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CONSTITUTIONS, ELECTORAL LAWS AND OTHER LEGAL INSTRUMENTS
RELATING TO POLITICAL RIGHTS OF WOMEN

Memorandum by the Secretary-General

1. The Secretary-General has the honour to circulate herewith the annual memorandum on progress achieved in the field of political rights of women,^{1/} prepared in pursuance of Economic and Social Council resolution 120 A (VI) of 3 March 1948.
2. In preparing the present memorandum the Secretary-General has also been guided by Economic and Social Council resolution 587 B (XX) of 3 August 1955 by which the Council:
 - "1. Requests the Secretary-General to include in this report all the States which are Members of the United Nations and/or the specialized agencies and/or Parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice;
 - "2. Invites the Secretary-General to include in an annex to this report pertinent information available to him on States non-members of the aforementioned organizations or not parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice;
 - "3. Requests also that in presenting information on the Convention on the Political Rights of Women in table IX, the Secretary-General include information on reservations and objections to reservations to this Convention."
3. Since the publication of the last memorandum (A/2692), which presented the information as of 14 August 1954 and which was circulated for the ninth session of the General Assembly, the following changes relating to women's political rights have been brought to the attention of the Secretary-General:

^{1/} For previous reports, see documents A/619 and Add.1, A/1163, A/1342, A/1911, A/2154 and Adds. 1 and 2, A/2462 and A/2692.

In Colombia, by a constitutional amendment of 25 August 1954, women were given the right to vote in all elections on the same conditions as men.

By presidential decree of 24 January 1955, women in Honduras were also granted the right to vote and to be elected in all elections, the voting, however, being obligatory for men and voluntary for women.

4. The text of the relevant provisions referred to above is given below, together with information relating to women's political rights in Nepal, San Marino and Spain, which was not included in the previous memoranda.

5. In addition to the texts referred to in the above paragraph, the following tables are also included in the present memorandum:

- I. Countries where women may vote in all elections on an equal basis with men
- II. Countries where women may vote in all elections subject to certain qualifications not imposed on men
- III. Countries where women may vote in local elections only
- IV. Countries where women have no voting rights
- V. Countries in which action has been taken since 1945 (the signing of the Charter of the United Nations) extending full or limited voting rights to women
- VI. Dates on which women were first granted the right to vote
- VII. Countries where women may vote on equal terms with men, but where suffrage grants originally involved limitations on the ground of sex
- VIII. Countries where women have been granted the right to vote but have not had an opportunity to participate in an election
- IX. Countries which have signed, ratified or acceded to, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women as of 15 August 1955.

6. Annexed to the present document, in response to paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 587 B (XX), is the information available to the Secretary-General regarding three countries which are non-members of the United Nations or of the specialized agencies and which are not parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice.

COLOMBIA - Decree of the National Constituent Assembly of 25 August 1954
to amend the Constitution whereby the Right to Vote and to be
Elected is Extended to Women

"Article 1. Article 14 of the Constitution shall read as follows:

"'A Colombian who is over the age of twenty-one is a Colombian citizen. Loss of Colombian nationality shall involve loss of Colombian citizenship. Citizenship may also be lost or suspended by virtue of a judicial decision in the cases specified by statute. Persons who have lost their citizenship may apply for the restoration of citizenship rights.'

"Article 2. Article 15 of the Constitution shall read as follows:

"'A person may not take part, as an elector or as a candidate, in an election to an office involving political representation, nor hold any public office which involves the exercise of authority or jurisdiction, unless he is in full possession of his citizenship rights.'

"Article 3. Article 171 of the Constitution, in so far as it restricts the suffrage to male citizens, is hereby amended.^{2/}"

HONDURAS - Presidential Decree No. 29 of 24 January 1955

"Article 2. The following persons are Honduran citizens:

- (a) Men and women over the age of twenty-one years;
- (b) Men and women who are over the age of eighteen years and married;
- (c) Men and women over the age of eighteen years who can read and write.

"Article 3. A person who is a citizen has the following rights:

The right to vote;

The right to be a candidate for public office, subject to the conditions prescribed by the law.

"Article 4. The exercise of the franchise is a public duty which is obligatory for and cannot be renounced by men and optional for women.

^{2/} Article 171 of the Constitution of Colombia of 5 August 1885 reads as follows:
"Article 171. All male citizens shall directly elect councillors, deputies to the departmental assemblies, representatives, senators and the President of the Republic."

"Article 5. The suffrage conferred on Honduran women by this Legislative Decree will be exercised for the first time in the electoral campaigns and the voting for the election of representatives to the National Constituent Assembly which will be convened in such form and at such time as the Head of State may see fit."

NEPAL - The Interim Government of Nepal Act of 30 March 1951 as amended in 1951 and 1954

"Section 43. There shall be one general electoral roll for every territorial constituency for these elections^{3/} and no person shall be ineligible for inclusion in any such roll for any such constituency on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, or any of them."

SAN MARINO - Electoral Law of 18 November 1926

"Article 5. The following are excluded from the electoral function:

(a) Women;

...

"Article 21. Other than the general conditions of the electorate expressed in Articles 4 and 5, it is necessary to be eligible as a councillor:

- (1) To know how to read and write;
- (2) Not to be in any ecclesiastical post;
- (3) To be domiciled in the Republic."

^{3/} Elections are provided by section 41 which reads as follows:

"The aim of the Interim Government shall be to create conditions, as early as possible, for holding elections for the Constituent Assembly which will frame a constitution for Nepal."

SPAIN * Note: The National Legislative Assembly (Cortes) is composed of certain ex officio members and of members elected by the national syndicates, by the provincial assemblies, by the royal academies, by the Higher Council of Scientific Research, and by various professional associations.

Act of 17 July 1942 creating the Spanish Cortes as amended by Act of 9 March 1946

"Article 3. To be a member of the Cortes, the following qualifications are required:

- (1) To be a Spanish citizen and of age;
- (2) To enjoy full civil rights and not to be under civil and public inhabilitation consequent to penal sentence."

Decree of 30 September 1948 concerning Rules for Municipal Elections

"Article 4. The following persons shall be electors:

- (1) For the election of that third of the Council consisting of family representatives, every Spanish citizen, whether male or female, who is resident in the municipal district and has attained twenty-one years of age, or has attained eighteen years of age and is sui juris, and is entered on the electoral roll of heads of families;
- (2) For the election of that third of the Council consisting of trade union representatives, any Spanish citizen of either sex who is resident in the municipal district and has attained twenty-one years of age, or has attained eighteen years of age and is sui juris, and who, being affiliated with the trade-union organization through direct membership in one of its units established in the municipal district, has been appointed as a delegate for the purpose of such election.
- (3) For the election of that third of the Council consisting of representatives of economic, cultural or professional bodies, any person resident in the municipal district who has the qualifications of a councillor elected by the two preceding groups.

"Article 7. Any person shall be eligible for the post of councillor who is a Spanish citizen, whether male or female, is resident in the municipal district, has attained twenty-three years of age, is able to read and write and has, in

addition to these general qualifications, the special qualifications required for one of the following groups of representatives.

To be eligible as a family representative, a person must without exception have the status of head of a family.

To be eligible as a trade-union representative, a person must without exception be affiliated with the trade-union organization through direct membership in one of its units established in the municipal district.

To be eligible as a representative of economic, cultural or professional bodies established in the municipal district, a person must be a member of such a body, but if, in the absence of any such body in the district, this group must be represented by persons who are not members of such a body, it shall be sufficient if they enjoy prestige in the locality.

"Article 9. The office of councillor shall be obligatory and unremunerated.

The office shall not, however, be obligatory for ... women, ..."

TABLES CONTAINING INFORMATION CONCERNING COUNTRIES WHICH
ARE MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS AND/OR THE SPECIALIZED
AGENCIES OR PARTIES TO THE STATUTE OF THE INTERNATIONAL
COURT OF JUSTICE

TABLE I

Countries where women may vote in all elections
on an equal basis with men

(61 countries)

Albania	Ecuador ^{4/}	Nepal
Argentina	El Salvador	Netherlands
Australia	Finland	New Zealand
Austria	France	Norway
Belgium	Federal Republic of Germany	Pakistan
Bolivia	Greece	Panama
Brazil	Honduras ^{4/}	Philippines
Bulgaria	Hungary	Poland
Burma	Iceland	Romania
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	India	Spain ^{5/}
Canada	Indonesia	Sweden
Ceylon	Ireland	Thailand
Chile	Israel	Turkey
China	Italy	Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic
Colombia	Japan	Union of South Africa
Costa Rica	Republic of Korea	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
Cuba	Lebanon ^{4/}	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Czechoslovakia	Liberia	United States of America
Denmark	Luxembourg	Uruguay
Dominican Republic	Mexico	Venezuela
		Yugoslavia

^{4/} Voting is compulsory for men, voluntary for women.

^{5/} There are no general elections for the National Legislative Assembly.

TABLE II

Countries where women may vote in all elections subject
to certain qualifications not imposed on men

(3 countries)

- Guatemala: Women must be literate. Voting is compulsory and secret for literate men, optional and secret for women who have the required qualifications and optional and public for illiterate men.
- Portugal: Women are subject to higher educational requirements or, when fulfilling the same tax qualifications as those prescribed for men, must be heads of families in order to have the right to vote.
- Syria: Women must have a certificate of at least primary education or equivalent, a condition not required for men.

TABLE III

Countries where women may vote in local elections only

(3 countries)

Haiti^{6/}
Monaco
Peru

^{6/} Under the Constitution of 1950, women are entitled to vote in all elections within a period not to exceed three years from the last municipal elections which took place in January 1955.

TABLE IV

Countries where women have no voting rights
(16 countries)

Afghanistan
Cambodia
Egypt
Ethiopia
Iran
Iraq
Jordan
Laos
Libya
Liechtenstein
Nicaragua
Paraguay
San Marino
Saudi Arabia^{7/}
Switzerland
Yemen^{7/}

^{7/} No electoral rights for men or women.

TABLE V

Countries in which action has been taken since 1945
(the signing of the Charter of the United Nations)
extending full or limited voting rights to women

(27 countries)

Albania	Constitution of 1946
Argentina	Act of 1947
Belgium	Act of 1948
Bolivia	Constitution of 1945 (municipal elections only); full rights by Presidential decree of 21 July 1952
Bulgaria	Constitution of 1947
Burma	Constitution of 1947
Chile	Act of 1949
China	Constitution of 1947
Colombia	Constitutional Amendment of 25 August 1954
Costa Rica	Constitution of 1949
El Salvador	Electoral Act of 1946 ^{8/}
Greece	Act of 7 June 1952
Haiti	Constitution of 1950
Honduras	Presidential Decree of 24 January 1955
Indonesia	Provisional Constitution of the Republic of the United States of Indonesia of 1949 ^{9/}
Israel	Election Ordinance of 1948
Italy	Constitution of 1947
Japan	Constitution of 1946
Korea	Act of 1948
Lebanon	Legislative Decree of 4 November 1952 amending the Elections Act of 10 August 1950 ^{10/}
Liberia	Constitutional Amendment of 1945

^{8/} Subject to conditions not required for men. Full voting rights granted to women by the Constitution of 1950.

^{9/} Maintained in the Provisional Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia of 1950.

^{10/} Full voting rights granted to women by amendment of 18 February 1953 to the Elections Act.

TABLE V
(continued)

Mexico	Constitutional amendment of 1947 (municipal elections only); Constitutional amendment of 1953 (all popular elections)
Nepal	Act of 30 March 1951
Panama	Constitution of 1946
Syria	Legislative Decree of 1949 ^{11/}
Venezuela	Constitution of 1947
Yugoslavia	Constitution of 1946

^{11/} Subject to conditions not required for men.

TABLE VI

Dates on which women were first granted the right to vote

I. Countries where women have national franchise^{12/}

Albania	1946
Argentina	1947*
Australia	1902*
Austria	1919
Belgium	1921*
Bolivia	1952*
Brazil	1932 ^{13/}
Bulgaria	1947
Burma	1935 ^{14/}
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	1917
Canada	1918*
Ceylon	1931*
Chile	1949*
China	1947
Costa Rica	1949
Cuba	1934
Czechoslovakia	1919

* See table VII for development of suffrage rights.

^{12/} This table gives the year in which women were granted the right to vote in national elections. For those cases where the grant was not in the first instance on an equal footing with men or where grants of provincial or municipal franchise preceded the grant of franchise on a national scale, see table VII.

^{13/} In the State of Rio Grande do Norte, women previous to 1932 had voting rights.

^{14/} Burma achieved independence in 1947 and in the same year, equal franchise for men and women, which had been previously also granted in the Government of Burma Act, 1935. Some categories of women had, however, had voting rights since 1922.

TABLE VI
(continued)

Denmark	1915
Dominican Republic	1942
Ecuador	1929
El Salvador	1946*
Finland	1906
France	1944 ^{15/}
Federal Republic of Germany	1919
Greece	1952*
Guatemala	1945 ^{16/}
Hungary	1920*
Iceland	1915*
India	1935 ^{17/}
Indonesia	1949
Ireland	1918*
Israel	1948
Italy	1945
Japan	1946
Republic of Korea	1948
Lebanon	1952 ^{16/}
Liberia	1945
Luxembourg	1918

* See table VII for development of suffrage rights.

^{15/} Decree of Provisional Government 1944; right subsequently confirmed in the 1946 Constitution.

^{16/} Subject to educational qualifications not applicable to men.

^{17/} By provincial legislation, between 1919 and 1935, of seven of the provinces of India (which at that time included India and Pakistan, subsequently in 1947 set up as two independent Dominions) certain categories of women in those provinces gained voting rights. In 1935, the Government of India provided a wider measure of enfranchisement. Under the present Constitution of India equal voting rights are established.

TABLE VI
(continued)

Mexico	1953*
Netherlands	1917
New Zealand	1893
Norway	1913*
Panama	1946
Philippines	1937
Poland	1919
Portugal	1915 ^{18/}
Romania	1946*
Sweden	1921*
Syria	1949*
Thailand	1932
Turkey	1934*
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	1917
Union of South Africa	1930
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	1917
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	1918*

* See table VII for development of suffrage rights.

18/ Subject to special educational or tax-paying qualifications, not applicable also to men.

TABLE VI
(continued)

United States of America	1920 ^{19/}
Uruguay	1932
Venezuela	1947
Yugoslavia	1946

II. Countries where women have only state, provincial or municipal voting rights ^{20/}

A. State or provincial rights

Pakistan 1951^{21/}

B. Municipal rights

Haiti 1950^{22/}

Monaco 1945

Peru 1933

^{19/} By virtue of the 19th amendment to the Constitution adopted in 1920, women throughout the United States obtained voting rights both in federal and state elections. The provisions of the United States Constitution apply also to Alaska and Hawaii. Women also have equal voting rights with men in Guam (Civil Regulations 1936), Puerto Rico (Electoral Law 1935) and the Virgin Islands (Organic Act 1936). Previous to 1920 women, by reason of state laws, already possessed these rights in the following states: Arizona, 1912; Arkansas, 1917; California, 1911; Colorado, 1894; Idaho, 1896; Illinois, 1913; Kansas, 1912; Massachusetts, 1918; Michigan, 1918; Montana, 1914; Nebraska, 1917; Nevada, 1914; New York, 1917; North Dakota, 1917; Oklahoma, 1918; Oregon, 1912; Rhode Island, 1917; South Dakota, 1918; Texas, 1918; Utah, 1895; Washington, 1910; Wyoming (1869 as a territory, 1890 as a state).

^{20/} This table gives the dates of grant of state, provincial or municipal franchise in countries where this is the only form of franchise at present open to women.

^{21/} For the period before 1947, see footnote 18. Under the Government of India Act, 1935, as adapted by Pakistan (Provisional Constitution) Order, 1947, voting rights in provincial elections were granted to certain categories of women. By Acts of 1951 and 1952, full right to vote and to be elected in provincial elections was granted to women. As yet, there is no legislation governing national elections in Pakistan.

^{22/} The Constitution of 1950 provides that within a period not to exceed three years from the next municipal elections, the law shall grant to women full and complete exercise of all political rights.

TABLE VII

Countries where women may vote on equal terms with men, but where suffrage grants originally involved limitations on the ground of sex

There is no change in the information given under this heading in the consolidated memorandum issued on 18 August 1954 (A/2692).

TABLE VIII

Countries where women have been granted the right to vote but have not had an opportunity to participate in an election

(3 countries)

- Bolivia: No elections have taken place since the passing of the decree granting women equal political rights on 21 July 1952.
- Colombia: No elections have taken place since the passing of the constitutional amendment granting women full voting rights on 25 August 1954.
- Honduras: No elections have taken place since the proclamation of the Presidential Decree granting women full voting rights on 24 January 1955.

TABLE IX

Countries which have signed, ratified or acceded to, the Convention
on the Political Rights of Women as of 15 August 1955

Country	Date of signature	Date of deposit of instrument of ratification	Date of deposit of instrument of accession
Albania			12 May 1955
Argentina	31 March 1953		
Bolivia	9 April 1953		
Brazil	20 May 1953		
Bulgaria			17 March 1954
Burma	14 September 1954		
Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic	31 March 1953	11 August 1954	
Chile	31 March 1953		
China	9 June 1953	21 December 1953	
Costa Rica	31 March 1953		
Cuba	31 March 1953	8 April 1954	
Czechoslovakia	31 March 1953	6 April 1955	
Denmark	29 October 1953	7 July 1954	
Dominican Republic	31 March 1953	11 December 1953	
Ecuador	31 March 1953	23 April 1954	
El Salvador	24 June 1953		
Ethiopia	31 March 1953		
France	31 March 1953		
Greece	1 April 1953	29 December 1953	
Guatemala	31 March 1953		
Hungary	2 September 1954	20 January 1955	
Iceland	25 November 1953	30 June 1954	
India	29 April 1953		
Indonesia	31 March 1953		
Israel	14 April 1953	6 July 1954	
Japan	1 April 1955	13 July 1955	
Lebanon	24 February 1954		

TABLE IX
(continued)

Country	Date of signature	Date of deposit of instrument of ratification	Date of deposit of instrument of accession
Liberia	9 December 1953		
Mexico	31 March 1953		
Norway	18 September 1953		
Pakistan	18 May 1954	7 December 1954	
Paraguay	16 November 1953		
Philippines	23 September 1953		
Poland	31 March 1953	11 August 1954	
Romania	27 April 1954	6 August 1954	
Sweden	6 October 1953	31 March 1954	
Thailand	5 March 1954	30 November 1954	
Turkey	12 January 1954		
Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic	31 March 1953	15 November 1954	
Union of Soviet Socialist Republics	31 March 1953	3 May 1954	
Uruguay	26 May 1953		
Yugoslavia	31 March 1953	23 June 1954	

RESERVATIONS TO THE CONVENTION ON POLITICAL RIGHTS
OF WOMEN AND OBJECTIONS TO THE RESERVATIONS

GENERAL RESERVATIONS

France: "The French Government, having regard to the religious customs and traditions existing in certain territories, reserves the right to postpone the application of this Convention in respect of women living in those territories who invoke such customs and traditions."

Objections:

Pakistan.

Mexico: "It is expressly understood that the Government of Mexico will not deposit its instrument of ratification pending the entry into force of the amendment to the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States which is now under consideration, providing that citizenship rights shall be granted to Mexican women.

Objections:

None.

RESERVATIONS TO ARTICLE I

Ecuador: "The Government of Ecuador signs this Convention subject to a reservation with respect to the last phrase in article I, 'without any discrimination' since article 22 of the Political Constitution of the Republic specifies that 'a vote in popular elections is obligatory for a man and optional for a woman'."

Objections:

None.

RESERVATIONS TO ARTICLE III

Denmark: "Subject to a reservation with respect to article III of the Convention, in so far as it relates to the right of women to hold military appointments or to act as heads of recruitment services or to serve on recruitment boards."

Objections:

None.

India: "Article 3 of the Convention shall have no application as regards recruitment to and conditions of service in any of the armed forces of India or the forces charged with the maintenance of public order in India."

Objections:

None.

Norway: "Under article III women shall not be given the right to perform the duties of a minister of the National Church of Norway."

Objections:

None.

Pakistan: "Article III of the Convention shall have no application as regards recruitment to and conditions of services charged with the maintenance of public order or unsuited to women because of the hazards involved."

Objections:

None.

RESERVATIONS TO ARTICLE VII

Albania: "The People's Republic of Albania declares its disagreement with the last sentence of article VII and considers that the juridical effect of a reservation is to make the Convention operative as between the State making the reservation and all other States parties to the Convention, with the exception only of that part thereof to which the reservation relates."

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Israel
Pakistan
Philippines
Sweden.

Bulgaria: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Norway
Pakistan
Sweden.

Byelorussian SSR: Réserve is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Israel
Pakistan
Sweden.

Czechoslovakia: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

Hungary: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Israel
Pakistan
Sweden.

Poland: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Israel
Pakistan
Sweden.

Romania: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Israel
Norway
Pakistan
Philippines
Sweden.

Ukrainian SSR: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

USSR: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Ethiopia
Israel
Pakistan
Sweden.

RESERVATIONS TO ARTICLE IX

Albania: "The People's Republic of Albania does not consider itself bound by the provisions of article IX which provides that disputes between Contracting Parties concerning the interpretation or application of this Convention shall at the request of any one of the parties to the dispute be referred to the International Court of Justice for decision, and declares that for any dispute to be referred to the International Court of Justice for decision the agreement of all the parties to the dispute shall be necessary in each individual case."

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Philippines
Sweden.

Argentina: "With reservations with respect to article IX."

Objections:

Pakistan
Sweden.

Bulgaria: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Norway
Pakistan
Sweden.

Byelorussian SSR: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

Czechoslovakia: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

Guatemala: "With reservations with respect to article IX of the Convention, which will apply, in accordance with the Political Constitution of Guatemala, to women of Guatemalan citizenship."

Objections:

Pakistan
Sweden.

Hungary: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

Poland: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

Romania: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Norway
Pakistan
Philippines
Sweden.

Ukrainian SSR: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

USSR: Reservation is the same as that of Albania.

Objections:

China
Denmark
Dominican Republic
Ethiopia
Pakistan
Sweden.

ANNEX

Operative paragraph 2 of Economic and Social Council resolution 587 B (XX) invited the Secretary-General to include in an annex to his annual memorandum on progress achieved in the field of political rights for women pertinent information available to him on countries non-members of the United Nations or the specialized agencies or non-parties to the Statute of the International Court of Justice. These countries are the Democratic Republic of Germany, the Mongolian People's Republic, and the Saar. In all these countries, women may vote in all elections on the same conditions as men. The text of the relevant provisions was included in the consolidated memorandum issued in 1954 (A/2692).
