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# Women Quotas an Assurance of Equality in Public Institutions

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## A brief overview of the Iraq Policy Program

The Iraq Policy Program aims to bridge the gap between youth elites and decision-makers by training young elites to effect positive change through influencing the decision-making process. The program aims to empower participants to prepare policy papers and propose policy alternatives aimed at enhancing system performance and supporting its legitimacy. This program enables participants to communicate with decision-makers and understand the main difficulties and problems affecting the implementation and follow-up of public policies. Additionally, the program seeks to provide participants with a realistic understanding of the decision-making environment in Iraq, as well as an understanding of the opportunities and challenges of change.

## The program stages

**Preparation:** Assisting participants in acquiring the fundamental skills to prepare policy papers and effective advocacy campaigns.

**Discovery:** Clarifying important public policies in Iraq by experts through stakeholder engagement, frameworks and institutional procedures, practical realities, and discussions surrounding each public policy, as well as reform prospects.

**Engagement:** Training participants to develop promotional campaigns and coordinate meetings with government officials to initiate their campaigns.

**Enrichment:** Supervising participants to prepare a policy paper in their area of interest to enrich dialogues, develop policy alternatives, which can help address current challenges.

## About the Center

The Platform for Sustainable Development is a registered center with the Non-Governmental Organizations Department at the General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers under the number (1S2106012). It serves as a space for thought, dialogue, and action towards positive change.

## Vision

We seek to establish a platform for dialogue and policies that contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Iraq.

## Mission

Filling the gap between the state and society to ensure the essence of democracy by engaging citizens in the decision-making process through training, monitoring, analysis, research, awareness, and advocacy.

## Strategic Goals

- Preparing a youth elite that rises to its social responsibilities through studying problems, proposing policy alternatives, and working towards their implementation.
- Utilizing knowledge outputs and encouraging youth to work towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals
- Presenting statistics and issues that occupy the political arenas and societal circles to reflect a deeper understanding of the Iraqi reality.
- Creating a network of active, informed, and committed citizens dedicated to the project of building the Iraqi government.



# Executive Summary

Discrimination against women in public state institutions is a serious issue that needs to be addressed to create a more just and equal society. It is essential to note that the problem is not limited to the underrepresentation of women in institutions but also concerns the quality of the working environment and how women are treated, which affects their productivity, the quality of their work, and consequently, the performance of institutions. The issue of discrimination in obtaining administrative positions and representation in Iraq is rooted in several factors, including cultural and societal norms, as well as historical and political factors. One of the main causes of this problem is the cultural and societal norms that traditionally favored men over women in terms of access to education, employment, and political representation, leading to a reduced representation of women in leadership positions, including administrative sectors.

Another significant factor is the historical and political context in which women's rights and representation were systematically suppressed in Iraq, particularly during periods of conflict and dictatorship when women were marginalized and excluded from political and administrative power.

This paper proposes several policy alternatives to address discrimination in Iraq's public institutions, including a quota system, which involves setting a minimum percentage of women in leadership and administrative positions. This system has been implemented in many countries, such as Rwanda. Additionally, it suggests awareness and training programs aimed at increasing awareness about discrimination and providing training to employees on how to prevent and address it. Allocating fund, especially for programs and policies that support women's empowerment and participation, is also recommended.

The implementation of a quota system in Iraq requires a multi-faceted approach, including legal and regulatory changes, affirmative action measures, continuous monitoring and evaluation. By taking these steps, it is possible to establish a fairer and more inclusive administrative system that promotes equality and ensures women's participation in decision-making processes.



## Introduction:

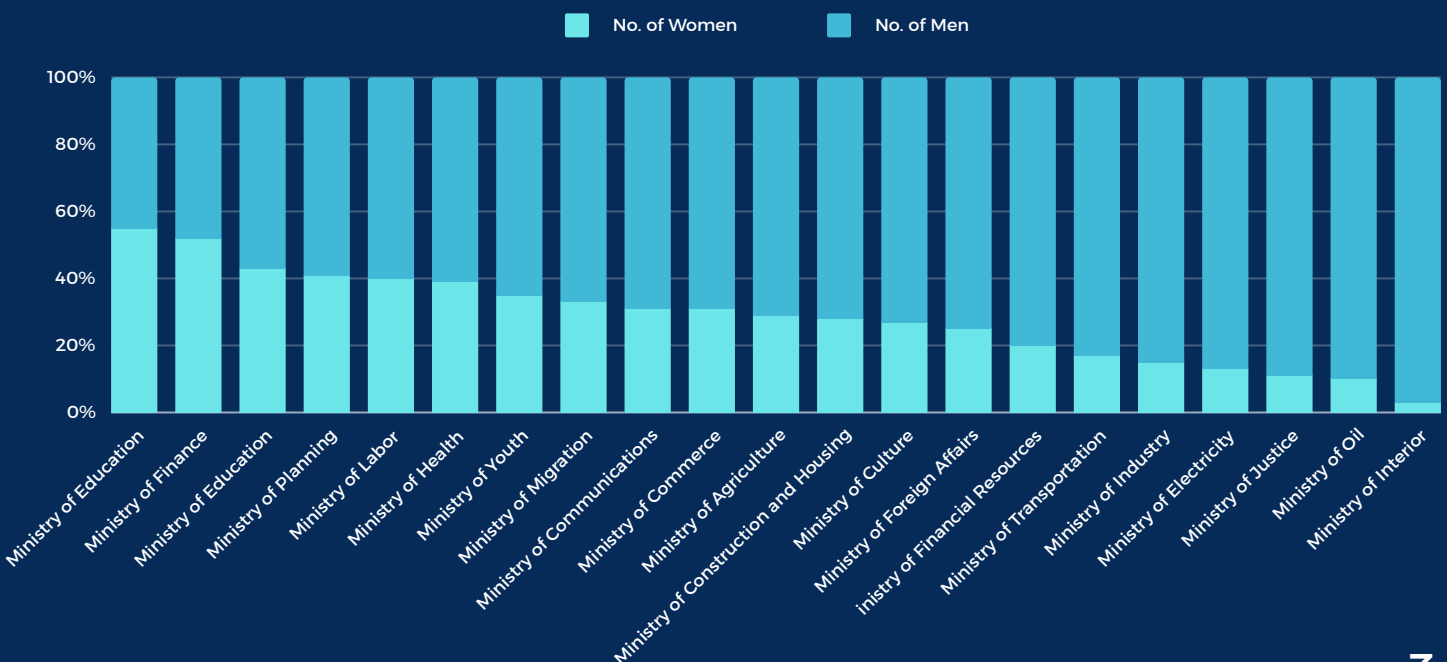
The concept of equality has become of utmost importance in development, as it is expected to lead to better living conditions for everyone and impact various aspects of life. It defines society's view of the roles, capabilities, rights, and duties of women and men. Equality aims to ensure that the benefits of development reach the target groups and do not stop at those in better positions to benefit from them. The issue of women has become one of the variables in the Iraqi fabric after a series of crises that left direct and indirect effects on the family institution and on women in particular.

Cultural and social factors, in addition to deficiencies in empowering women and their limited skills, all contribute to reducing the range of available opportunities for them and weaken their ability to compete in the formal job market. Discrimination in public institutions is an important issue that affects the rights and opportunities of women in the country. Despite the fact that the Iraqi constitution states that all citizens are equal under the law, women still face discrimination in the workplace, especially in the public sector.

## Background:

Discrimination in holding administrative positions in Iraq is one of the prevailing issues documented in various studies and reports. According to data from the World Economic Forum, Iraq ranks among the bottom 10 countries in the world in terms of equality. This is illustrated in the following figure:

Figure (1) : Percentage of Women to Men in Iraqi Ministries





Discrimination is a complex and multifaceted issue that can occur in both the public and private sectors. Both sectors have a significant impact on the social and economic development of the country. However, this paper focuses only on the public sector, which is often seen as a role model for other sectors and is expected to set an example of best practices. Furthermore, the public sector has a unique responsibility to promote equality and combat discrimination.

The problem of women's discrimination in obtaining administrative positions and representation in Iraq has its roots in several factors, including cultural and societal norms, as well as historical and political factors. One of the main underlying causes of this problem is the cultural and societal norms that traditionally favored men over women in terms of access to education, employment, and political representation. This has led to a lack of women in leadership positions, including administrative roles, and has limited women's ability to participate in politics and decision-making. Another important factor is the historical and political context

in which women's rights and representation were systematically suppressed in Iraq. This was particularly true during periods of conflict and dictatorship when women were marginalized and excluded from political and administrative power.

While there is limited data and research on the specific impacts of women's underrepresentation in administrative positions in Iraq, it is widely recognized that the lack of women in leadership roles can have negative consequences for both women and society as a whole. Studies have shown that countries with higher levels of equality in political representation tend to achieve better overall social and economic outcomes.

In Iraq, the low representation of women in administrative positions has had several negative effects on both women and the administrative sector. For women, this has meant limited opportunities for education, employment, and political participation, as well as a lack of representation and visibility in decision-making processes. For the administrative sector, it has resulted in a lack of diversity and representation, as well as a lack of women's perspectives and experiences in decision-making processes. This has led to a lack of effective policies and programs that address the needs and concerns of women and girls.

According to a 2021 Labor Force Survey conducted by the Central Statistical Organization (CSO) of the Ministry of Planning in Iraq, the female labor force participation rate was particularly low at 10.6%, compared to 68% for males. This indicates a significant gap in labor force participation.



The Global Gap Report by the World Economic Forum, which measures women's participation in decision-making positions such as parliament, ministerial positions, and other leadership roles in its 2022 report, ranked Iraq 133rd out of 156 countries in terms of political empowerment. Furthermore, a study conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 2018 found that only 14% of women in Iraq hold decision-making positions in the public sector.

Figure (2): Percentage of Women in Assistant Director-General Positions in Ministries Compared to Men

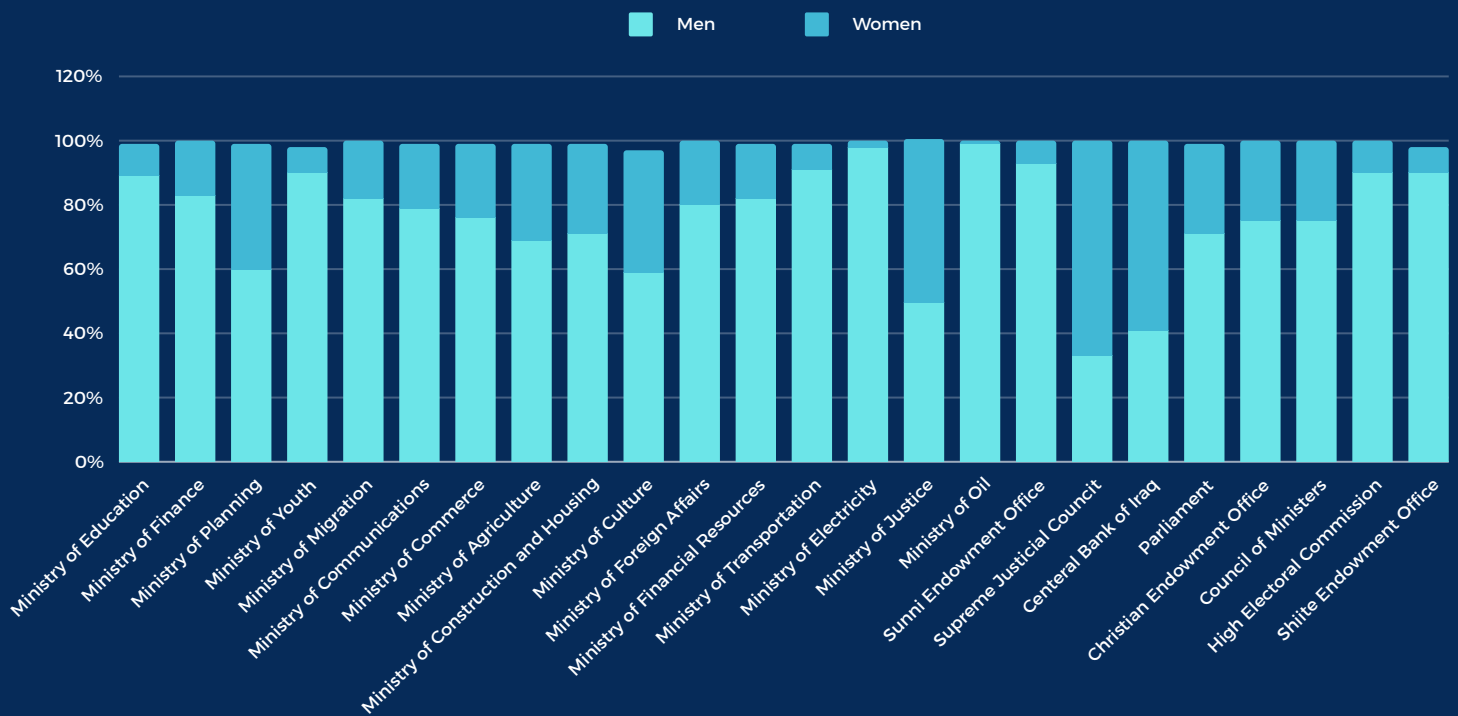
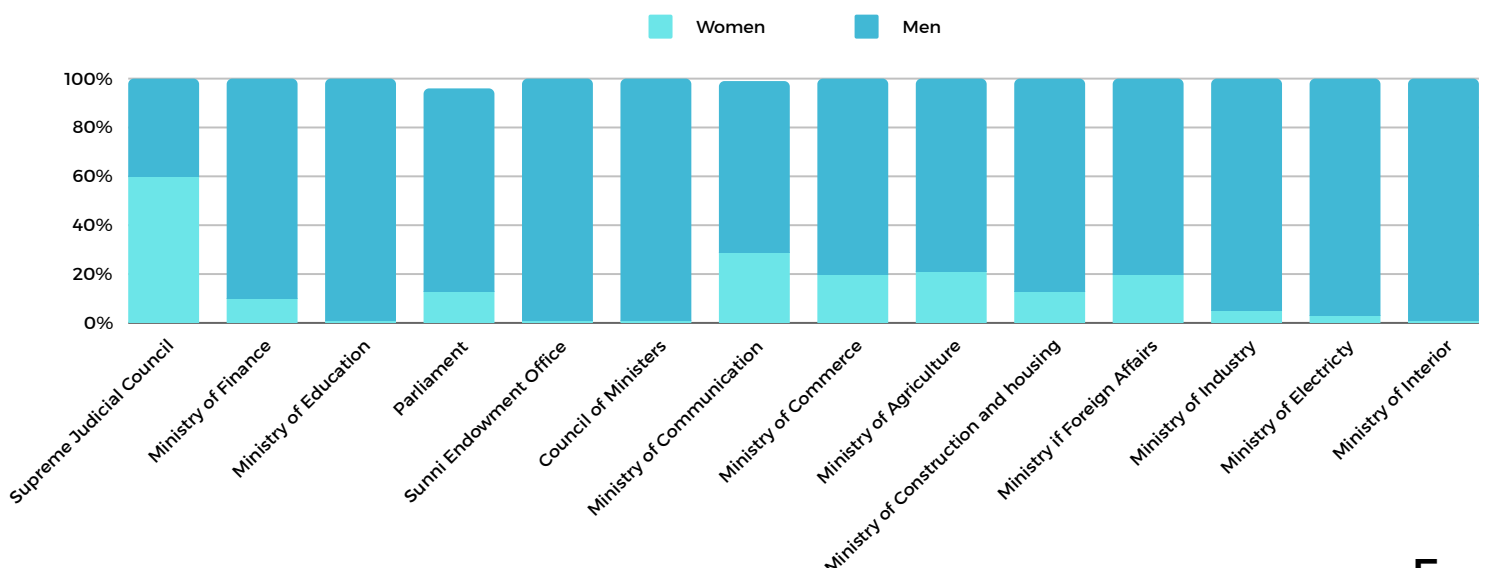


Figure (3): Percentage of Women in Assistant Director-General Positions in Ministries Compared to Men





The figures above show that both the Ministry of Education and the Iraqi Judicial Council have a higher percentage of women in senior management positions, such as “General Manager” and “Deputy General Manager,” despite the limited available evidence to understand the reasons for this difference compared to other ministries. However, it is generally expected that women are more inclined to join professions such as education, health, and law. According to data from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics in 2019, the percentage of women enrolled in higher education in Iraq was 47.4%, compared to 52.6% for men. Nevertheless, statistics have shown that a large number of women in the Ministry of Higher Education and the Iraqi Judicial Council hold advanced degrees, as indicated by the Reality in Iraqi State Ministries and Institutions in 2015. The number of women holding advanced degrees in the Iraqi Judicial Council reached 3,426, while the Ministry of Higher Education had 35,325 women with advanced degrees. This may be one of the reasons that have allowed women to take on these leadership positions.

## Policy Alternatives:

There are several proposed alternatives to address discrimination in public institutions in Iraq, and we believe that the most appropriate and best alternative among the options is: Quota System:

This involves setting a minimum percentage of women for holding leadership positions in public institutions in Iraq. It is a viable option, as it has been implemented in various countries and has shown positive results in addressing discrimination. However, the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposal will depend on the specific context and cultural norms in Iraq. Implementing a quota system has been widely used to increase women’s representation in politics and public institutions.

For example, Rwanda has implemented a quota system since 2003, which reserves at least 30% of parliamentary seats and other elected positions for women. Bolivia also introduced a similar quota system in 2019, reserving at least 50% of elected positions for women. In Norway, a quota system was introduced for the boards of publicly traded companies in 2006, requiring that at least 40% of board members be women. As a result, the representation of women on the boards of publicly traded companies in Norway increased from 6% in 2002 to 40% in 2017.



In India, the state of Tamil Nadu introduced a quota system for local government in 1994, requiring that at least 33% of seats in rural councils be occupied by women. As a result, the percentage of women in local government in Tamil Nadu increased from 0% in the early 1990s to over 50% today. These examples demonstrate that a quota system can be an effective tool for increasing women's representation in politics and public institutions.

However, it is important to note that quotas alone are not sufficient and should be combined with other measures such as training, capacity building, and changing societal attitudes to increase women's participation in various fields. It is also important to recognize that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and the most effective strategy is likely to involve implementing a combination of alternatives tailored to the specific needs and challenges in Iraq. It is worth noting that implementing this alternative requires a strong commitment and political will from the government and society.

It also requires careful planning, monitoring, and evaluation to ensure the success of these efforts. Implementing a quota system to address discrimination in Iraq is likely to benefit not only women but also other marginalized groups that have traditionally faced discrimination in these institutions. On the other hand, those who traditionally hold power

and privileges within these institutions, such as men and some ethnic or religious groups, may be negatively affected by these changes. However, addressing discrimination and promoting equality ultimately benefits society as a whole.

Here are some steps that can be taken to develop a roadmap for implementing a quota system in Iraq, which can create a more equitable and inclusive public sector that promotes equality and ensures women's full participation in decision-making processes:

**Assessment:** Before implementing a quota system, it is important to conduct an audit to determine the current level of representation in the public sector. This may include collecting data on the number of women at various levels of government, identifying barriers to women's participation, and understanding the cultural and social factors contributing to discrimination.

**Legal and Policy Changes:** Legal and policy frameworks are essential to support the implementation of a quota system. This may involve identifying any necessary legal or regulatory changes to enable the implementation of quotas and ensure that they align with current laws. It should also ensure equal opportunities for women and penalize discrimination, as justice began applying-based discrimination as a form of racial discrimination against females from its natural place, which is the courts, through a series of cases and judgments.



For example, the European Court of Justice in 1995 ruled that equality should be enshrined in the national legislation of European countries by setting qualifications for candidates for promotion regardless of their. In the event of a decrease in the representation in one of the sectors where the percentage of female employees is less than that of male employees, priority in appointment is given to women.

**Setting Goals and Quotas:** Based on the results of the audit and the legal framework, specific quotas and goals for women's representation in the public sector should be established. These goals may be set for different levels of government and may include both numerical targets and percentage goals.

**Developing Affirmative Measures:** Affirmative measures can be implemented to support the achievement of quotas and specific goals. These measures may include capacity-building programs, mentoring plans, leadership development programs, and other forms of support to encourage and empower women to participate in decision-making roles.

**Creating Awareness and Building Support:** Creating awareness and building support for the quota system is crucial for its success. This involves engaging with stakeholders, including government officials,

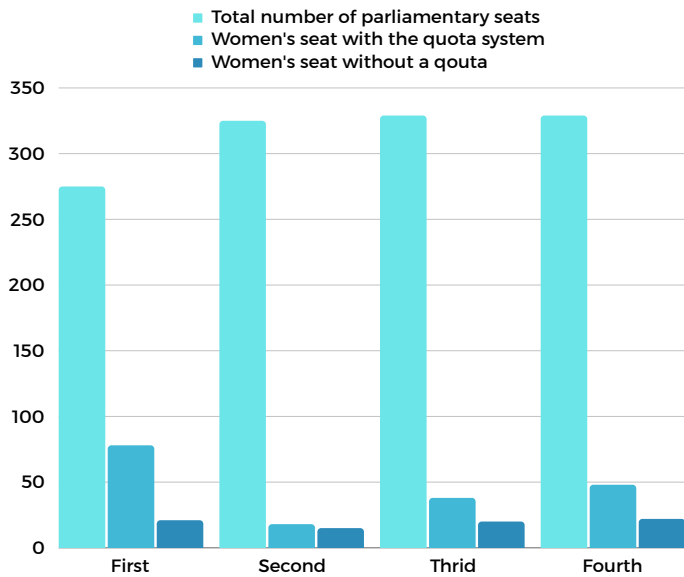
civil society organizations, and women's groups, to build support for the quota system and ensure effective implementation.

**Monitoring and Evaluating Progress:** To ensure the effectiveness of the quota system, it is important to regularly monitor and evaluate progress. This may involve collecting data on women's representation, tracking the implementation of affirmative measures, and assessing the impact of the quota system on equality in public institutions. Implementing a quota system in Iraq to address discrimination can lead to a more equitable and inclusive public sector that promotes equality and ensures women's full participation in decision-making processes.

## Alternative Feasibility

The quota system in public institutions is a means to address discrimination by specifying a minimum percentage of positions to be held by women. One of the strongest arguments in favor of this system is its potential to increase women's representation in positions of power and decision-making. This can lead to a more balanced and equitable representation of diverse perspectives and experiences, potentially resulting in better policies and decision-making. Without the quota system,

Figure (4) Women's representation in the Iraqi parliament



the underrepresentation of women in positions of authority can persist, making them less likely to be selected for such roles and less prepared for leadership roles. As a result, Iraqi law mandates that women occupy a minimum of 25% of the seats in the Council of Representatives. The application of the quota system in Iraq has resulted in women gaining seats, as illustrated in Figure 4.

On the other hand, the women's quota system was a necessary and significant step for the Iraqi political process after the political regime change in 2003. A new era of elections and politics began, and Iraqi society at the time had not fully embraced the idea of women in political power and representative councils. It is worth noting that women make up more than half of Iraq's population, representing a significant portion of society with its own interests,

requirements, and rights that need representation from within this demographic. Additionally, many countries, such as Rwanda, Bolivia, and Cuba, have adopted quota systems for their legislative and executive bodies. This system also helps challenge cultural norms and societal stereotypes that traditionally hindered women's participation in politics and administrative positions.

In conclusion, discrimination within public institutions in Iraq is a multifaceted problem deeply rooted in cultural, social, and economic factors. Discrimination against women in public institutions is a serious issue that must be addressed to create a fairer and more equal society. It's important to note that the problem isn't solely related to the underrepresentation of women in public institutions but also pertains to the quality of their working environment and how they are treated. Discrimination affects their productivity and the quality of their work, which, in turn, impacts the performance of public institutions. Discrimination in public institutions is a violation of women's human rights, undermines Iraq's development, and perpetuates a culture of inequality and injustice. Addressing inequality

in public institutions in Iraq is a complex, multifaceted issue that requires a comprehensive and integrated approach to address both legal and cultural barriers to women's participation in these bodies. It's crucial to involve government institutions and civil society organizations in working together to tackle this problem.

## Recommendations:

- Implementing the quota system for women in public institutions can help increase women's representation in these bodies and ensure the allocation of a specific percentage of positions for women.
- Providing training and resources for women in administrative positions can help them become more effective leaders and decision-makers, enabling them to overcome discrimination.
- Conducting public awareness campaigns to highlight the importance of women's participation in administrative positions can help challenge societal norms and stereotypes that discriminate against women.
- Strengthening the legal framework to protect women's rights and combat discrimination in public institutions, including laws and regulations that prohibit discrimination, as well as mechanisms for enforcing these laws.

- Monitoring and evaluating progress in equality and the impact of implemented solutions can help determine the effectiveness of these solutions and identify areas where adjustments may be needed.

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