



EVENT BRIEF



## UN WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA SUPPORTS ELECTORAL CYCLES TO BE GENDER SENSITIVE

### A Building Resources in Democracy, Governance and Elections (BRIDGE) Training Workshop on Gender and Elections

*(Above) Participants of the workshop. (Photo © UN Women)*

UN Women Ethiopia held a two and half days BRIDGE workshop on Gender Equality and Elections in line with its plan to create a pool of able trainers who can train various stakeholders including women members of political parties in view of the upcoming Ethiopia's general election and beyond.

The objective of the workshop was to enhance participants understanding on how to make the electoral cycle gender sensitive and increase women's political and civic participation. The workshop took place on 25-27 November 2020 in Addis Ababa. A total of eighteen participants (13 women and 5 men) attended the blended online and face-to-face training workshop focused on international standards and principles for democratic elections, electoral cycle and gender, a level playing field as well as impact of electoral systems on representation.

During the training workshop, participants discussed existing barriers for women's involvement and contributed on strategies to alleviate the same through the electoral cycle approach. The training based on the BRIDGE gender and elections curriculum also equipped them with tools to analyze elections from gender perspective.

Ms. Anna Parini, UN Women Ethiopia Deputy Representative, in her opening speech recalled UN Women's continuous support and determination to increase equal participation of women in leadership, "The ToT in December 2019 on Political Leadership and Candidate Training; this training on gender and elections and our upcoming interventions to empower women in politics are all part of UN Women's effort to increase the equal participation and effective representation of women in leadership and particularly it is in line with the plan to expand the pool of able and willing women politicians and aspirants running a campaign, win and serve in elective positions in Ethiopia."

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*"We trust that this workshop will serve as a tool to strengthen our collaborative effort in identifying and reducing the existing barriers to women's effective participation through proposing strategies that can be undertaken to achieve the full and effective participation of women in Ethiopia's 6<sup>th</sup> general election and at the different phases of the electoral cycle." Anna Parini, UN Women Ethiopia Deputy Representative.*

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In her closing remarks, Ms. Desset Abebe, UN Women Ethiopia's Leadership and Governance Program Specialist underlined,

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With the knowledge and skills participants acquired, they are now equipped to play a key role in making electoral processes gender sensitive.

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UN Women Ethiopia Country Office works with key stakeholders including the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia, gender machineries and CSOs towards enhancing the leadership capacities of women to ensure they are equally represented and effectively participating in positions of power.

Considering the upcoming general election tentatively scheduled for August 2021, UN Women has been working to enhance the capacities of individuals drawn from key election stakeholders including National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), members of Bahir Dar University Women's Political Empowerment Curriculum Development Committee and other governmental and non-governmental partners who are collaboratively working to enhance the participation and representation of women in electoral process. Hence, the participants, who received certificates for the BRIDGE module of Gender and Elections are expected to apply the knowledge gained to inspire and influence others, incorporate gender issues within their organizations and encourage gender equality and women's participation in Ethiopia.

BRIDGE is comprehensive election administration-training curriculum, using adult learning teaching methodology, and is based on key understandings and learning outcomes.

It is a modular professional development program with a particular focus on electoral processes. BRIDGE represents a unique initiative where five leading organizations in the democracy and governance field have jointly committed to developing, implementing, and maintaining the most comprehensive curriculum and workshop package available, designed to be used as a tool within broader capacity development framework.

The five BRIDGE partners are the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), International IDEA, International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Electoral Assistance Division (UNEAD). UN Women organized the training with the financial support of UNDP under the purview of the project titled 'Support for gender responsive parliament and promotion of women's engagement in electoral process' that was launched in January 2019.



*Some of the participants in a discussion during the workshop. (Photo: UN Women)*