

ENSURING SUDANESE WOMEN'S INCLUSION IN ELECTIONS
A CALL TO ACTION
Prepared by the Coalition of Women Leaders in Sudan
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Sudanese women sustain communities and mobilize for peace. Throughout the country, we are now looking ahead to elections, preparing to participate as voters, organizers, and candidates. Without our full participation, elections will not succeed.

Although we face many challenges, there is no shortage of Sudanese women who want to be involved. With the appropriate support from the international community, we can reach our common goal of helping guarantee free and fair elections and over time, transforming Sudan into a secure, democratic nation. We recommend the following:

Educating and Mobilizing Women Voters

- Consult Sudanese women civil society organizations, community-based organizations, and activists when designing voter education strategies and programs.
- Ensure voter education programs highlight the confidentiality of the voting process and the relevance of elections to the future of Sudanese women and their families.
- Encourage innovative approaches to widening women's participation such as incorporating voter education in existing literacy programs and disseminating information to women gathering at markets, in queues at water points, and elsewhere.
- Ensure voter education programs target illiterate women, acknowledging the very high illiteracy rates among women, particularly in rural areas.
- Fund outreach programs with local male leaders, particularly in rural areas, specifically to raise awareness about the role of women in elections.

Contracting to International and Sudanese Organizations

- Specify that a minimum of 30 percent of organizations sub-contracted to design and deliver voter education and other election programs are women-led. Acknowledge that women often work through informal associations as opposed to registered organizations.
- Prepare a clear summary of criteria and processes for accessing funds for election support. Ensure the document is translated into local languages and distributed to local women-led organizations well in advance of issuing requests for proposals.
- Require all contractors to describe the indicators they will use to measure women's participation, set benchmarks, and report results.
- Ensure that a minimum of 50 percent of United Nations (UN) electoral staff are women.
- Require all UN electoral staff to receive training on the importance of women's participation in Sudanese elections and on approaches to ensuring their inclusion.

Recruiting and Training Women Candidates

- Mandate a minimum of 30 percent women's participation in all candidate training and party strengthening programs by insisting that when proposing candidates for training, party leaders include at least 30 percent women.
- Provide women candidates with targeted trainings on topics of particular relevance to women, such as public speaking, leadership, fundraising, managing a campaign, and advocating within political parties.
- Provide training for political parties on how to recruit women candidates. Mentorship programs with women leaders from Sudan and elsewhere can be effective.

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