



Republic of South Africa
Electoral Commission Website
www.elections.org.za

Parliamentary Structure
Bicameral

Election System
National & Provincial: List PR
Local: Hybrid PR & WS

Female Political Participation in Sub-Saharan Africa

Metafile

Administrative Divisions

South Africa is split into 9 provinces which are further divided into both district and local administrative councils. The constitution makes provision for three categories of local government which include metropolitan (8), district (44) & local (207) municipalities. Metropolitan municipalities govern the largest cities in South Africa. The remaining local administrative divisions are split into district municipalities which consist of a group of local municipalities.

Election System

National and provincial elections are held simultaneously and occur every five years. The party list Proportional Representation (PR) voting system is used to calculate the number of seats each party receives in National & Provincial government. Each political party is allocated a share of seats in parliament in proportion to the amount of votes received in the election. The last national and provincial election took place on the 7th of May 2014.

Municipal elections take place every five years and do not take place in the same year as provincial and national elections. A hybrid voting system which combines a ward and PR system is used to determine seat allocations for local government. The last municipal election took place on the 3rd of August 2016.

In metropolitan and local municipal elections half of the councillors are elected according to a proportional representation system, while the other half are directly elected as ward councillors by voters in each respective ward (IEC, 2016). Voters will receive two ballot papers if they reside in a metropolitan area and three if they reside in a local municipal area. In the case of the former, voters can vote for a political party on the one ballot paper with the objective of getting their preferred party seats in 50% of the local council, this is calculated according to the list PR system. The second ballot paper gives the voter the option to vote for a ward councillor directly which makes up the other half of local council seats. In this case, the additional ballot paper requires the voter to vote for a party which will make up 40% of the district council within which the local municipality is situated. This is calculated according to the PR system. The remaining 60% of councillors are comprised of councillors sent by their respective local councils to represent the area within the district. The local council is elected in the same manner as the municipal council. The difference between these two electoral areas is that the individuals voting in a local government area must also vote for a party which makes up 40% of the district council seats.

Women's Representation & Quota Information

South Africa does not have legislative quotas for female representation in National and Provincial government however the Local Government Municipal Structures Act makes provision for female representation in local elections (Quota Project, 2014). The Local Government Municipal Structures Act (1998, 17.(5)) stipulates that "Every party or independent ward councillor must seek to ensure that fifty percent of the candidates on the candidates list are women and that women and men candidates are evenly distributed through the list". Legal sanctions for non-compliance are not imposed (Quota Project, 2014). Voluntary quotas can be set by political parties. The African National Congress (ANC), South Africa's ruling party, has a voluntary quota of 50% for women in local and national elections. The local quota was instituted in 2006 and the national quota was instituted in 2009.

Seats & Trends in Seat Numbers

National government consists of 400 seats while each of the nine provinces has between 30 and 90 seats, depending on the population of the province.

Following the national elections in April 2009, women comprised 174 of the available 400 (43.5%) seats in the lower house and 16 of the 54 available seats in the Upper House. Following the 2014 national elections, women held 169 of the 399 (42.36%) available seats in the Lower House and 19 of the 54 (35.19%) available seats in the Upper House. At the local level, women represent 3494 of the available 9088 (38.45%) positions.



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