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IMPACTING LEGISLATION THROUGH BUILDING COALITIONS, BEING PREPARED AND STRATEGIC ALLIES

The South African Experience

When South Africa became a democracy, women parliamentarians made use of formal and informal structures within parliament to ensure that women's rights were legislated.

The South African Constitution

- Prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of gender, socio-economic status, pregnancy, etc

The Employment Equity Act

- Affirmative Action for women of all racial groups in work place
- Creating an enabling environment
- Reasonable accommodation for women
- Education, training and development

Women in Parliament

- Women in parliament work closely with institutions aimed at monitoring, promoting and protecting the rights they lobbied for when it comes to gender equality

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South African Bodies Promoting : The ideals in the Constitution

Chapter 9 Institutions:

- Commission for Gender Equality
- Human Rights commission
- Public Protector
- Commission for Religious, Cultural and Linguistic rights

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South African Bodies Promoting, Protecting and Monitoring Employment Equity

- Employment Equity Commission

Bodies protecting women's rights in civil society

- Equality courts
- NGOs
- Civil society organisations e.g. Gender Links and Sonke Gender Networks

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Successes in the past resulting from strategic alliance between parliament and other bodies

- Recognition of African Customary marriages
- Ratification of CEDAW
- Ensuring equitable female representation in business with reference to ownership, board membership and executive and senior management positions
- Lobbying to restrict age of marriage to 18 years
- Eliminating income differentials
- Lobbying against gender specific professional development

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Strategic Alliance Action Plan of the South African Parliament	
Goal	Alliance Partners
Capacity building on awareness of enabling legislation in all languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Language specialist and translation •NGOs and CSOs •Institutional lawyers •Women rights organizations •Gender activists
Capacity building for court officials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •National coalitions •Women's NGOs
Ensure monitoring of key institutions like parliaments, policy commissions, ministries for women rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Women rights organizations •Gender networks
Ensure that at least 50% of decision making positions in public and private sector are held by women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Employment equity commission •Statistics bureau •Ministry of Gender

Strategic Alliance Action Plan of the South African Parliament	
Goal	Alliance Partners
Adopt affirmative action measures to eliminate all barriers preventing equal and meaningful participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Corporations and business •Public bodies or sectors •Employment Equity Commission •Gender networks
Establish support structures for women in decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Women caucuses, politicians at all levels and NGOs
Ensure male involvement in all gender governance activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Men's organization, councilors, ministries, government departments, faith based organization, educators, labour unions, civil society organizations
Documenting women's stories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediators, political parties, diplomats, international affairs

Strategic Alliance Action Plan of the South African Parliament	
Goal	Alliance Partners
Ensure equal participation of women and men in policy formulation and implementation of economic policies	•Researchers, gender and economic justice networks, women in business, entrepreneurial organizations, labour movements, organization dealing with gender and trade issues
Enact and enforce gender sensitive legislation prohibiting all forms of gender based violence Sexual harassment and human trafficking	•Gender links, Sonke Gender Justice Network, women ministries and parliamentary forums, national NGOs forum
Introduce and support gender sensitization and public awareness program	•Gender links, capacity building organizations, Chapter 9 institutions
Promote and protect sexual rights of women	Gender networks, faith based organizations, Chapter 9 institutions,

Strategic Alliance Action Plan of the South African Parliament	
Goal	Alliance Partners
Reduce maternal mortality ratio by 75% by 2015	• health education sector, health policy makers in parliament, lobby groups, faith based organizations
Gender mainstreaming into media practice and media laws and policies, promoting gender – sensitive reporting, encourage media to give equal voice to men and women	•Schools for journalism •Editors forums •Media houses •Gender Links •Local and regional experts