**Equal Participation in Political and Public Affairs**

* The right to participate in public affairs is guaranteed through the fulfillment not only of those rights protected by Art. 25 of the ICCPR, but through freedom of expression, freedoms of association and assembly, the right to security of the person etc. The state must take the steps necessary to give effect to these rights.
* The right to participate in public affairs includes but is not limited to participation in political processes. For example, it can also include the right to hold public office, or public service positions.
* In the context of elections, emphasis should be placed on inclusive processes. There should not be discrimination on the basis of prohibited grounds (outlined in Art. 2 of the ICCPR), and steps should be taken to ensure that so called ‘vulnerable groups,’ including women, minorities, persons with disabilities, migrant workers (as appropriate), and internally displaced persons, are able to participate in the process. States have an obligation to take the steps necessary to ensure rights – for some vulnerable groups this can include the use of special temporary measures to promote equality.
* Equal participation in political and public affairs requires that States recognize that both de jure and de facto factors may inhibit the full participation of “vulnerable” or “marginalized” groups.
* A non-exhaustive list of examples of good practices, are included in the table below. More information can also be found in [Election Obligations and Standards: A Carter Center Assessment Manual.](http://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/democracy/cc-OES-handbook-10172014.pdf)

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|  | Non-Exhaustive List of Examples of Good Practice |
| Inclusion of Women in the Electoral Process | * Ensure an adequate number of polling places so that it is not necessary to travel long distances to vote.
* Allow pregnant women or women with children to move to the front of the voting queue
* Consider public funding of campaigns to encourage broad participation in the electoral process, including by women.
* Provide gender sensitivity training to poll workers
* Consider legislative means of promoting women’s participation and representation such as quotas
* Provide training to women candidates
* Provide voter education targeting women (which may require using media other than the TV and internet and making creative use of social networks)
* Encourage partnerships with civil society that may be able to provide resources for women’s participation
* Encourage the development of task forces within the legislature on issues pertinent to women’s participation
* Hold local elections – women are more likely to be able to participate in candidates in local elections
* Ensure that women have access to a legal identity and can easily obtain the documentation necessary to participate in political and public affairs
* Promote civic education in elementary education
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| Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities | * Include legal provisions for independent voting, including allowing assistance by a person of the voter’s choice
* Exploring technologies that will allow voter’s to independently cast their ballots
* Ensuring that polling places are accessible to those with physical disabilities
* Allowing people to vote in hospitals or other facilities
* Considering the use of mobile or other alternative voting methods for persons with disabilities
* Including positive representations of persons with disabilities in public awareness campaigns about the voting process
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| Inclusion of National or Ethnic, Religious or Linguistic Minorities | * Provision of ballots and voter education and other materials in minority languages
* Cooperation with civil society organizations that can provide voter education in minority languages
* Scheduling elections to ensure that they do not fall on holy days
* Ensuring an adequate number of polling stations in all areas of the country, including those with national, ethnic or other minorities
* Considering the use of public financing to promote broader political participation, including by members of minority groups
* Holding local elections
* Provide training to candidates from minority groups
* Encourage the development of task forces within the legislature on issues pertinent to minority participation
* Ensure that members of minority groups have access to a legal identity and can easily obtain the documentation necessary to participate in political and public affairs
* Promote civic education in elementary education
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