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The UN women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. It focuses on priority areas that are fundamental to women's equality, and that "unlock progress across the board"[1]. The priority of the committee is to address the issue of women in politics worldwide. Women bring up different perspectives to solve problems -they are more sensitive to people's needs and often help to improve public services. Mali is concerned about the issue of increasing the number of women in politics thanks to the country's willingness to start looking to the future and provide basic needs to its inhabitants. This issue affects not only Mali, but also sub-Saharan and Asian countries due to their strong beliefs in traditions that have excluded women from taking part in decisions. As a result, women still cope with great limitations and barriers to be respected and treated fairly.

Although women in Mali achieved the right to vote in 1956¹, gender inequality still remains a problem. Like in other developing countries, women are denied the education they need to free themselves from poverty. In Mali, women make up two-thirds of the illiterate population. Furthermore, due to this lack of studies, they cannot find a job and they are not capable to support themselves, so they need to marry young. These marriages bring up issues like domestic violence, polygamy or genital mutilation, which cause women both physical and mental serious problems. Few women can work, even less are able to reach high positions in politics. Currently, this reflects on the 9.5%² of women there are in Malian parliament. This percentage reveals by itself the great crisis, diseases, like ebola, and the large inequalities the country is going through. In comparison with the rest of the world in terms of women in politics, Mali is given out the 128th position, position that the country is not proud of.

In order to prevent this situation from happening any longer, Mali established a quota that says a 30 % of the parliament must be women and has created several laws. Nevertheless, these actions are not being respected, especially since 2012, when the country suffered a coup d'état. As a consequence, women lost all the rights and the power they had achieved until then, mainly because several organizations that were helping at that moment had to stop working. Since then there has been a recovery and these NGOs could restart their work to aid women. The most known one is *Care*, which since 1975 has been helping community organizations to become more effective and seeking to protect the rights of vulnerable people[2]. There are also smaller organizations designated to local populations, specifically, the *Association for the Defense of Women's Rights*[3], which was created in 1991 to promote the rights of Malian women and improve their socio-economic and legal status, and the *Action for the Promotion and Development of Women*[4], which is a plan to educate local populations about the negative consequences of underage marriage. There were also new organizations that emerged after the

¹ http://womensuffrage.org/?page_id=69

² <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>

coup d'état and developed other ways of encouraging and empowering women, which meant a great step to achieve gender equality in the nation.

Mali has subscribed to international agreements which have greatly contributed to the process of having more women in government and ensured the protection of women. One of those stipulations is the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination (1991)*^[5], which “defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up an agenda for national action to end such discrimination”^[6]. Mali is also part of the *Protocol on Women's Rights (2005)*^[7], a document in which “laws are revised so that they also look favorable to women and made sure to be effective and respected”^[8]. As well, Mali is member of the UN Development Summit of 2000 and the *UNI Africa*^[9], which organizes a seminar for women members that was first just made for African women but later spread to other countries that joined too. This NGO was created by women from Europe and the United States, which are members of “*Synabef*”^[10]. This is another organization that teaches women quickly and effectively what their rights are and how to exercise them using a participatory method. Women discuss their current situations, and learn how to improve their way of living. As a consequence, women start to think by themselves and learn not to depend on their husbands' decision, which will help them to be independent and resourceful. With *Synabef*, not only are women trained to work and help each other, but also men are taught, who learn to tolerate and accept women as an equal. The main aim of these organizations is to make women participate in politics and reach a greater equality between genders. Therefore these organizations have been lately making progress by reducing women's genital mutilation in a 10%, increasing girls education up to a 88% , reducing poverty from a 47.5% to a 43.6% and teaching women the knowledge they need to acquire the power they did not receive in their childhood.

Mali wants other states to be involved actively in the process of solving these issues. To do it, the country proposes several actions to stop gender disparity in the country. Additionally, Mali would like the international community to adopt “a leadership and political will”^[11] to find solutions to the country's issues. This step is vital for Mali, as it is deeply influenced by old beliefs, traditions, wars, and economic issues. As a result, Mali expects that negotiations between allied countries are strengthened and policies are created between core and periphery countries. Firstly, a political party made up only of women, would be really useful to stop this issue. Research has shown that governments with a higher percentage of women have less problems with corruption and lack of transparency. In addition, due to their sensitivity to the population feelings and needs, they are more reticent than men at the time of touching the people's money. Secondly, the nation proposes to create a television program where women can express all their opinions and concerns. They could talk about what it is like to be a woman in Mali or talk about the barriers they have to overcome to be successful. Last but not least, Mali considers it is essential that the concept of gender equality be taught to children from a young age. If this happens, when they grow up they are going to know women and men are equal and deserve the same, so they will not discriminate against anyone. This behavior will probably start spreading out and people in the country will start realizing how important is to have both genders in the society to look to the future.

The global impact of the need to increase the role of women in politics affects humans in a widespread scale. Women are changing everything. Their ideas are making a better world. With men and women united as equals in politics and society, our countries and our communities will be stronger.

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[6] <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/>

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[9] <http://www.uniglobalunion.org/regions/uni-africa/news>

[10] www.uniglobalunion.org/fr/node/25177

[11] <http://www.globalurban.org/GUDMag06Vol2Iss1/Grown,%20Gupta,%20&%20Kes.htm>