



FACT SHEET

Historic Gender Bill for Women's Representation

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Against incredible odds, Mali passed new legislation guaranteeing more seats for women at the political table. In November 2015, the Malian Parliament adopted a gender quota bill that will reserve one-third of government jobs for women, including in elected offices.

Since the beginning of its USAID-funded program, the National Democratic Institute (NDI) assisted the Government of Mali to develop legislation that provides greater inclusion of women in political processes. NDI supported a consensus-building effort by convening civil society, the Ministry for the Promotion of Women, Children and the Family (MWCF), and the Network of Female Parliamentarians (NFP) to form a coalition and reach common ground on key provisions of the bill. After the workshop, participants lobbied organizations that opposed the bill to gain their support. For example, women civil society leaders met with leaders of the High Islamic Council to garner support, and NFP members met with their male counterparts in the National Assembly to discuss the bill's merits. The coalition avoided partisan and cultural battles, and focused negotiations on the peace process and the importance of inclusion.

The successful adoption of the quota bill can be attributed to four key elements: 1) Building a broad network and bridges between the MWCF, civil society organizations, the NFP, and political parties; 2) The NFP's extensive awareness-raising efforts; 3) the Ministry's direct advocacy efforts to engage social and political groups; and 4) Receiving backing from Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita (IBK) himself. These combined efforts resulted in passage of the bill.

The next step involves the creation of an implementation decree to put the new law into action. The MWCF organized a high-level workshop on February 11 with various women's networks to seek consensus on the conditions for implementation. This was the first time that a Malian ministry invited the public to contribute to the drafting of an official decree. Although implementation of the law will be difficult, the alliances and strategies that NDI has helped the Ministry and other stakeholders to build have put them on a path to sustainable success.

Gender quota bill allows Malian women to join the government with at least 30% representation.



Photo: NDI

Celebrating steps toward gender parity, Madame Haidara Aichata Cisse, Member of Parliament (far left) and Madame Sangare Oumou Ba, Minister of Women's Affairs (second from right), form a consensus coalition from various networks to implement the 30% quota law on February 11, 2016.

"The gender quota bill is the most important law of our legislature for social progress."

- Issiaka Sidibe
President of the
National Assembly

For More Information:

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