

THE CARTER CENTER



Mozambique

NGO Submission to the U.N Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of
Discrimination Against Women Session 73

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This submission summarizes the findings of The Carter Center's election observation mission to the Mozambican elections of 2014. It is submitted for inclusion in the review of Mozambique's state report by the UN CEDAW Committee.

Reporting Organization

1 - A not-for-profit, nongovernmental organization, The Carter Center has helped to improve life for people in more than 80 countries by resolving conflicts; advancing democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity; preventing diseases; and improving mental health care. The Carter Center was founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, in partnership with Emory University, to advance peace and health worldwide.

2 - The Carter Center's Democracy Program works globally to promote democratic elections and governance consistent with human rights. The Center has monitored 107 elections in 39 countries since 1989, forging many of the techniques now common in the field. The Democracy Program's Democratic Election Standards (DES) has developed practical tools, including the Election Obligations and Standards (EOS) database and Assessment Manual which make available common criteria for assessing elections based on public international law.

3 - *The Carter Center in Mozambique:* The Carter Center has supported development in Mozambique since 1995, including international election observation, support for citizen observers, review of the political finance structure, and improvement of agricultural production. At the invitation of the government of Mozambique, The Carter Center supported a multi-stakeholder dialogue known as the Agenda 2025 National Vision and National Development Strategy Process. The process was unanimously approved by Parliament in December 2003 and informed the country's poverty reduction strategy, which was supported by the international donor community.

4 - The Carter Center has observed past elections and related events in Mozambique, including international observation of voter registration and the general elections of 1999, the subsequent electoral law revision process, the 2003 municipal elections, the 2004 voter registration update, and the December 2004 presidential and legislative elections. The Carter Center also conducted a number of activities to broaden the role of civil society organizations in democratic processes, including technical assistance around the implementation of parallel vote tabulation exercises in 2003 and 2004.¹ The Carter Center has worked closely with EISA in Mozambique, including incorporation of key staff from EISA into the Center's observation missions in 1999 and 2004. The Carter Center partnered with EISA to observe and report on the 2014 elections in Mozambique, and in the post-election period implemented an election reform project that included a focus on women's political participation.

Findings and Recommendations

5 - The equitable participation of women in politics and government is essential to building and sustaining democracy. Democracy cannot truly deliver for all of its citizens if half of the population remains underrepresented in the political arena.

6 - International and regional obligations protect women's rights and ensure their democratic right to participation.² Mozambique is signatory of several regional and international conventions and protocols regarding gender equality, including the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and

Peoples' Rights concerning the Rights of Women in Africa (December 2005) and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW, June 1993). In addition to these international rights obligations, Mozambique's constitution mandates that "the state shall promote, support and value the development of women, and shall encourage their growing role in society, in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life of the country."³

7 - Women can be particularly effective in promoting honest government. Countries where women are supported as leaders and at the ballot box have a correspondingly low level of corruption. Women are strongly committed to peace building, as they often disproportionately suffer the consequences of armed conflict. Studies show that reconstruction and reconciliation efforts take root more quickly and are more sustainable when women are involved. By helping women become participating members of a democracy, one can look to mitigate conflicts or stop conflicts before they begin. Women are also strongly linked to positive developments in education, infrastructure and health standards at the local level. Where rates of gender development and empowerment are higher, human rates of development and standards of living are also higher.

8 - As the 2014 election showed, under the Mozambican electoral system there is no provision to facilitate participation of women, such as a candidate gender quota. However, at the political party level there is a history of voluntary quotas. The Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) has used gender quotas since 1994, requiring that 40 percent of candidates be women and that there be balance in the distribution of men and women in the party list.

9 - Despite the lack of a formal quota system, female candidates were relatively well-represented in the 2014 elections, and 40 percent of the new parliamentarians are women. At the national level, while no party nominated a woman as a presidential candidate, FRELIMO, the Mozambican National Resistance (RENAMO), and the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) did nominate women candidates for national assembly positions. FRELIMO had the highest percentage of women candidates on the national assembly ballot with 40 percent. RENAMO and MDM had the second and third highest percentages of female candidates at 28 and 21 percent, respectively. Across all parties, women candidates made up 30 percent in the legislative elections.

10 - The government of Mozambique is obligated to take steps to increase women's participation in electoral processes at all levels, particularly as candidates, election administrators, and voters, in order to ensure full realization of their rights.

11 - To increase women's participation in politics and to ensure balance in women's representation across all political parties, Mozambique could consider revising articles of the electoral law that govern the organization of the candidate lists in the closed-list system. Consideration should be given of a "zippered" or "zebra" list that would ensure that women are well represented throughout the list, for example requiring that every other candidate be a woman.³ Such a zippered list system may provide the best prospects for enhancing women's political participation and meeting international commitments.

12 - The new National Assembly is composed of approximately 37 percent women, roughly the same percentage as in the previous legislature. There are, nevertheless, differences among the three

parties with seats in parliament: FRELIMO is represented by 64 women, representing 44 percent of all parties' elected Member of the National Assembly while RENAMO has among its ranks 27 women, or 30 percent of its total representatives. MDM is represented by one female Member of Parliament out of a total of 17 representatives elected.

13 - Although a Parliamentary Women's Caucus has been established in Mozambique, it would benefit from additional training for members and development of a strategic plan and communication plan. Women's caucuses can play an important role in the development and implementation of laws and policies on important gender issues, and where they are active have been successful in addressing issues in ways that transcend political differences.

14 - Additionally, attention should be paid to campaign finance reform. Funding plays an essential role in politics, and the high cost of election campaigning means that politics often does not afford equal opportunities for all to compete. Money is one of the essential elements that facilitates the election of women and increases their participation in politics. Studies have found that one of the strongest deterrents to women entering politics is the lack of finances to contest electoral campaigns.⁵ New parties, or those not represented in parliament, usually feel the challenge of political finance most acutely.

15 - Legislating a limit on campaign spending and donations and increasing oversight of campaign spending is recommending in a corresponding white paper in this series focused on campaign finance. Implementation of those recommendations would help level the playing field for all candidates and could have a particularly important impact on increasing the quality participation of women in politics.⁶

Notes

1 Additional information about the Center's work with civil society and the 2003 and 2004 parallel vote tabulations can be found in the Carter Center's report, *Observing the 2004 Mozambique Elections*, available at www.cartercenter.org

2 United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

3 1990 Constitution, Article 122.1 Articles

4 167 – 171 of Law No. 8/2013 of February 27, 2013, deal with the closed-list system for legislative elections.

5 Inter-Parliamentary Union survey of 300 parliamentarians in 1999; UN Women 2013 research.

6 International IDEA, *Funding of Political Parties and Election Campaigns: A Handbook on Political Finance*, 2014