

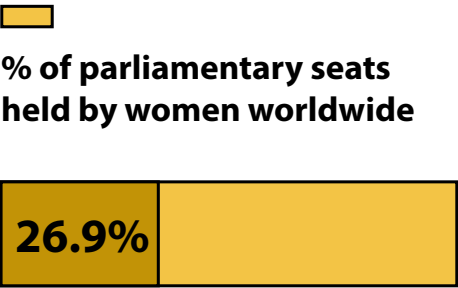
Gender Equality

Gender Representation in National Parliaments

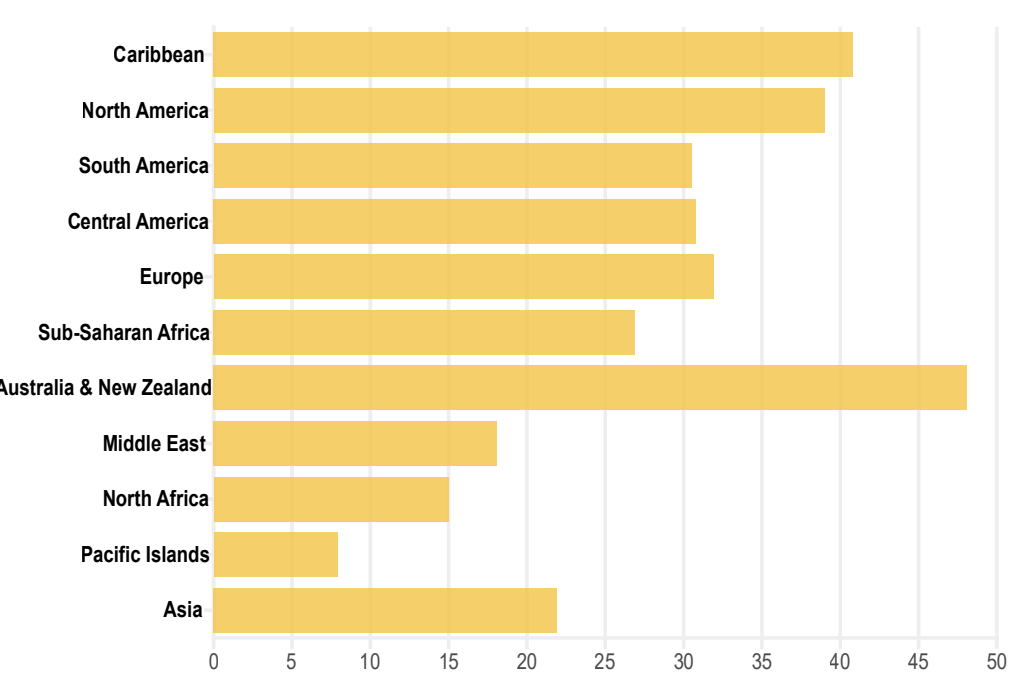
Across the globe, women’s parliamentary representation weaves a story of both progress and profound imbalance. In Nicaragua, for example, women now hold 53.8% of national seats, a rare majority that reflects deliberate electoral reforms and gender quotas. But just as striking is the opposite: in Nigeria, only 4% of parliamentarians are women, underscoring how deeply structural and cultural barriers can limit access to power. In other major nations, the picture is mixed. The United States has-

28.8% of its seats occupied by women; India stands at 17%, while China’s representation remains in the middle which serves as a reminder that parliamentary gender parity is not simply a function of economic development or size. Mexico, meanwhile, provides a hopeful counterpoint: its progress illustrates how proportional systems and legal quotas can meaningfully accelerate women’s political participation. Yet, this unevenness is not accidental. The Inter-Parliamentary Union reports that, globally, women’s share of parliamentary seats climbed from just 11.3% in 1995 to around 27%-

by 2025, but the pace of change has slowed in recent years. The tales of Nicaragua, Nigeria, India, China and the U.S. all reflect this larger pattern; a world where systems, history and policy converge to shape who gets a voice.

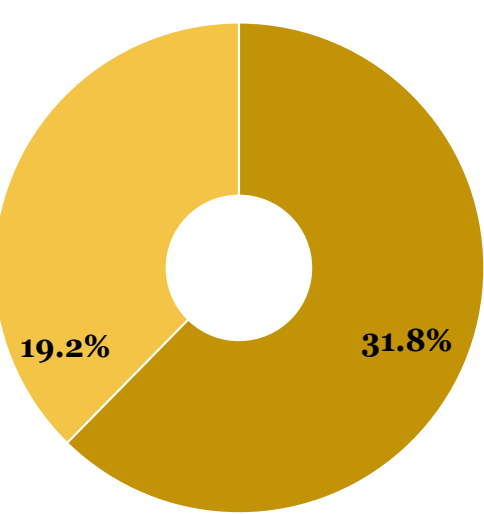


% of seats held by women by region



Source: IPU Parline, Global Data on National Parliaments

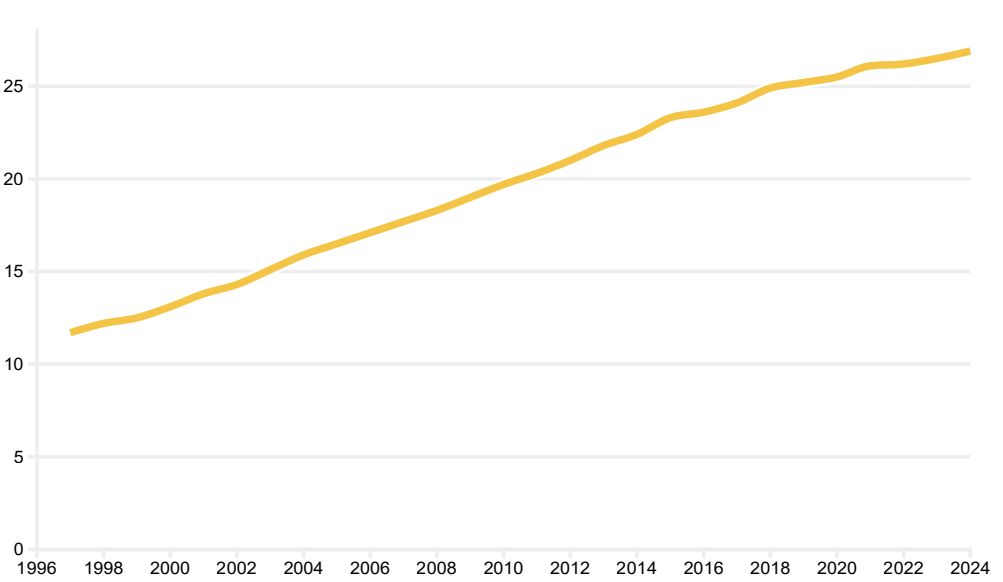
Countries by Gender Quota



Source: IDEA Gender Quotas database

Just a fraction of countries use gender quotas, but those that do elect far more women to parliament. The divide echoes the wider story seen across Nicaragua, Mexico, Nigeria, India and the U.S., where policy choices, not potential, determine who gets a seat.

% of seats held by women worldwide (1997-2004)



Source: World Bank WDI (SG.GEN.PARL.ZS)

Over the past three decades, women have gained ground in national parliaments worldwide, yet the pace of progress has slowed markedly since the mid-2010s. The rise from just under 12% to nearly 27% is significant, but it also highlights how far most countries-

Structural reforms, such as electoral design and gender quotas, remain the strongest drivers of change, and without them, global representation is unlikely to accelerate.