

BY THE NUMBERS

Women's Participation in the UNFCCC: 2022 Report



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 agreed that promoting gender equality and protecting women's human rights are necessary to meet global climate and development goals.

Parties to the UNFCCC have emphasized the importance of women's leadership in climate change policymaking across several key decisions, including under the gender action plan (GAP). While we have seen many great initiatives to enhance women's participation, from travel funds to mentorship networks, progress remains uneven and unacceptably slow.

Since 2009, as a part of ongoing efforts to enhance women's voice and leadership in climate change policy-making, the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) has tracked the participation of women delegates on national delegations to the UNFCCC—across countries, regions and as Heads of Delegations. We have documented and shared these statistics on the Gender Climate Tracker website and mobile app, and produce regular briefs on the status of these figures.

**Women made up
30% of national delegations in 2009,
compared to 38% in 2021.**

30% in 2009 **38%** in 2021

Updated in June 2022. For more information and participation data, download WEDO's Gender Climate Tracker App on the App Store or Google Play.

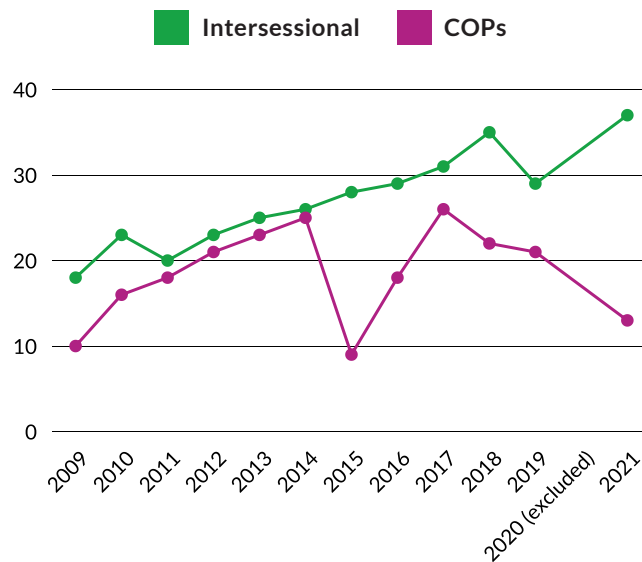
Key Takeaways

- The percentage of women across all national delegations **rose from 30% for meetings in 2009 to 38% in 2021**, a less than 10 percentage point increase despite greater policy commitments and activities to promote equal participation.
- For COPs, **only 10% of Heads of Delegations were women in 2009 and 13% in 2021**, with a low of 9% in 2015 and high of 26% in 2017. Arguably, COP15 in 2009 and COP21 in 2015 were considered pivotal decisionmaking events under the UNFCCC, highlighting that as more senior officials take up the role as Head of Delegation, the more likely they are to be men.
- Women's participation tends to be highest in delegations from **Latin America, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe, often between 45% and 50%**, and **lowest in Africa and Asia, often between 30% and 35%**.
- At this rate of change, gender parity in national COP delegations will **not be achieved until 2040**, and gender parity in COP Heads of Delegations will not be achieved within the forecastable future.

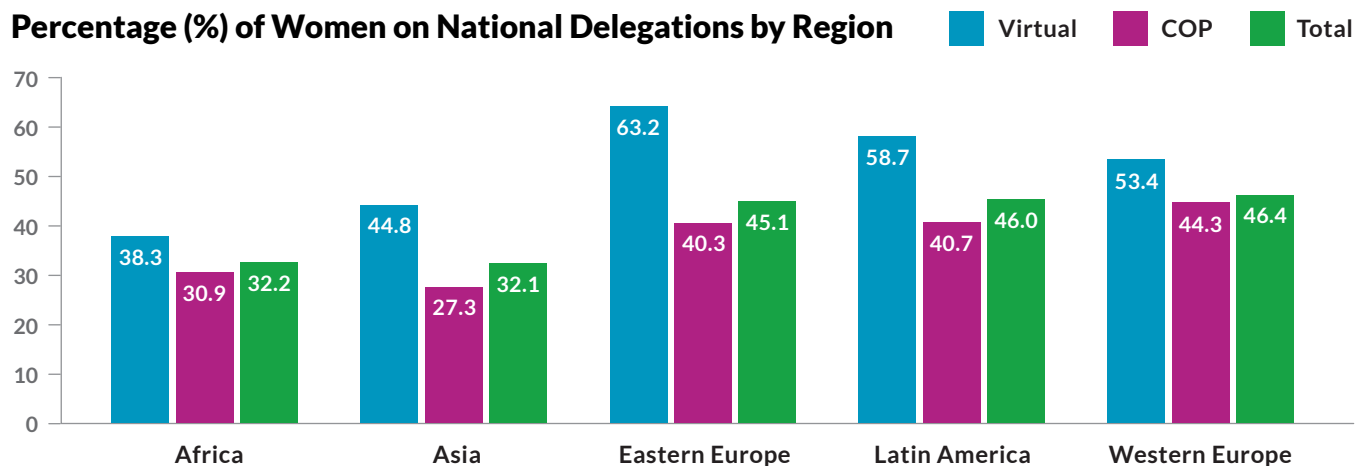
At COP15 in 2009, 19 of the 193 Heads of Delegation (10%) were women. At COP26 in 2021, 26 of the 194 Heads of Delegation (13%) were women.



Percentage (%) of Women as Heads of Delegation (per year)



Percentage (%) of Women on National Delegations by Region



New Measures

Beyond participation statistics, it has been recognized that new measurements are needed to assess the quality of women’s participation, including for example, speaking times. Under the enhanced Lima Work Programme on Gender and its GAP, UN Climate Change has therefore strengthened its reporting by including two case studies in their 2021 annual gender composition report.¹

One shows that while men accounted for 51 percent of registered government delegates, they were 60 percent of active speakers in the plenary—those meetings attended by all Parties—and spoke for 74 percent of the time.

Similarly, in a case documented by WEDO at the 22nd meeting of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), men accounted for 79% of the total speaking time for the meeting among all stakeholders in attendance. When only Board members were counted, that jumped to 93% of the time, as observers and Secretariat speakers/other presenters increase the time women’s voices are heard. Women spoke 38% of the time given to the Secretariat or other presenters (accredited entities, etc.), while women active observers spoke 84% of the time.

¹ unfccc.int/documents/302672