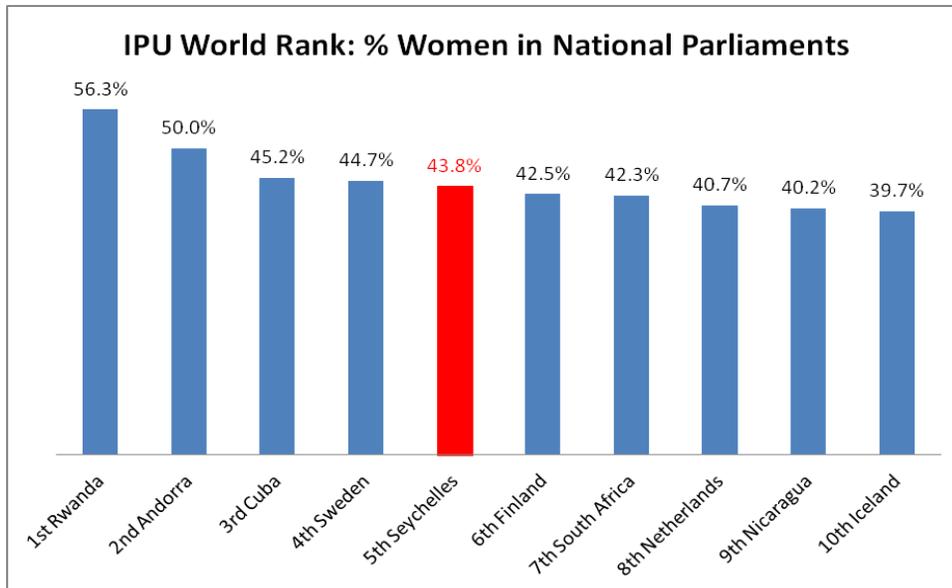


Seychelles National Assembly one of the most gender-balanced in the world

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has ranked Seychelles the 5th highest country in the world according to the proportion of women in national parliament.



The IPU maintains the Parline database which monitors the representation of women in politics across 190 countries. Seychelles shot up to fifth position as of January 2012, with women representing 43.8% of members in the national parliament, following a 20% increase since last year's elections.

This is a testament to the strides Seychellois women are making in politics and decision-making. To put things into perspective; the United Kingdom is ranked 53rd (22.3% women), France 69th (18.9%) Mauritius 70th (18.8%) and USA 78th (16.8%). This is an important achievement for Seychelles as we get closer to fully realising the 50/50 target set out in the SADC Protocol on Gender and Development. What makes this accomplishment even more impressive is the fact that Seychelles achieved this impressive result without a quota system, which is used by many countries to reserve seats for women.

Rwanda tops the table with 56.3% women in its lower house and Andorra, a small country in Europe, comes in second with 50.0%. These are the only two countries in the world which are at the 50% mark and beyond. One might assume that as a small country Seychelles has an unfair advantage to achieving gender parity in a national assembly with only 32 members - but this is not necessarily the case. Some of the top ranking countries have large parliaments; including Cuba ranked third with women making up 45.2% of the massive 856 parliamentary seats; while Sweden which is ranked fourth with 44.7% women out of 349 seats. On the other end of the scale, small states are found throughout the table including the bottom, with Comoros ranked 136th with only 3.0% of women out of 33 members and Haiti which came 130th with only 4.2% women out of 95 members of parliament.

Therefore the high representation of women in parliament is more to do with political commitment rather than size and level of development, a testament to the success of Rwanda. Even having a woman Head of State does not guarantee gender parity. Despite having a woman President, Liberia is ranked 113th with only 9.6% (or 7/73) women and Brazil is ranked 116th with only 8.6% (44/513) women in their lower house of parliament.

For more information visit: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/arc/classif311211.htm>