

VII. Promote Gender Equality and Economic Opportunity for Women

The R-TGoNU should invest in the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality. Among the first steps toward this goal are the appointment of a woman as transitional vice president (VP)⁹⁰ and the implementation of gender equality trainings among government leaders. The VP and other high-level officials should have the resources to support gender equality in the country, coordinate trainings across a range of economic skills and access points on gender equality, and ensure gender quotas in government and economic leadership.⁹¹ The VP should lead the transitional cabinet’s Gender and Youth cluster of ministerial oversight⁹² and use the high office to ensure international donors commit to hiring women to fill 50 percent of positions in international organizations, NGOs, and local communities.

How would this action improve economic governance?

Women in South Sudan are underrepresented in government and business and disproportionately suffer the physical, mental, and economic impacts of armed conflict and atrocities.⁹³ The government has so far ignored this basic reality. To achieve peace in the country and an inclusive and thriving economy, women need to have equal access to resources, basic services, justice, and positions of power.⁹⁴

- Representation by women in high-level government leadership positions would signal the importance of gender equality in South Sudan that is necessary for post-conflict economic growth and anti-corruption efforts.⁹⁵ With greater emphasis on gender equality in the economy, government leaders would advocate for women’s economic opportunity with international NGOs and banks to tailor economic revitalization packages to women.
- The credible and informed VP would lead the initiative to ensure all high-level government authorities are mandated to advocate for women and commit to gender quotas. High-level leadership that prioritizes opportunity for women would spur growth in job creation.
- With improved access to healthcare and education, increased overall security in the country, and more promising economic opportunities—including the freedom to own and operate businesses safely—women who chose to return from refugee and internal displacement camps would find greater opportunities to pursue sustainable work.⁹⁶

Has this policy worked?

In Kosovo following the U.N.-brokered peace agreement in 1999, international assistance provided critical training and opportunities for women after the conflict. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors prioritized promoting entrepreneurship opportunities for women and workplace development, creating opportunities for women in the formal economy. At the political level, a quota system was instrumental in setting the groundwork for increased representation at higher levels of government in Kosovo.⁹⁷

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What are the steps to implementation?

The R-ARCSS guarantees the participation of women in the transitional government, requiring 35 percent of positions in the Council of Ministers to be filled by women.⁹⁸ Across all legislative and executive bodies, a higher 50 percent quota should be prioritized to open up a new space for South Sudanese women in government positions and socioeconomic advancement.

- **South Sudan:** The R-TGoNU should nominate a woman as the VP in charge of the Gender and Youth cluster of the cabinet, which includes leadership of multiple ministries. In addition, all levels of government should follow a 50 percent baseline quota when selecting members of transitional committees and government posts.
- **IGAD, AU, United Nations:** RJMEC should work with the VP to advocate for a 50 percent threshold. International organizations operating in the country, including the United Nations and AU, should commit to hiring women to staff 50 percent of positions to meaningfully promote gender equity, drawing on diaspora and refugee communities.
- **International Partners, Donors:** Development agencies should incorporate training and capacity building for women into development projects and gender equality training for government leadership.⁹⁹ In the procurement and bidding process for development projects, donors should require that NGO partners commit to gender parity.