SESSION C1: NOTES FOR THE FACILITATOR

Encourage everyone in the group to share their views: Leaders from political organizations, can be reluctant to openly discuss internal problems, including problems of sexism and gender discrimination. For this session to work well as an honest discussion of the impact of gender norms on attitudes and behaviors within a political organizations, it is essential to remind participants of the benefits of honest reflection and discussion about harmful gender norms in order to ensure that the benefits of women's greater political participation can be realized.

Relate the Gender Boxes to participants' own lives and experiences: This session is particularly concerned with the impacts of such norms on political organizations and how such norms limit women's political participation.

Look closely at the socio-cultural factors limiting women's political participation: Women may be deterred from entering political life or progressing in their political careers because politics is highly masculinized - seen as a "man's world". By the same token, men in political life may not take their female colleagues seriously or not see the everyday sexism that women face, because they assume that men should lead, and that women's role is to support and follow men. The social expectations of femininity (the Woman Box) can harm women's political participation and progress in very direct ways:

► The social expectation that women take care of their families limits the time and freedom they have to participate in meetings and other political activities.

► The association of femininity with sexual honor in many societies limits women's freedom to choose when and where to participate in political activities. Political parties may hold meetings in the evenings in bars and restaurants, but in many societies women are expected to be at home in the evening, under the implicit or explicit control of their husband or father. Women in public spaces in the evening face particular risks of sexual violence and harassment from men, and stigmatization as being disreputable or dishonorable.

Discuss the impact of the Man Box on male peer culture within the political organizations: The social expectations of masculinity that men are pressured to conform to often encourage men to be competitive and sometimes aggressive with each other, and to disrespect women's abilities and ambitions. In this way, these norms of masculinity can create a "male peer culture" which is hostile to women's participation and progress in political life and which also values competition over collaboration, deterring men from working together to challenge sexism in political organizations. It is important to help participants understand this concept of "male peer culture", what this culture looks and feels like in their own political organizations and how it may affect women's participation and progress.

Compare the Woman Boxes with the Man Boxes: Putting the boxes side-by-side can help to highlight 1) the harms to women of conforming to norms of femininity and 2) the ways in which men not only benefit from norms of masculinity but are also harmed by such norms. For many years in many societies, women have been campaigning against discrimination, but crucially, this activity focuses on men's interests in rejecting masculinities and looking at the harms that norms of masculinities can do to men. The activity uses the metaphor of the Gender Box to explore the ways in which social expectations and messages about femininity and masculinity not only restrict the lives of women, but also limit the lives of men.

Make the distinction between being unable to comply with gender norms and being unwilling to comply with gender norms: There may be a number of reasons why men feel unable to conform to patriarchal norms. Often these reasons are to do with men's economic circumstances or marginalized social status, which limits their ability to fulfill some of the social expectations of masculinity, e.g. in terms of being the main breadwinner in their family. But when this activity refers to men stepping outside of their Man Box (by rejecting or resisting some harmful social expectations of masculinity), it is mainly concerned with encouraging men to refuse to comply with harmful norms of masculinity - because they recognize the harms such norms do not only to women and girls but also to men and boys. The harms of patriarchal masculinities to men may include:

► Damage to men's physical and mental health

► Male violence against other men

► Men's experiences of abusive use of power within male-dominated hierarchies

► Pressure to compete rather than collaborate with other men