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# Women's Parliament Representation in Africa

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Since the stopping of 1994 genocide against Tutsi, major achievements in strengthening unity and reconciliation are creation of institutions that promote good governance (National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, National Human Rights Commission, Electoral Commission, National Examination Board), creation of Gacaca courts to foster justice and reconciliation among Rwandans, release of about 70.000 confessed genocide perpetrators, fighting discrimination and promotion of gender equality policy, Ingando (solidarity camps) and other sensitisation activities that promote reconciliation; a participatory constitution that enshrines unity and reconciliation and fight against discrimination and

genocide ideology, creation of the survivors fund and emergence of reconciliation initiatives at personal and community levels such as Perpetrator Confessions gestures of forgiveness from individual survivors, establishment of Reconciliation clubs in schools, reconciliation Associations, etc.

However, the national policy for Unity and Reconciliation is still facing strong challenges: Combating discrimination and genocide ideology is a complex and long-term struggle, National security in Rwanda has been a critical factor in ensuring peace and stability, the political commitment to promote necessary policy and rule of law creates a conducive environment to unity and reconciliation process, Community ownership of reconciliation process is critical to sustainable peace and security.

# THEME 3: GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY
## The role of free, fair and transparent elections in the building process of peace and security: the Case of Rwanda
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## Executive Secretary, National Electoral Commission (Rwanda)

Elections are a double-edged weapon. If properly conducted, they can yield good results. Otherwise, they affect security. That is why the electoral dynamics should guarantee security. In Rwanda, elections have often been an opportunity for frustration, injustice and exclusion. For example, they were characterized by restrictions; during the first and the second republic, the elections were organized on ethnic and regional labels.

Under the Belgian trusteeship, there were the electoral consultations of 1953: the bodies of electors to elect the councils of the sub-chieftaincies, the chieftaincies, the territories and the higher council of the King are identified on basis of ethnic belonging. For the councils of sub-chieftaincies, out of 13,245 members of the body of electors, 58.38% are Hutu, 41.40% are Tutsi and 0.22% are Twa. When the councils of 1953 were to be renewed, only 400,000 valid men out of 1,500,000 inhabitants had to elect the body of electors. The body of electors as well as the councillors were ethnic-based elected, that is 53% of Tutsis, 47% of Hutus and no Twa.

Under the Second Republic (1973-1994), elections took place in an ideological logic and ethnic exclusion. The 1978 to 1988 presidential elections occurred in a closely monitored militancy (98% in 1978, 99.8% in 1988 for the unique candidate HABYALIMANA Juvénal).

The legislative elections were held n a regime of co-option from 1981 to 1988, to the monopoly of the Party-State. They resulted in the emergence of a non representative legislative assembly (2 Tutsi in the 1988 elections out of 70 deputies whereas the supposed quota should be 9%). All of these accumulations of injustices and exclusion resulted in potentially conflict situations and frustrations on the part of the excluded.

To correct the mistakes of the past, practical foundations like the preparations of the 2008 legislative elections have been put into place today : good participatory planning of the 2008-2001 electoral process (to avoid rushness) ; good preparation of the electoral card ; acquisition of the electoral material guaranteeing transparency (transparent urns, indelible ink and rigid ink); participation of voters to the electoral process (approval) ; contribution to the funding of the elections ; volunteering for the construction of the voting booths and voluntary assessors ; decentralization of the electoral infrastructures ; civic and electoral education of the population during the electoral cycle ; implication of several stakeholders including the political parties, civil society, media, local and international electoral observation; transparency in the consolidation of the results:

In the post- genocide Rwanda, the mechanisms aiming at the smooth running of the elections have been put in place. They are henceforth characterized by good preparation, inclusion of all and involvement of the population. All things considered, a dialectic relation exists between free and transparent elections and peace and national security. All depends on the political will and the political actors committed to the higher interest of the nation.

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The problem of women under-representation in national legislatures has been widely studied using socio-economic, cultural and institutional variables. The latter is mainly used in the economically affluent Western-type democracies and the former in the less affluent polities. The recent gain or increase of women in parliament in Sub-Saharan African is also understood in terms of agency and affirmative action. The assumption, mainly derived from cultural-modernization theory is that institutions only matter in developed societies; for they are supposed to develop in predictable ways and follow cultural and economic transformation.

However, while socio-economic and cultural variables are valuable, since Giovanni Sartori's seminal work on Constitutional Engineering (1994), and earlier works on electoral systems, political variables have become more powerful and salient in understanding political exclusion/inclusion; yet, thus far, are often missing in analyzing women's legislative under-representation in Africa. Yet, in addition, we know that liberal democracy as an ideal and impartial has been challenged.

Other studies also claim that, in comparison, Westminster/majoritarian model of democracy is inferior to proportional representation (PR) in bringing on board historically excluded groups like women. In this paper, using Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi as examples, my aim is, not only to contest the claim that institutions are less important in accounting for outcomes in parliament in Africa, but also the claim that PR is a guarantee for more women getting to parliament. Instead, through the evaluation of the Rwandan case, I show that it is a certain type of PR-where the ideology of power-sharing is based on cooperation and consensus in which women's voices/interests are valued and institutionally mediated that count most.

In Rwanda and in Uganda, the number of women represented in Parliament has increased since the independence. As far as the situation of Rwanda is concerned, why and how from the reduced number to 48%, this transition was made possible after 2003 elections? Focusing on elections or institutions as a determinant factors, many reasons or determinant factors can explain this situation such as impact of elections and lobbying, the principle of 30% women representation in decision making institutions, political will of leaders, the contribution of the work of particular institutions such as FFPR, many affirmative actions, many international conferences and the work of associations that aim at women promotion.