

First Female Legislator Takes Office in Ebonyi State, Nigeria



Dorathy Obasi, the first woman legislator to be elected to the State House of Assembly in Ebonyi State, Nigeria, was sworn in to office on April 25.

Although the 1979 and 1999 Constitutions underscored the equality of all Nigerian citizens, women's participation in Nigerian politics is limited and political parties do not tend to put forward female candidates. Several domestic and international NGOs have been working to promote women's political empowerment in Nigeria. One domestic NGO, DOVENET, hosted seminars on enhancing women's participation in politics in Ebonyi State, which spurred participants to put what they had learned into action. Women rallied behind Obasi, helping her win by an overwhelming margin. In a post-election interview, Obasi said, "I honestly believe that DOVENET provided the motivation for women in Ebonyi State to campaign on my behalf and get me elected."

While the government has yet to put into force several international treaties protecting women's rights (including the Beijing Declaration), President Olusegun Obasanjo has kept his promise to give 15% of federal appointments to women (though this falls far short of Beijing's recommended 30%). However, women still lack representation in elected offices, and NGOs in Nigeria continue to work to replicate Ms. Obasi's success in other states. [IFES](#)

For more information on women's participation efforts in Nigeria, visit www.ifes.org/reg-activities/africa.

The Election Calendar (p.1) and Results are provided by IFES' Election Guide, a top source of verified election results available online at www.ElectionGuide.org.



BURUNDI

Referendum ■ February 28, 2005

Registered Voters : NA

Votes Cast: 2,894,362

Valid Votes: 2,834,077 → 97.91% of votes cast

Invalid Votes: 60,285 → 2.08% of votes cast

Referendum Topic: This referendum asked voters to approve a new constitution, which includes allocation of seats in Parliament: a 50-50 seat split in the Senate between Hutus and Tutsis, while in the National Assembly the split will be 60-40 between Hutus and Tutsis. In addition, the new constitution would guarantee that women's representation in government would be at least 30%.

"Yes" Votes: 2,607,852 → 92.01% of Votes Cast

"No" Votes: 226,225 → 7.98% of Votes Cast

