



# Women Delegates Fund

ENSURING WOMEN'S ACCESS AND INFLUENCE  
ON CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY

Including updated data on women's participation in the United Nations climate negotiations  
(2008-2014)

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## ABOUT

The **Women Delegates Fund (WDF)** was established in 2009 with support from the Government of Finland. Recently, the Government of Iceland has also contributed to the fund. The WDF is a project of the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA), implemented by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) in partnership with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). For more information on the WDF, please contact Bridget Burns, [bridget@wedo.org](mailto:bridget@wedo.org).

The **Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)** is a women's global advocacy organization, WEDO envisions a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment. WEDO works on a range of cross-cutting issues - from climate change and natural resource management to global governance and enhanced civil society participation - towards three interlinked goals: to ensure women are empowered as decision-makers and leaders, especially in environmental and sustainable development arenas; to ensure sustainable development policies, plans and practices are gender responsive; and, to ensure global governance is transparent, accountable and effective.

For news, updates and key resources on this work, visit WEDO's website at [www.wedo.org](http://www.wedo.org).





## WOMEN IN CLIMATE CHANGE POLICY MAKING

*"The effects of gender imbalance amongst decision-makers go beyond headline statistics. The lack of power and influence wielded by women in public and political life is undermining progress towards a world where poverty is eradicated and men and women are able to build sustainable and secure futures for themselves and their families."*  
 - VSO (2015) Women in Power: beyond access to influence in a post-2015 world

Throughout the past several years of the international climate change negotiations, alongside the establishment of a new sustainable development agenda, governments across the world have established and agreed that promoting gender equality and protecting women's human rights are necessary to effective action on climate change toward peaceful and sustainable societies.

At the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), where negotiations will determine global climate policy, women account for around 33% of all national Party delegates and around 20% of the Heads of Delegations. Research shows that gender imbalances differ across countries and regions. Women's participation in Eastern and Western Europe, for example, is around 45%, while it is around 21% in Africa and the Asia-Pacific region. These differences can also be seen when looking at participation by UNFCCC negotiating blocks, with countries from the African Group, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and OPEC having less representation of women on national delegations.

As the climate negotiations work towards a new agreement in 2015, there is an opportunity to ensure that climate policies and actions are responsive to gender power structures and social constructs, that they recognize and respond to the needs, perspectives and rights of women and men, and that they enhance and protect women's human rights. This includes the right for women and men to fully and effectively participate in climate change decision-making at all levels.

### Creating Change

The UNFCCC has worked to strengthen women's leadership in the climate negotiations. COP18's landmark Decision 23/CP.18, on promoting gender balance and improving the participation of women in UNFCCC negotiations, highlighted countries' recognition of the importance of equitable participation. However, as many Governments and CSOs noted in their follow-up submissions<sup>1</sup> on how to achieve the goals of this Decision, words on paper will not be enough to truly transform participation levels, particularly as gender imbalance in decision-making is a reflection of larger structural gender equality issues at international, national and local levels.

For policies like Decision 23/CP.18 to be effective, and for participation to be more equal, words on paper must be operationalized through investment in training, capacity building, financial support and innovative methodologies and processes to create not just a simple balance in numbers, but transformation in who has access and influence in global decision-making spaces.

1. 2013 Submission Analysis.  
[http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/Final\\_Analysis\\_Nov10.pdf](http://www.wedo.org/wp-content/uploads/Final_Analysis_Nov10.pdf)

## THE WOMEN DELEGATES FUND (WDF)

*"The WDF is a very important institution as it provides women from developing countries with the opportunity to take part in policy making around climate change. Not only through financial means, but also through skill and knowledge building."* - Samah El Bakri, WDF Delegate, Sudan

Recognizing a need to support the participation and leadership of women in the UN climate negotiations, particularly from countries most affected by climate change, in 2009, the Government of Finland partnered with the Global Gender and Climate Alliance (GGCA) to launch the Women Delegates Fund (WDF).

The WDF works to enhance women's participation in the climate negotiations in three key ways: 1) Travel support; 2) Capacity Building and Networking, and 3) Outreach and Advocacy.

### Travel Support

*"We talk about increasing women's participation in decision-making, and the first step to do that should be to ensure that they are present."* - Emelda Adam, WDF Delegate, Tanzania

First and foremost, the WDF works to address a gap in women's participation, particularly from Least Developed Countries with limited capacity and resources overall to attend and effectively participate in the climate negotiations. As this report highlights, women's participation is lowest among LDC and African Group countries, as well as many Asian countries—regions where women are also significantly impacted by climate change. Between 2009 and 2014, 25% of the trips funded by the WDF were for delegates who were the only woman in their delegations.

While recognizing that this kind of travel support cannot be used as the only means to address structural gender inequality in decision-making at the regional and national levels, it is an important equity measure to support women's full and effective participation, which can also lead to greater awareness raising and more inclusive policy decisions.

*"The WDF makes us ambassadors for women across all areas of the negotiations. Other countries now want to increase the women on their delegations and even just by being in the room, we are helping to ensure that gender remains in the language of the text."* – WDF Delegate, Bangladesh



## Capacity Building and Networking

Feedback from a WDF 'Night School' during the Bonn intersessional (2012):  
*"in the three years I have been coming to these negotiations, I have never once raised my flag to speak. The training really helped to bolster my confidence. In Bonn, I have raised my flag three times on behalf of my country."*  
 - WDF Delegate

Since WEDO began administering the Women Delegates Fund in 2009, a key component has been networking and capacity building. The WDF prioritizes building leadership skills through knowledge and skills training on negotiations, media and communications.

The evolution of WDF capacity building has been demand-led and based on delegates' requests for more in-depth skills building and networking opportunities. In 2010 and 2011, for example, the training and advice was provided on an ad-hoc basis, with delegates listing topics in which they wanted to receive support and the WDF responding. Since 2012 however, the WDF has worked to develop more comprehensive and sustained negotiation skills 'modules' including the institutionalization of a pre-session 'Night School' (named so because it is held in the evenings during the preparatory meetings) for women delegates prior to the COP and mid-year intersessionals. More than 80 delegates have participated in pre-session night schools and capacity building sessions, open to WDF delegates and others.

For example, one of the key skills that the WDF delegates requested was training on drafting and delivery of an intervention: how to write one, deliver one, and the fundamentals of when, where and who could make one. Additionally, delegates have received training on overall process and procedural issues at the UNFCCC, analysis of key topics to be covered at the upcoming meetings (e.g. finance, technology, REDD+, agriculture, loss and damage), and tips and tricks for reading and reviewing legal language. Trainings often include mock exercises in plenary and contact groups to practice negotiations skills.

Furthermore, the WDF has held networking events for women delegates across several meetings, providing a space for collaboration, mentorship and cross-cultural exchange.

*"The WDF has been an interacting opportunity - we learn a lot from each other, give advice to one another."* - Patience Dampety, WDF Delegate, Ghana

### Women Delegates Fund (WDF) Night School

The Night School, open to all delegates engaged in the UNFCCC, is particularly geared toward:

- 1) women delegates with limited experience in the UNFCCC negotiation process (0-1 years);
- 2) experienced delegates who are interested in honing their negotiation skills; and
- 3) delegates interested in broadening their network of delegates working in the UNFCCC.

Beyond skills building, the Night School provides information and updates on where the negotiations are and provides important concepts on legal form, specifically as the world progresses towards a new climate agreement. The training also aims to provide a space for engaging with other delegates outside of the ongoing preparatory meetings.

## Outreach and Advocacy

*"We need to make sure that thinking about gender under the UNFCCC goes beyond achieving gender balance within its bodies and delegations, but also ensuring that concrete results are achieved on the ground."* - WDF Delegate

A final and critical element of the WDF is the work done overall to highlight the programme as an innovative strategy to enhance women's leadership, and to harness it as a platform for wider discussion on women's leadership in decision-making, as well as to promote policy change at international and national levels.

In November 2012, UNITAR highlighted the WDF programme to host an *Online Discussion Platform on Women's Diplomacy* to raise awareness of the roles of women and the importance of gender equality in diplomacy today. WDF participants supported coordination and moderation of a one-week open forum on women in the climate change negotiations, which included 111 participants from 47 nationalities<sup>2</sup>. As a follow-up to the discussion, WEDO hosted an in-person 'brown bag' lunch at COP18 to discuss the challenges of transforming the demographics of delegations at the UNFCCC; and in March 2013, the WDF was featured at Yale Law School's New Directions in Environmental Law Conference<sup>3</sup> at a session entitled "Empowering Women's Voices During Climate Change Negotiations".

Participation in the WDF has also been followed up by actions at the national level. Women are encouraged to extend their impact to their country's policies. Through the WDF, many of them have expanded their knowledge around gender and climate change, and have decided to dedicate themselves more fully to this issue at the country level. For example:

- Since participating in the UNFCCC meetings through WDF sponsorship, Emelda Adam of Tanzania has become more involved in issues around gender and climate change, and has had the opportunity to be part of a partnership between Tanzania and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to develop a national gender and climate change strategy.
- After participating in her first negotiations at the UNFCCC under WDF sponsorship in June 2014, Anniete Cohn-Lois of the Dominican Republic designed a project for women's empowerment under her mission at the Vice President's office. The project is promoting women's entrepreneurship in climate vulnerable areas of the Dominican Republic, supporting them in skills development, capacity-building and financial inclusion.

## Making Change

*"At the national level we speak a lot about the importance of women empowerment, but it's not the same thing as actually implementing policies to achieve progress on this."* - Anniete Cohn-Lois, WDF Delegate, Dominican Republic

Changing the landscape of leadership and participation at the UNFCCC is an ongoing process. The WDF has played a pivotal role in the evolution of the face of the UNFCCC, through its unique combination of travel funds, capacity building, outreach and networking. Importantly, the WDF has also had influence in the changing policy at the UNFCCC, and increasingly at the regional and national levels, to support and promote gender equality and women's human rights.

A strong and robust WDF will be valuable in coming years to support the institutionalization of equal participation and leadership at the UNFCCC, and a more just, sustainable and climate resilient world.

# THE WDF IN NUMBERS



Between 2009 and 2014, 25% of the trips funded by the WDF were for delegates who were the only woman in their delegations.

## CURRENT PARTICIPATION- BY THE NUMBERS

A first report by WEDO had tracked data from 2008 through 2012 to present the trends in women's participation at the major negotiating meetings of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (see "WEDO (2012), Women's Participation in UN Climate Negotiations, 2008-2012"). The data presented below complements these initial findings and analyzes recent evolutions.

There is progress to note: in the last 7 years, there has been a steady increase in women's participation in the process, both in overall participation and at the highest levels of decision-making. This progress can be attributed to various factors: the adoption of decisions promoting women's participation in climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts at the UNFCCC, the implementation of gender quotas and the introduction of climate change and gender plans at the national level, as well as the introduction of initiatives by civil society to enhance women's leadership in climate change negotiations.

However, women's access to and influence in UNFCCC negotiations, though increasing, still has some way to go before reflecting a truly gender-balanced process, as highlighted through the various graphs and tables below. Women remain widely underrepresented on the delegations of many countries, particularly in high-level positions, as well as on the delegations of countries most vulnerable to climate impacts. Certain countries, regions, and negotiating blocks are more marked than others by these tendencies. Despite some slight progress, women's overall participation has, on average, stagnated below 25% for LDCs, African Group and OPEC countries.



## About the Numbers

The data highlighted in this report was collected from past WEDO publications and from official UNFCCC participant lists for each meeting during the years 2008-2014, including all intersessional and COP meetings. Data collection is restricted to published information on participants in official government delegations and members of UNFCCC boards and bodies; non-governmental stakeholders have not been taken into account. The compounded participation results by year (2008-2014), which includes the most recent COP20 data, can be found in the insert at the end of this publication.

UNFCCC MEETINGS BY YEAR						
2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Bangkok and Bonn	Bonn I	Bonn I	Bangkok and Bonn	Bonn	Bonn I	Bonn I
Accra	Bonn II	Bonn II	Panama City	Bangkok	Bonn II	Bonn II
COP14 (Poznan)	Bonn III	Bonn III	COP17 (Durban)	COP18 (Doha)	COP19 (Warsaw)	Bonn III
	Bangkok and Barcelona	Tianjin				COP20 (Lima)
	COP15 (Copenhagen)	COP16 (Cancun)				

Source: UNFCCC website

### UNFCCC NEGOTIATING BLOCKS MENTIONED IN THE REPORT

<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>LDCs</b>	Least Developed Countries
<b>AG</b>	African Group
<b>G77</b>	Group of 77 and China
<b>BASIC</b>	Brazil, South Africa, India, and China
<b>AOSIS</b>	Alliance of Small Island States
<b>UG</b>	Umbrella Group
<b>ALBA</b>	Alianza Bolivariana de Nuestra America
<b>EU</b>	European Union

### UNFCCC BOARDS AND BODIES MENTIONED IN THE REPORT

<b>AC</b>	Adaptation Committee
<b>CGE</b>	Consultative Group of Experts
<b>GCF</b>	Green Climate Fund
<b>TEC</b>	Technology Executive Committee
<b>SC</b>	Standing Committee on Finance



## 2008-2014: EVOLUTIONS

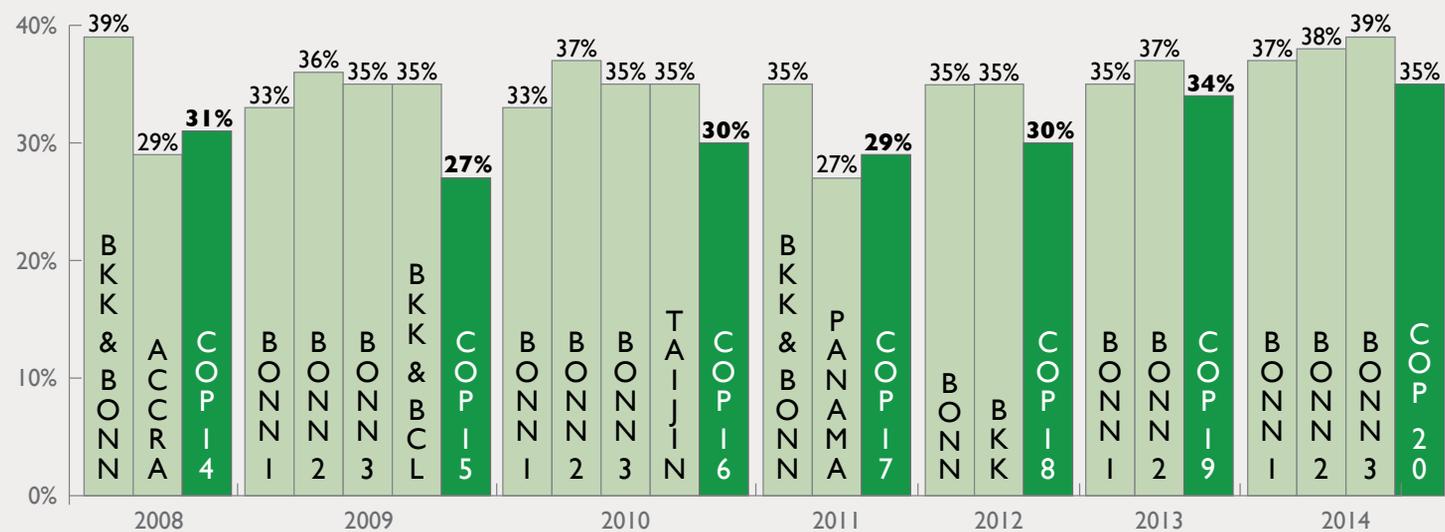
### PARTICIPATION

#### Women Delegates at UNFCCC Meetings

In the last 7 years, women's participation as members of national delegations to the UNFCCC has steadily increased, from 33% in 2008 to 38% in 2014.

The graph below highlights this positive upward tendency showcasing the percentage of women delegates at each UNFCCC meeting per year. This graph also evidences a regular drop in women's participation for major UNFCCC meetings such as the Conference of Parties.

#### Women Delegates at UNFCCC Meetings, 2008-2014

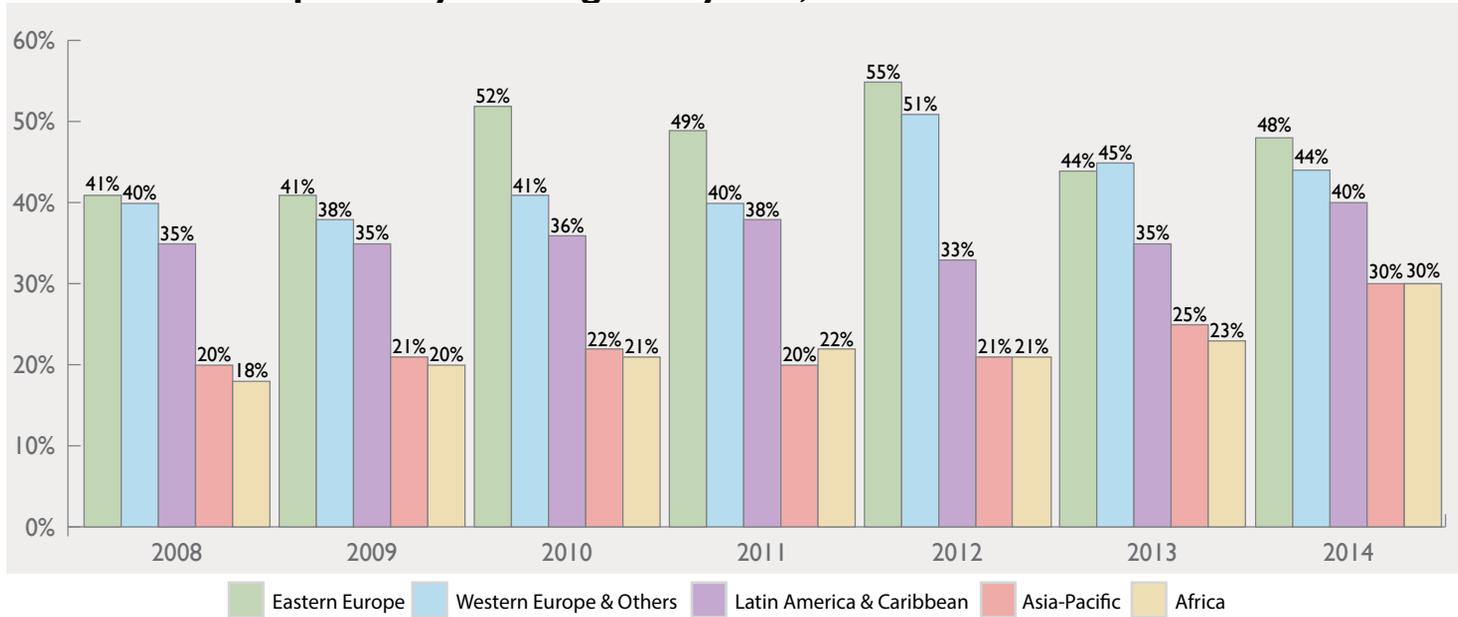


Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2012 and December 2014)

## Women's Participation by UN Regions

The graph below illustrates the average participation of women throughout the years and across official UN regions. Notably, the Eastern Europe and Western Europe and Others (which includes Australia, Canada, the United States and New Zealand) regions have, at almost every meeting, reached women's participation rates equal to or greater than 40%. Although steadily increasing, women's participation in delegations from the Africa and Asia Pacific regions remains significantly lower.

### Women's Participation by UN Regions by Year, 2008-2014



Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2012 and December 2014)

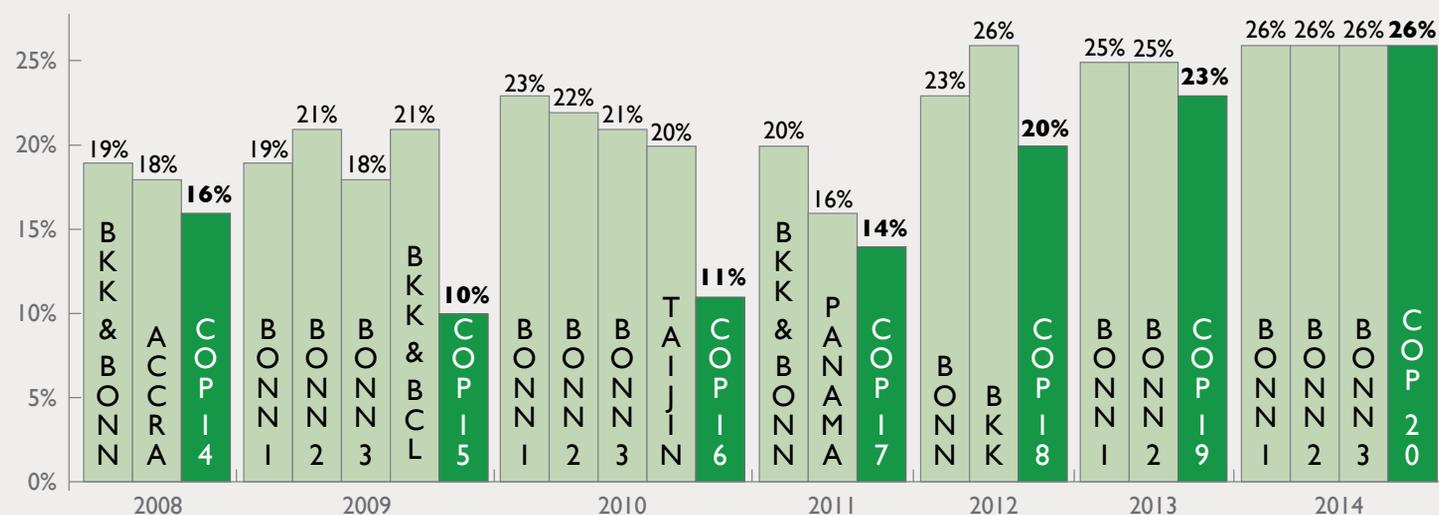
# LEADERSHIP

Leadership was measured in two ways: first, by the number of women as Heads of Delegation, to assess women's leadership at the country level; second, by the number of women in the UNFCCC boards and bodies, to account for leadership at the international and institutional level.

## Women as Heads of Delegation

In the last 7 years, women's participation as Heads of Delegation at UNFCCC meetings has steadily increased, from 18% in 2008 to 26% in 2014. The graph below highlights this positive upward tendency.

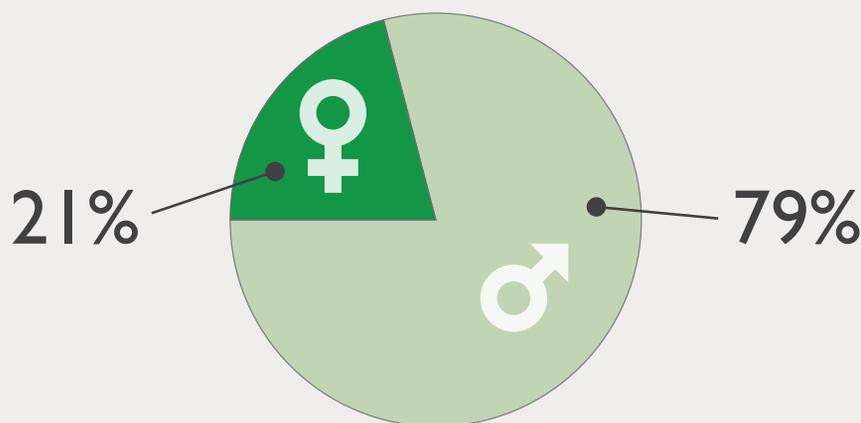
### Women Heads of Delegation at UNFCCC Meetings, 2008-2014



Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2012 and December 2014)

As was seen for women's overall participation, this graph also evidences a regular drop in the percentage of women Heads of Delegation for the COP meetings.

### 7-Year Average of Women's Participation as Heads of Delegation, 2008-2014

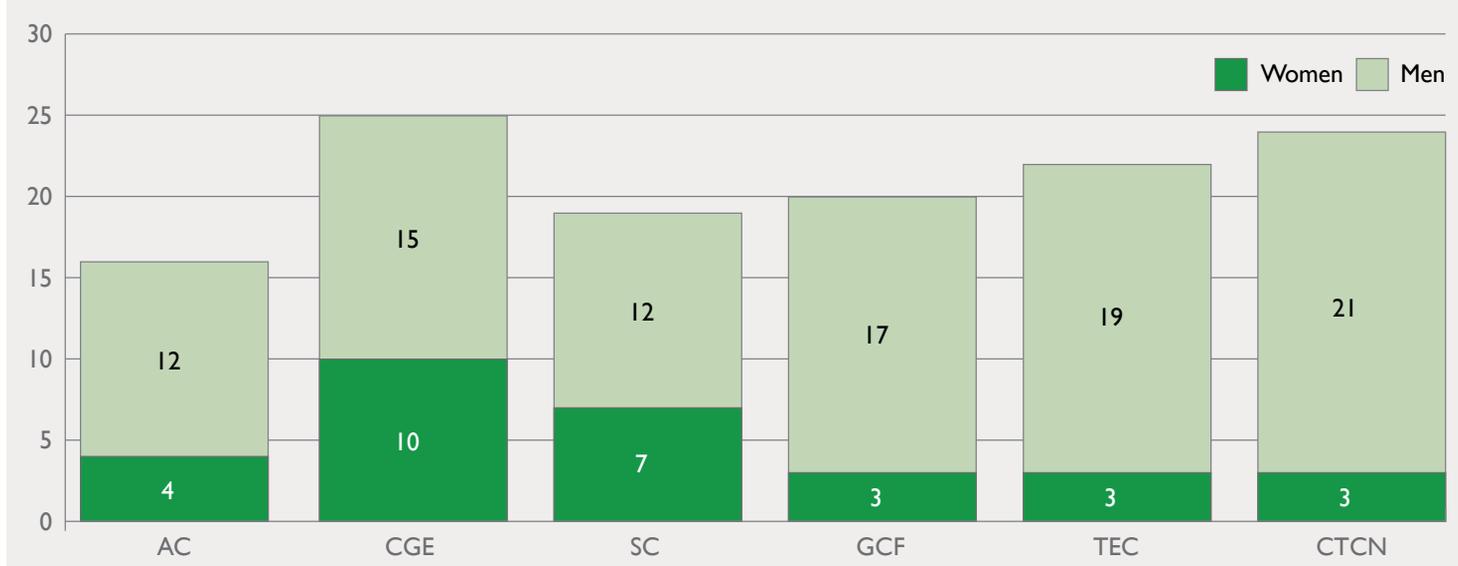


Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2012, and September and December 2014)

## Women on UNFCCC boards and bodies

As evidenced in the graph below, gender balance has not been achieved in the majority of UNFCCC boards and bodies. When comparing with the 2012 data collected for WEDO's previous publication on women's participation, results are mixed. There is a greater presence of women in the TEC and SC. However, women's presence in the AC, CGE, and GCF has decreased from 2012 to 2014.

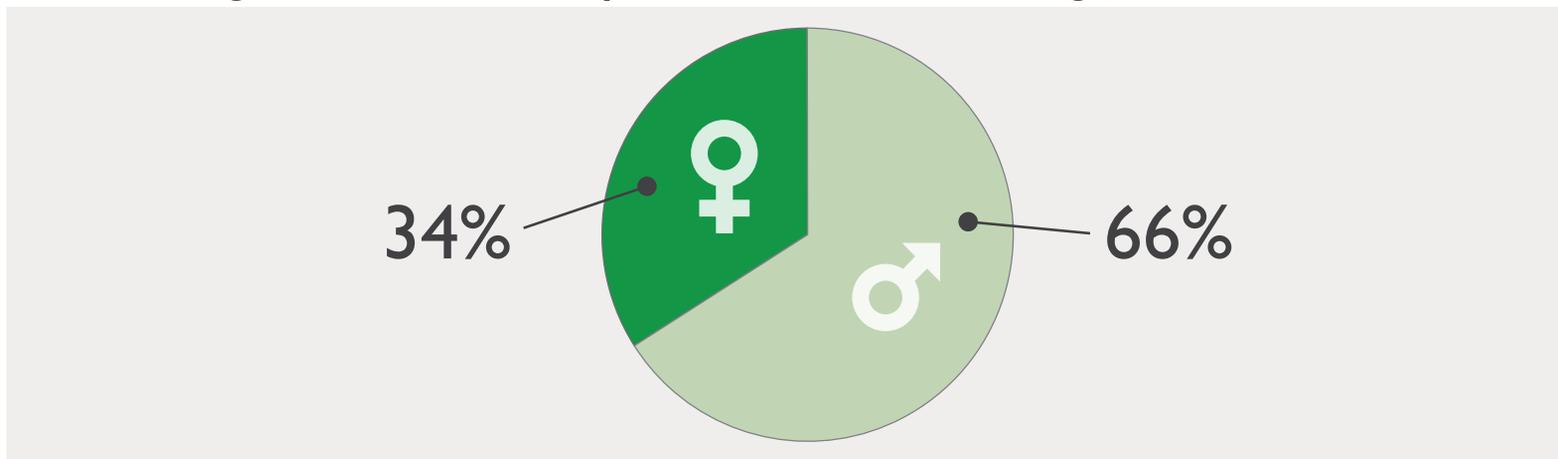
### Women on UNFCCC Boards and Bodies, 2014\*



Source: WEDO (2014), Gender & Climate Change Technical Guide for COP20

\*Not all boards and bodies have been included in our data collection

### 7-Year Average of Women's Participation in UNFCCC meetings, 2008-2014



Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2012, and September and December 2014)

As demonstrated by this figure, gender balance has yet to be achieved. However, women's yearly participation rate has been steadily increasing throughout the years, going from 33% in 2008 to 36% in 2014.

# GENDER BALANCE

## Most Gender-Balanced Delegations

Progress with regard to women's overall and high-level participation in the UN climate negotiations has resulted in progress on gender balance within the national delegations. The table below highlights some of the most gender-balanced delegations – that is, delegations reaching an equal ratio between women and men – in recent years.

### Most Gender-Balanced Delegations\* in 2013-2014

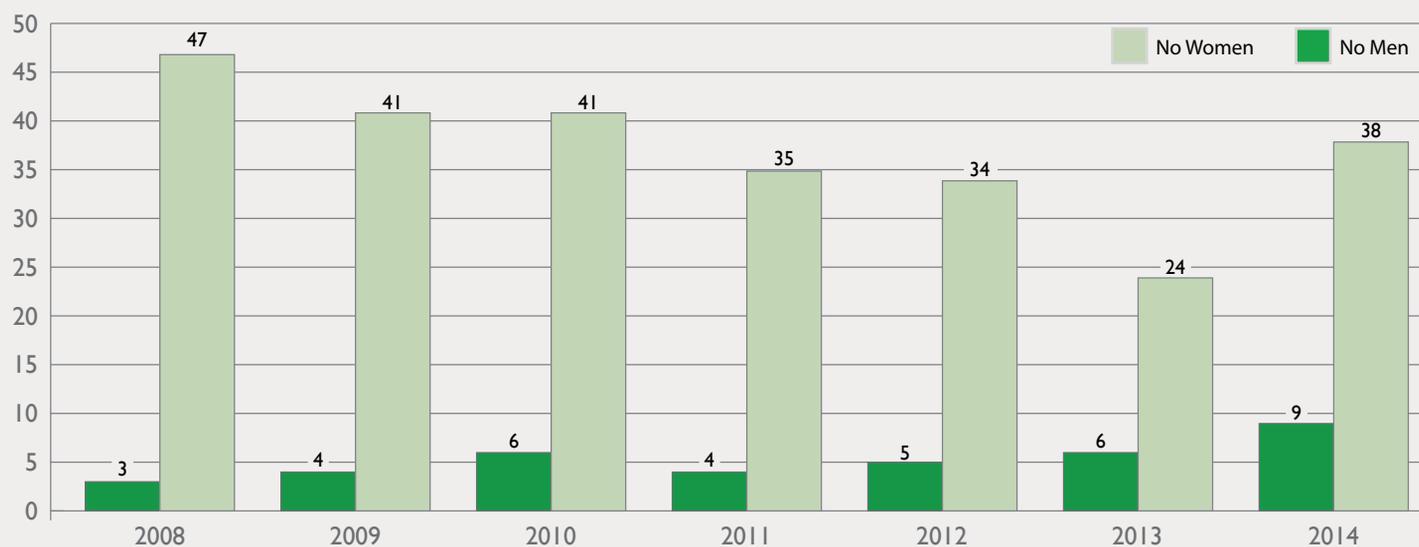
2013	2014
Argentina	Costa Rica
Czech Republic	Guatemala
Dominican Republic	Haiti
Estonia	Iceland
Israel	Malta
Kyrgyzstan	Romania
Lebanon	Saint Lucia
Paraguay	Slovakia
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	Syrian Arab Republic

Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2014). \*50% of their delegation is made up by women

## Gender Balance on Delegations

The graph below records the number of delegations to the UNFCCC each year, on average, that show a notable imbalance between women and men - in terms of the goal of gender balance - because the delegations either include all women or all men. There has been an overall decline (with the exception of 2014, not including COP20 data) in the average number of delegations with no women - which illustrates a greater presence of women across a wider range of delegations.

### Gender Balance on Delegations, 2008-2014\*



Source: UNFCCC Participants lists (collected in September 2012 and September 2014).

\*Not including COP20, and calculated for delegations with more than one delegate





Women's Environment  
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