota.

FIGURE 8

Proportion of elected seats held by women in capital city councils and in other local deliberative bodies, in countries with data available, as of 1 January 2020

Source: UN Women (2020a).
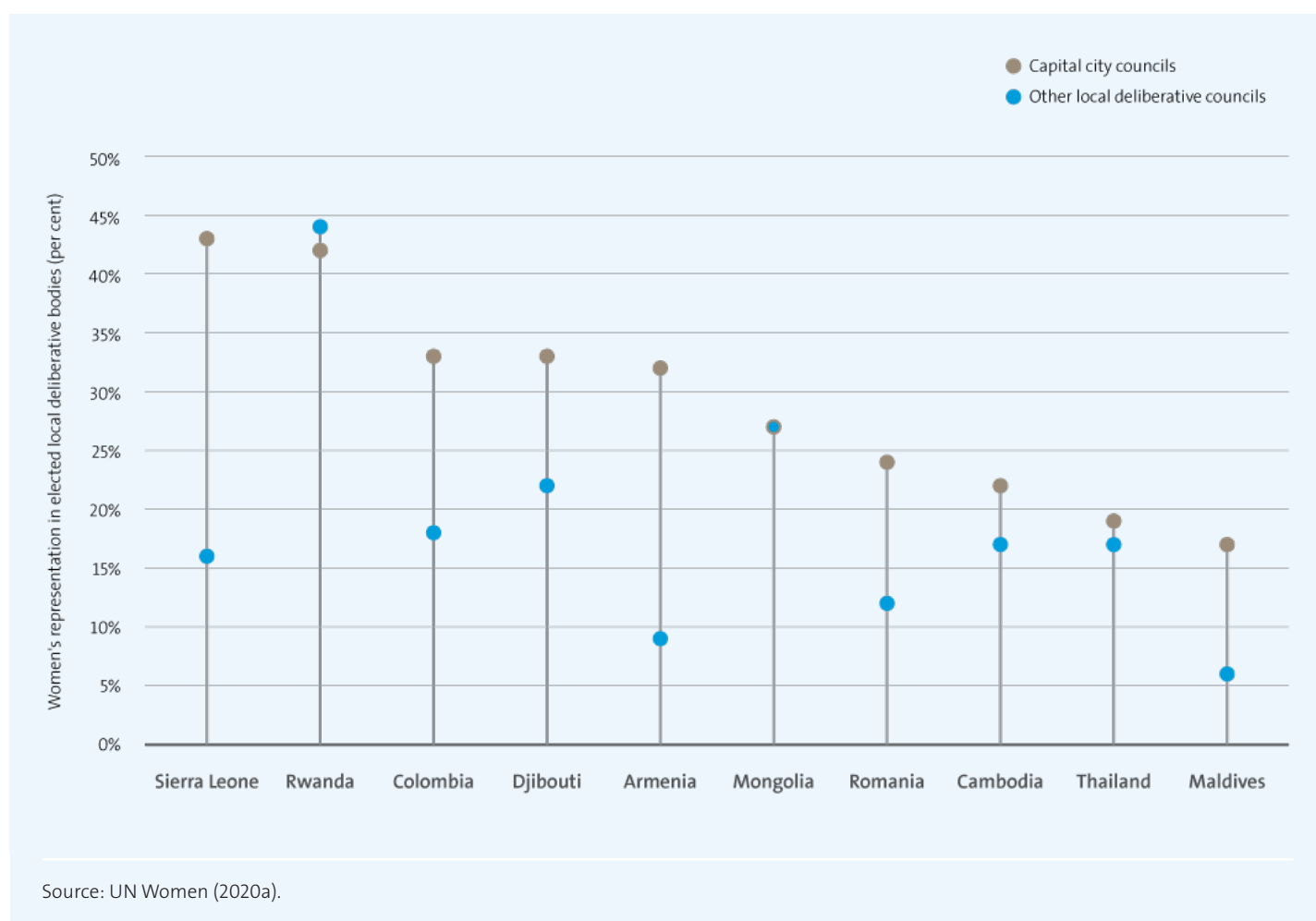
Executive positions in local government remain out of women's reach

While SDG indicator 5.5.1b does not cover local executive positions, such as mayors or equivalent heads of the executive, available data show that women's representation in these more powerful positions is lower compared to their representation in deliberative bodies. In Europe in 2019, for instance, the share of women among municipal mayors, is twice lower than among councillors − 15 per cent compared to 30 per cent.[22] Similar patterns are observed in countries from other regions, as shown by official data provided by countries in the context of SDG data compilation.[23] For instance, in Republic o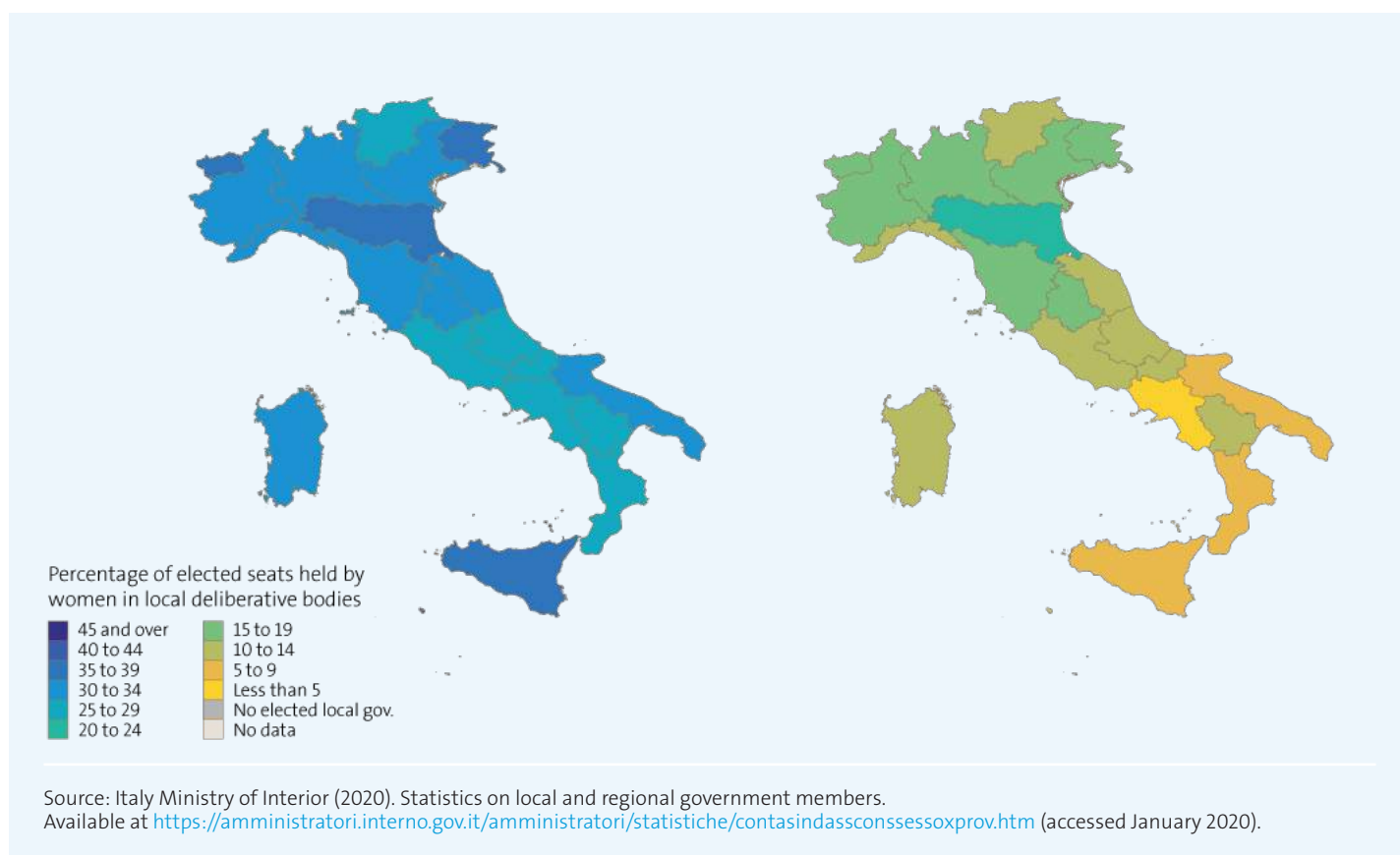f Korea women hold three per cent of executive head positions in local government and 19 per cent of positions in local deliberative bodies. In Uganda, the corresponding proportions for executive heads and councillors are 1 per cent and 48 per cent, respectively, while in Peru the proportions are five per cent and 30 per cent, respectively.

In Italy, data further disaggregated by geographic areas indicate that women's representation among members of local deliberative bodies across the country's regions varies from 26 to 46 per cent, while in executive head positions the representation varies from 5 per cent to 21 per cent. As the darker blue on Map 4 depicts, only some regions − mainly in the northern part of the country − reached gender balance in municipal councils, while severe underrepresentation of women in executive positions is widespread (shown in yellow and green on Map 4).

MAP 4

Proportion of elected seats held by women in municipal government, by region in Italy, as of 1 January 2019

(a) Local deliberative bodies

(b) Executive head positions (mayors)

Percentage of elected seats held by women in local deliberative bodies

- 45 and over
- 40 to 44
- 35 to 39
- 30 to 34
- 25 to 29
- 20 to 24
- 15 to 19
- 10 to 14
- 5 to 9
- Less than 5
- No elected local gov.
- No data

Source: Italy Ministry of Interior (2020). Statistics on local and regional government members.
Available at https://amministratori.interno.gov.it/amministratori/statistiche/contasindassconssessoxprov.htm (accessed January 2020).

VI. PROGRESS IN MONITORING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AT LOCAL LEVEL

Significant progress in data availability for SDG indicator 5.5.1b, but some countries still face challenges

The inclusion of an indicator on women's representation in local government in the SDG monitoring framework addresses a major prior data gap regarding women's political participation. For the first time, globally comparable data based on official statistical sources are compiled and made available on a regular basis by UN Women. To date, three-quarters of countries with elected local governments are covered and the data gathered provide a snapshot of the current situation and a baseline for monitoring and analysis of future trends at country, regional and global levels.

Nevertheless, some countries still face challenges in producing data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b, particularly in contexts where the electoral data systems do not include information on the sex of candidates and winners, and where the results of local elections are not centralized. Systematic use of electoral data is also hampered in countries where EMBs have not been integrated into the national statistical systems (NSSs); the statistical mandate of EMBs has not been made clear in laws, rules or regulation guiding their work; and data-sharing agreements with other entities of NSSs have not been put in place.

Data not disaggregated enough to capture the SDG principle of 'leaving no one behind'

Some data disaggregation exists but not enough to entirely capture the SDG principle of 'leaving no one behind'. Data for SDG indicator 5.5.1b are compiled and disaggregated by tier of local government, with some countries providing additional data by geographic area and age, as shown in this paper. These dimensions of disaggregation – together with others such as urban/rural areas and political party representation – are likely to be available or can be easily integrated into electoral data systems maintained by EMBs in many countries.

However, the scope of information collected through data electoral systems is limited to a small set of individual characteristics, typically prescribed by electoral laws and EMB mandates. It is critical to note the paucity of disaggregated data to reveal several categories of women who may be denied access to local decision-making positions, including disabled women, women in economically marginalized groups, ethnic minority groups, indigenous populations, youth or LGBTIQ+. These data can be generated by alternative sources, such as surveys of local government members, assuming privacy and confidentiality of information are properly enforced.

Data on electoral participation available, but underused

Electoral administrative data on other dimensions of women's political participation at local level exist, but they are underused. In particular, data on electoral candidates can explain the level of women's representation in local government by showing whether women entered the competition

for local elections in the first place, and, if they entered, whether their chances of election were lower or higher than men's. For example, as shown in Figure 9, in the Maldives and Albania, the share of women elected was lower than the share of women candidates, pointing to the lower chances of election for women candidates in both countries. Meanwhile, in Denmark, women and men candidates have a similar chance of election, while in New Zealand, women candidates have a greater chance of election than men (Figure 10). Additional data on women candidates and those elected as independents or on political party lists can also contribute to understanding women's paths to local power.
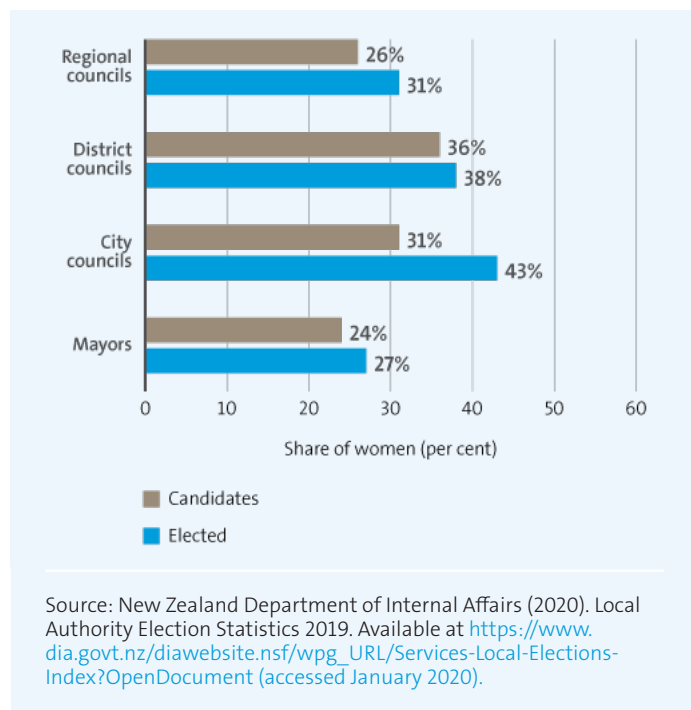
Share of women among candidates and elected candidates for local deliberative bodies in selected countries

Source: UN Women based on data reported by Albania Institute of Statistics, Maldives National Bureau of Statistics, and Statistics Denmark.
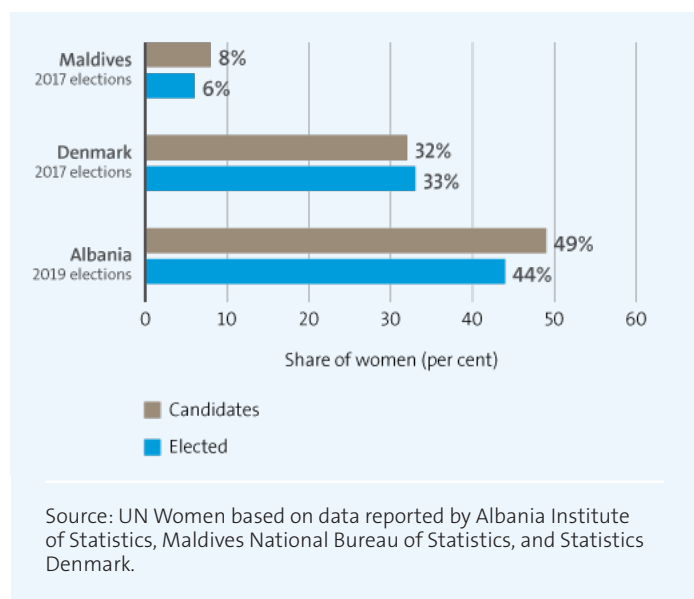
Broader data and new data collection tools needed to capture women's full, equal and effective political participation and leadership

To date, global comparable data on women's political participation refers to women's representation in electoral processes and in elected office, but not other aspects of women's political participation. More comprehensive data, supported by new data collection tools, are needed to monitor, promote

Share of women among candidates and elected candidates in local government by type of position, New Zealand, 2019 elections

Source: New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs (2020). Local Authority Election Statistics 2019. Available at https://www.dia.govt.nz/diawebsite.nsf/wpg_URL/Services-Local-Elections-Index?OpenDocument (accessed January 2020).

and support "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership" aspired by SDG target 5.5. While women's representation continues to be monitored through electoral data, surveys that target women aspirants, candidates, and officeholders can collect a broader set of data to capture a constellation of factors that prevent or encourage women's political engagement at different stages of the electoral cycle. These include, for example, when entering the political arena, securing nominations as candidates, sustaining effective political campaigns – in the pre-election period - or accessing more powerful positions within local government on equal terms with men, and equally participating in decision-making processes - while in the office. Among these factors, violence against women in politics, has emerged as a major deterrent to women's participation as election candidates and office holders. Understanding these factors in turn will help design policy responses to support women, in all their diversity, to engage and succeed in political processes and realise the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda and goal on gender equality.

VII. ANNEX

Women and men elected in local deliberative bodies, as of 1 January 2020

Rank	Country/ Area name	Reference election year or equivalent	Number elected women	Number elected men	Number elected women and men	Proportion of elected seats held by women (per cent) (SDG indicator 5.5.1b)
1	Antigua and Barbuda	2019	6	3	9	66.67
2	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	2015	1,117	1,096	2,213	50.47
3	Tunisia	2018	3,497	3,715	7,212	48.49
4	Belarus	2018	8,729	9,381	18,110	48.20
5	Senegal	2014	12,864	14,186	27,050	47.56
6	Iceland	2018	236	266	502	47.01
7	New Caledonia	2014	345	408	753	45.82
8	Uganda	2016	12,682	15,073	27,755	45.69
9	Costa Rica	2016	461	549	1,010	45.64
10	Namibia	2015	170	207	377	45.09
11	Mexico	2018	10,131	12,377	22,508	45.01
12	India	2017	1,375,914	1,724,890	3,100,804	44.37
13	Sweden	2018	6,302	8,072	14,374	43.84
14	Rwanda	2016	390	504	894	43.62
15	Albania	2019	706	913	1,619	43.61
16	Nepal	2017	14,352	20,689	35,041	40.96
17	Norway	2019	4,051	5,868	9,919	40.84
18	South Africa	2016	3,790	5,516	9,306	40.73
19	France	2015	213,196	314,483	527,679	40.40
20	Northern Mariana Islands	2018	6	9	15	40.00
21	New Zealand	2019	415	638	1,053	39.41
22	Liechtenstein	2019	45	70	115	39.13
23	Finland	2017	3,514	5,485	8,999	39.05

Rank	Country/ Area name	Reference election year or equivalent	Number elected women	Number elected men	Number elected women and men	Proportion of elected seats held by women (per cent) (SDG indicator 5.5.1b)
24	Belgium	2018	5,344	8,347	13,691	39.03
25	Lesotho	2017	650	1,016	1,666	39.02
26	Spain	2019	25,724	41,107	66,831	38.49
27	Andorra	2015	29	52	81	35.80
28	Republic of Moldova	2019	4,123	7,457	11,580	35.60
29	Suriname	2017	42	76	118	35.59
30	Azerbaijan	2014	5,236	9,724	14,960	35.00
31	Cuba	2018	5,510	10,291	15,801	34.87
32	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	2019	6,941	13,323	20,264	34.25
33	Latvia	2017	549	1,065	1,614	34.01
34	Australia	2018	1,679	3,271	4,950	33.92
35	Slovenia	2018	1,139	2,246	3,385	33.65
36	Kenya	2017	746	1,478	2,224	33.54
37	Denmark	2017	879	1,758	2,637	33.33
38	El Salvador	2018	972	2,024	2,996	32.44
39	Lao People's Democratic Republic	2016	116	244	360	32.22
40	Jordan	2017	1,058	2,264	3,322	31.85
41	Netherlands	2019	2,921	6,268	9,189	31.79
42	Italy	2019	29,739	63,843	93,582	31.78
43	Mauritania	2018	1,285	2,811	4,096	31.37
44	Switzerland	2018	1,598	3,508	5,106	31.30
45	Serbia	2016	2,038	4,492	6,530	31.21
46	Belize	2019	430	959	1,389	30.96
47	Hungary	2019	6,206	14,132	20,338	30.51
48	United Republic of Tanzania	2015	1,608	3,742	5,350	30.06
49	Lithuania	2019	441	1,061	1,502	29.36
50	Philippines	2019	114,072	278,252	392,324	29.08

Rank	Country/ Area name	Reference election year or equivalent	Number elected women	Number elected men	Number elected women and men	Proportion of elected seats held by women (per cent) (SDG indicator 5.5.1b)
51	Djibouti	2017	56	138	194	28.87
52	Estonia	2017	495	1,234	1,729	28.63
53	Cabo Verde	2016	97	245	342	28.36
54	Dominican Republic	2016	534	1,350	1,884	28.34
55	Comoros	2015	279	716	995	28.04
56	Honduras	2018	674	1,742	2,416	27.90
57	Montenegro	2015	218	567	785	27.77
58	Germany	2019	6,293	16,576	22,869	27.52
59	Ecuador	2019	1,534	4,111	5,645	27.17
60	Bulgaria	2019	1,394	3,740	5,134	27.15
61	Czechia	2016	16,994	45,802	62,796	27.06
62	Poland	2017	12,576	34,131	46,707	26.93
63	Equatorial Guinea	2017	163	444	607	26.85
64	Viet Nam	2016	86,109	235,283	321,392	26.79
65	Mongolia	2016	2,159	5,931	8,090	26.69
66	Canada	2015	6,140	16,943	23,083	26.60
67	Croatia	2017	2,637	7,355	9,992	26.39
68	Malta	2019	122	342	464	26.29
69	Mauritius	2016	342	965	1,307	26.17
70	Peru	2018	3,276	9,240	12,516	26.17
71	Uruguay	2015	271	766	1,037	26.13
72	Slovakia	2018	5,480	15,668	21,148	25.91
73	Iraq	2013	112	324	436	25.69
74	Cameroon	2013	326	961	1,287	25.33
75	Mali	2017	2,874	8,506	11,380	25.25
76	Bangladesh	2018	15,086	44,751	59,837	25.21
77	Luxembourg	2017	283	844	1,127	25.11
78	Chile	2017	626	1,892	2,518	24.86

Rank	Country/ Area name	Reference election year or equivalent	Number elected women	Number elected men	Number elected women and men	Proportion of elected seats held by women (per cent) (SDG indicator 5.5.1b)
79	Ireland	2019	227	722	949	23.92
80	Austria	2019	9,180	30,569	39,749	23.09
81	China, Macao Special Administrative Region	2017	6	20	26	23.08
82	Kazakhstan	2018	740	2,595	3,335	22.19
83	Turkmenistan	2018	1,294	4,606	5,900	21.93
84	State of Palestine	2018	773	2,879	3,652	21.17
85	Morocco	2015	6,825	25,879	32,704	20.87
86	Paraguay	2018	601	2,285	2,886	20.82
87	Burundi	2015	3,137	13,284	16,421	19.10
88	Bosnia and Herzegovina	2016	578	2,532	3,110	18.59
89	Republic of Korea	2018	697	3,053	3,750	18.59
90	Jamaica	2016	42	186	228	18.42
91	Sierra Leone	2018	93	418	511	18.20
92	Colombia	2019	2,230	10,231	12,461	17.90
93	Algeria	2017	4,728	22,152	26,880	17.59
94	Thailand	2018	24,998	119,042	144,040	17.35
95	Israel	2018	647	3,129	3,776	17.13
96	Cambodia	2019	2,655	13,031	15,686	16.93
97	Pakistan	2015	22,429	110,700	133,129	16.85
98	Afghanistan	2019	59	298	357	16.53
99	Marshall Islands	2019	50	264	314	15.92
100	Guinea	2018	334	1,831	2,165	15.43
101	Guam	2016	4	22	26	15.38
102	Cote d'Ivoire	2018	1,147	6,525	7,672	14.95
103	Malawi	2019	67	393	460	14.57
104	Indonesia	2017	2,802	16,698	19,500	14.37
105	Eswatini	2018	56	338	394	14.21

Rank	Country/ Area name	Reference election year or equivalent	Number elected women	Number elected men	Number elected women and men	Proportion of elected seats held by women (per cent) (SDG indicator 5.5.1b)
106	Brazil	2016	7,811	50,017	57,828	13.51
107	Georgia	2017	277	1,781	2,058	13.46
108	Bahrain	2018	4	26	30	13.33
109	Japan	2017	4,211	28,504	32,715	12.87
110	Burkina Faso	2016	2,359	16,243	18,602	12.68
111	Botswana	2014	64	441	505	12.67
112	Romania	2016	5,216	36,495	41,711	12.51
113	Zimbabwe	2018	244	1,792	2,036	11.98
114	Sri Lanka	2018	552	4,515	5,067	10.89
115	Bhutan	2016	202	1,700	1,902	10.62
116	Guatemala	2015	394	3,328	3,722	10.59
117	Tuvalu	2019	5	43	48	10.42
118	Turkey	2019	2,373	21,033	23,406	10.14
119	Nigeria	2015	740	6,828	7,568	9.78
120	Vanuatu	2018	12	115	127	9.45
121	Armenia	2018	379	3,813	4,192	9.04
122	Panama	2019	62	626	688	9.01
123	Zambia	2016	116	1,508	1,624	7.14
124	Syrian Arab Republic	2018	1,145	14,996	16,141	7.09
125	Maldives	2017	40	613	653	6.13
126	Benin	2015	66	1,354	1,420	4.65
127	Lebanon	2016	597	14,435	15,032	3.97
128	Timor-Leste	2016	106	2,578	2,684	3.95
129	Ghana	2019	234	5,924	6,158	3.80
130	Oman	2016	7	195	202	3.47
131	Iran (Islamic Republic of)	2017	4,024	121,859	125,883	3.20
132	Micronesia (Federated States of)	2019	9	599	608	1.48
133	Saudi Arabia	2018	24	2,084	2,108	1.14

ENDNOTES

1 A shorter version of this paper was included as Expert Paper in the Expert Group Meeting: 'Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls' organized in preparation of the Sixty-fifth session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW65, 2021), 5-8 October, 2020.

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10 The composition of SDG regions and information on other types of regions and sub-regions used in this paper are available at https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/.

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UN Women supports UN Member States as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to ensure that the standards are effectively implemented and truly benefit women and girls worldwide. It works globally to make the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals a reality for women and girls and stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on four strategic priorities: Women lead, participate in and benefit equally from governance systems; Women have income security, decent work and economic autonomy; All women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; Women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality.