Women’s direct participation in political decision making process is essential for gender equality. Thus, the third amendment to the Representation of the People Order (RPO) 1972 requires political parties to set the goal of reserving at least 33 percent of all committee positions for women including the central committee, progressively achieving this goal by the year 2020.

While Bangladesh takes pride in women leadership in many of its key positions— including the head of the government, opposition leader, Speaker of the Parliament— women’s direct participation in the parliamentary election remains far behind the commitment made in the RPO.

This Policy Breakfast aims to be an excellent opportunity to put the issue on the table on what holding back women to participate in the politics as in direct election, what can be done to curb political and electoral violence against women and how the political participation of women in direct election can be increased.

IID Policy Breakfast series promotes evidence-informed and solution-driven debate among key influencers of policy community under Chatham House rule for candid discussion.

Theory of change:
Women’s direct participation in politics

- **Goal**

  Enabling space for women’s increased and meaningful political participation within the political party system

- **Objective**

  Women gain more meaningful roles and leadership positions within political parties

**Intermediate results**

- **Institutional Level**

  Increased ability of political parties to identify, attract, recruit, and support female members

- **Socio-Cultural Level**

  Changes perceptions on women’s participation in politics and political parties

- **Individual Level**

  Strengthening women’s capacity, skills, and knowledge to participate in political parties
Women work across party lines
Women lawmakers are highly responsive
Encourages citizen confidence in democracy
Women help secure lasting peace
Women prioritize key development indicators

Why do women need parties?
Gateway to political leadership
Inform the policy agenda
To gain party supporters
Develop inclusive platform
To win elections

why do parties need women?

Yet – Women continue to be under-represented

Global scenario
Less than a quarter women parliamentarian in the world (2017 average)

Bangladesh scenario
Share of women parliamentarian increasing, mostly with reserved seats

Women are more winnable
Less representation, because of less nominations!

More female candidates won against male candidates, than the other way round

Women MP (elected)

Women MP (reserved)

5th Parliament

8th Parliament

10th Parliament

23% World Average: Both House Combined
24% World Average: Single or Lower House
24% World Average: Upper House or Senate
11% Men MP (elected)
17% Women MP (elected)

Less than a quarter women parliamentarian in the world (2017 average)

201 female candidates against 9209 male candidates
in past 5 parliament elections

18% male winners as percentage of total male nominations
32% female winners as percentage of total female nominations

10 6 7 7 21 12 12 3

In 9th Parliament
In 10th Parliament

18% male winners as percentage of total male nominations
32% female winners as percentage of total female nominations
55% male winners as percentage of total male nominations
62% female winners as percentage of total female nominations

21

7th Parliament
8th Parliament
9th Parliament
10th Parliament

23% Men

24% Women

Female Candidate Won against Male
Male Candidate Won against Female

Institute of Informatics and Development (IID)
National Democratic Institute
High Commission of Canada in Bangladesh