

New dataset reveals more female diplomats in the world today

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The United Nations has designated 24 June as International Day of Women in Diplomacy. A new dataset was recently published that documents the share of women and men among the world's ambassadors.

The research program Gender in Diplomacy (GenDip) at the University of Gothenburg has developed the dataset, which will enable entirely new types of analyzes.

The new "GenDip Dataset on Gender and Diplomatic Representation" maps all bilateral ambassadors in the world posted between 1968 and 2021 and the share of women and men in this group—something that has been missing in the past. In total, the [dataset](#) contains 89,263 ambassador postings from 222 current and former countries.

"I am pleased that we can now make such basic information as the gender of ambassadors available through this dataset. Gender and [diplomacy](#) is a growing field of research and more and more people are interested in gender-related questions. For example, the UN has designated 24 June as International Day of Women in Diplomacy to highlight that women are still under-represented in diplomacy," says Ann Towns, Professor of Political Science and Director of GenDip.

The share of female ambassadors in the world has risen slowly from 0.9 percent in 1968 to 21 percent in 2021, but the figure varies regionally and between countries. In 1968, no region appointed more than 2 percent women to ambassador postings, and only 22 out of 127 countries appointed female ambassadors at all. In 2021, [regional differences](#) were greater; for instance, 41 percent of ambassadors posted abroad by the Nordic countries were female, compared with 12 percent by countries in the Middle East.

Regional averages, however, can obscure variations between individual states.

"Although there were few female ambassadors on average from African countries in 1968, 20 percent of Guinea's ambassadors were women, the highest proportion of women in the world at that time."

In 2021, very small states are top appointers of female ambassadors: 100 percent of Nauru's postings were of women, Liechtenstein posted 80 percent, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, Jamaica and Grenada all appointed over 60 percent women. Sweden appointed 47 percent female ambassadors that same year.

Gender plays a role in international relations

The new dataset enables studies of why some states appoint more female diplomats than others, and what happens in diplomatic interactions when there are more women involved.

"Diplomatic missions are used as a measure of international recognition and status. By making [women](#) visible in diplomacy, we show that [gender](#) plays an important role in states' quest for status," says Ann Towns.

More information: Database: [www.gu.se/en/gendip/the-gendip ...
matic-representation](http://www.gu.se/en/gendip/the-gendip...matic-representation)

Provided by University of Gothenburg

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