

IWD 2014: Gender equality in parliaments and political corruption

Source: GOPAC - Fri, 7 Mar 2014 12:12 PM

Author: Priya Sood



Does the extra X chromosome make political leaders less likely to bribe, pilfer and lie? Are women across the board less corrupt?

After all, plenty of female political leaders have been accused of committing large scale acts of corruption at local, national and international levels.

According to the Women in Parliament Network from the **Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC)**, the reality is far more nuanced.

GOPAC conducted **research** based on a ten-year analysis of trends in the proportion of women elected to national parliaments as correlated to trends in national corruption levels. Surprisingly, findings showed no general worldwide correlation between changes in parliamentary gender balance and changes in political corruption.

When, however, GOPAC examined countries which have traditionally been strongholds of parliamentary democracy and focused on women's political participation, the picture changed. An increase in the number of women in parliament will tend to reduce corruption, if, and only if, the country in question has reasonably robust systems to uphold democracy and enforce anti-corruption laws. Thus we, as the global community, must continue to advocate for more women to get involved in politics while also advocating for our leaders to invest in effective, transparent and well-resourced parliamentary oversight.

What does this mean in practice? On International Women's Day 2014, GOPAC is advocating for:

- Legislation to mandate parliamentary oversight of government use and management of state financial instruments
- Rules within political parties that commit a party to fielding a minimum number of candidates of each gender in general elections
- Increasing female political leaders capacity and understanding of financial oversight mechanisms
- Research to further advance the analysis of gender equality and anti-corruption

Taking these concrete steps is vital to ensuring progress in the realm of gender equality and the fight against corruption around the world.

Priya Sood is Program Advisor at the Global Organization of Parliamentarians Against Corruption (GOPAC).

Learn more about GOPAC, go to www.gopacnetwork.org

<http://www.trust.org/item/20140307121220-zqvdc/>