



International  
Labour  
Organization

---

# Gender Balance in the International Labour Conference

Statistics on the representation of  
women and men in the ILC\*

2006 – 2012

---



**Bureau for Gender Equality**

## Table of contents

Preface .....	3
Table 1. Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by <i>Position and Group</i> , without Ministers (2006-2012) .....	4
Table 2. Women Ministers at the ILC (2006-2012) .....	4
Graph 1. Women Delegates at the ILC by <i>Group</i> (2006-2012) .....	5
Table 3. Total Number of Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by <i>Region</i> , including Ministers (2006-2012) .....	6
Graph 2. Total Number of Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by <i>Region</i> , including Ministers (2006-2012) .....	7
Graph 3a. Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by <i>Group</i> (2006-2012) .....	8
Graph 3b. Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by <i>Group</i> (2006-2012) .....	9
Graph 4. Percentages of Women speaking in ILC 2012 Plenary by <i>Region</i> (based on informal daily summaries of the published Plenary Speakers) .....	10

\*Statistics kindly provided by the ILO Relations, Meetings and Document Services Department (RELCONF)

## Preface

The Resolution concerning gender equality at the heart of decent work, adopted by the June 2009 International Labour Conference (ILC), instructs the ILO to "...improve the representation of women at all levels, in all ILO meetings – including sessions of the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference". In 2009 the ILO Director-General challenged member States' delegations to achieve a target of 35 per cent women by 2011. This was not realized, and at the **2012 ILC only 26.9 percent** accredited delegates, substitute delegates and advisers **were women**. This was noted with regret by the Credentials Committee.

### 2012 International Labour Conference Credentials Committee

"The Committee notes with deep concern that the proportion of women delegates and advisers has decreased. The Committee deeply regrets that the participation of women in the Conference has again not achieved the target the United Nations set in 1990 of increasing the proportion of women in decision- and policy-making bodies to at least 30 percent. The Committee also notes that the ILO Director-General's convocation letter has yet again urged the member States to make every effort to achieve a gender balance in delegations. In light of this lack of progress, the Committee would like to request the Governing Body, through the Conference, to consider concrete measures to improve the situation in this respect."

The tables and graphs in this paper show the 2012 percentages, drawn from the following final, official figures: 806 women and 2195 men attended. There were 478 women government representatives with 33 women Ministers, 189 women workers' representatives, and 139 women employers' representatives. The governments group had the strongest overall participation of women with 31.9%, followed by the workers with 22.3%, and the employers with 21.1%. The European region had the best representation, with 35.8% women participants, Americas were next with 32.2%, and the Arab States had the lowest with 11.7%. Beyond these broad percentages, it is worthwhile recording the following breakdown of data. Of the 170 government delegations present in 2012, there were no women in ten, and six had 10 percent or fewer women representatives.

Given this insufficient progress, in an effort to analyze the situation and offer possible strategies for improvement, the Office contacted the 22 governments who had at least 50 percent or more women in their delegations in 2011 to see what factors contributed to their success. Half of these governments replied and shared a number of common factors:

- There was government policy on gender equality and/or women's empowerment
- The government had a plan of action or strategy on gender equality and/or women's empowerment
- In half of those who replied there was a high-level advisor or Ministry on gender equality and/or women's empowerment
- A number had an informal commitment or tradition of gender parity in delegation appointments
- There was encouragement by the ILO in Conference information and in ILO briefing sessions on the Conference.

Other governments could take inspiration from these good practice initiatives.

In 2011, in order to present a more in-depth indicator of women's participation in the proceedings of the ILC, we added a new table to show, by region, the number of women who spoke in the plenary, expressed as a percentage of the total number of speakers. Having equal numbers of women attending the ILC is a positive step, but those women must also engage fully in the proceedings. We have included this record again for 2012, based on an informal daily summary (prepared by Office staff) of the published plenary speeches. In total 44 women took the floor at this 101<sup>st</sup> Session out of a total of 247 plenary speakers (17.8%). Africa (26.9%), Europe (20.8%) and the Americas (13.7%) had the most women speakers in plenary.

The figures in this paper provide the empirical base for arguing to have more women as delegates and advisers at the annual Conference. It is now up to the decision-makers among the constituents to nominate far more women to represent them as delegates and advisers at the international level.

This paper, published by the Bureau for Gender Equality, has tracked data since 2001 with assistance from the Relations, Meetings and Document Services Department of the ILO, whom we sincerely thank.

Jane Hodges, Director, Bureau for Gender Equality

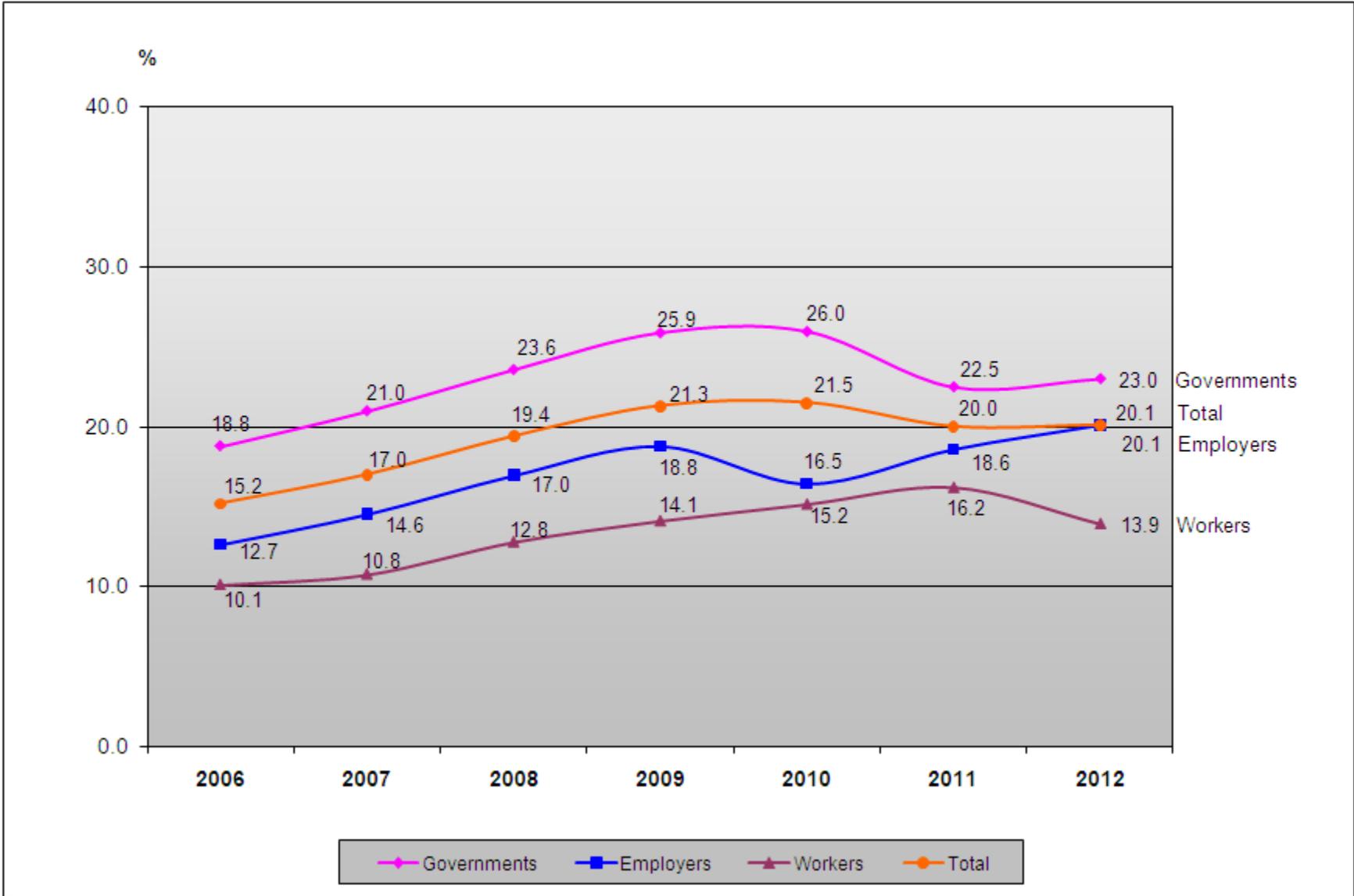
**Table 1. Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by Position and Group, without Ministers (2006-2012)**

2006	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	18.8	33.9	34.6	30.5
Employers	12.7	13.9	24.7	19.7
Workers	10.1	23.9	18.0	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>27.0</b>	<b>24.3</b>
2007	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	21.0	29.4	31.7	28.6
Employers	14.6	16.4	23.7	19.8
Workers	10.8	19.8	23.6	20.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>24.4</b>	<b>27.5</b>	<b>24.4</b>
2008	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	23.6	30.4	35.5	31.4
Employers	17.0	15.2	20.8	18.5
Workers	12.8	19.1	24.6	21.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>25.7</b>
2009	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	25.9	33.4	36.8	33.2
Employers	18.8	20.0	26.7	22.7
Workers	14.1	21.7	29.7	24.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>27.7</b>	<b>32.6</b>	<b>28.5</b>
2010	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	26.0	33.8	33.3	31.8
Employers	16.5	18.8	21.9	19.7
Workers	15.2	21.5	30.9	25.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>31.8</b>	<b>28.3</b>
2011	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	22.5	35.4	34.1	32.1
Employers	18.6	27.4	23.9	23.6
Workers	16.2	24.1	25.5	23.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.0</b>	<b>30.5</b>	<b>29.7</b>	<b>27.8</b>
2012	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	23.0	35.1	34.1	31.9
Employers	20.1	19.2	22.7	21.1
Workers	13.9	21.3	25.7	22.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.1</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>29.1</b>	<b>26.9</b>

**Table 2. Women Ministers at the ILC (2006-2012)**

	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %	2012 %
Women Ministers	15.6	19.6	19.4	27.6	25.4	29.3	24.8

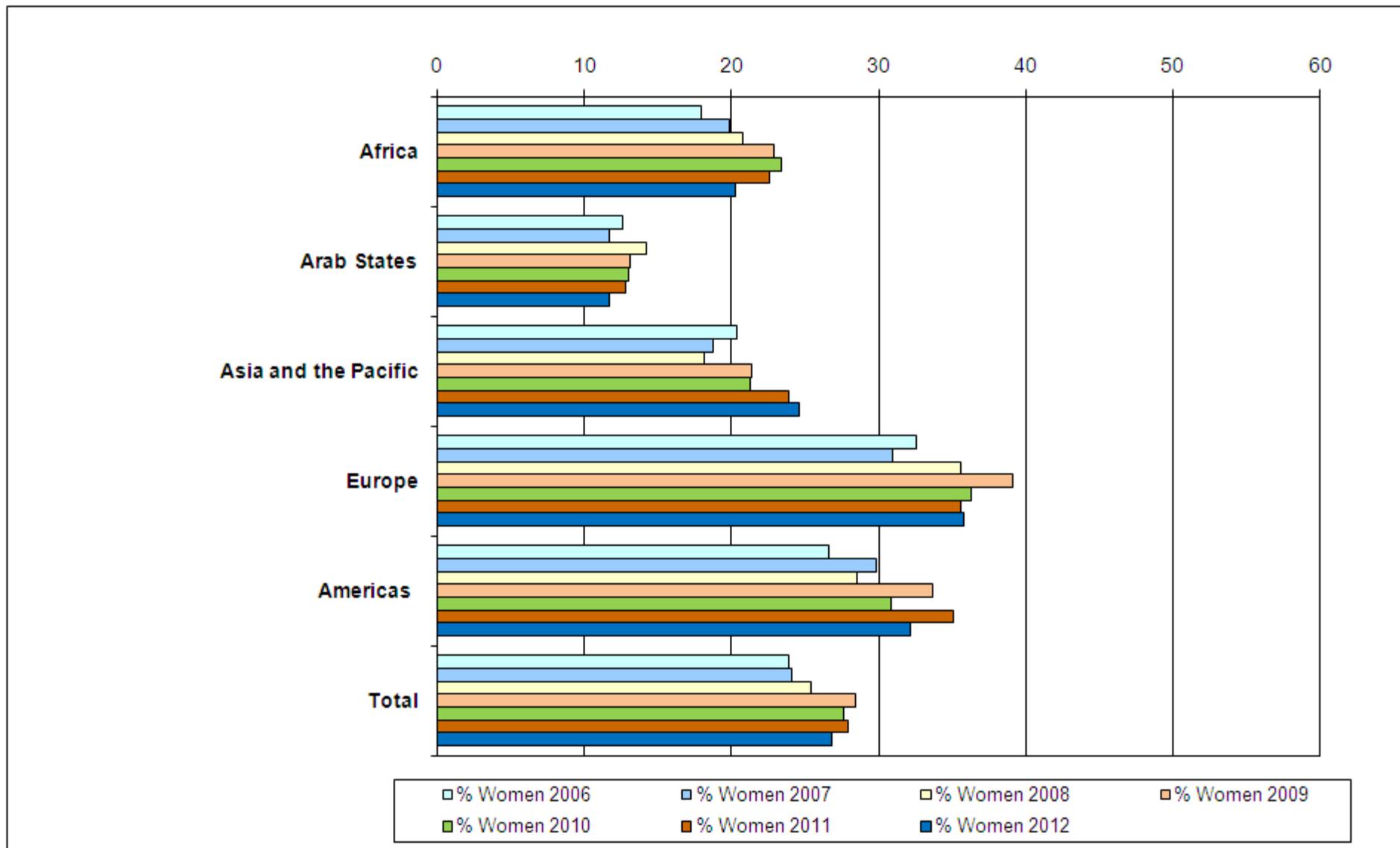
**Graph 1. Women Delegates at the ILC by Group (2006-2012)**



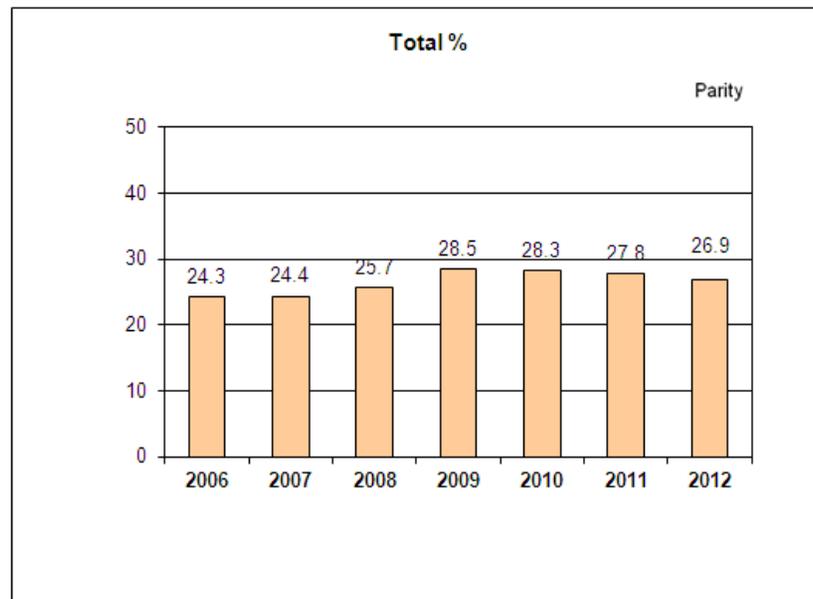
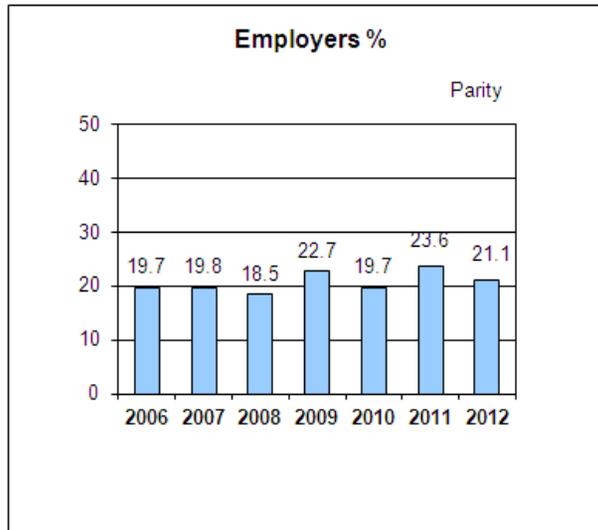
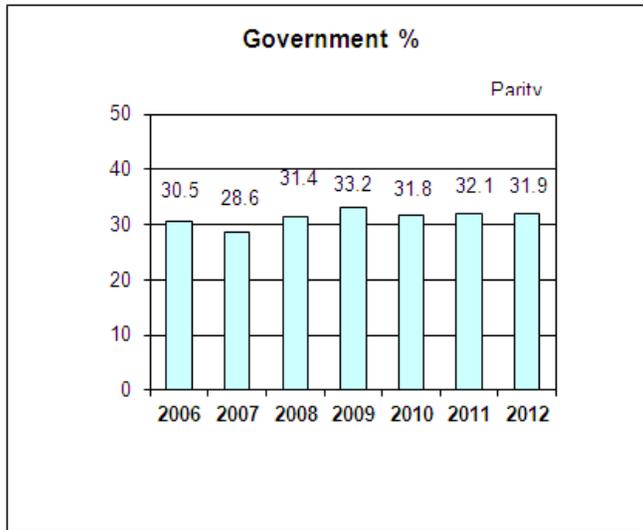
**Table 3. Total number of Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by Region, including Ministers (2006-2012)**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
	% Women 2006	% Women 2007	% Women 2008	% Women 2009	% Women 2010	% Women 2011	% Women 2012
Africa	18.0	19.9	20.8	22.9	23.4	22.6	20.3
Arab States	12.6	11.7	14.2	13.1	13.0	12.8	11.7
Asia and the Pacific	20.4	18.8	18.1	21.4	21.3	23.9	24.6
Europe	32.6	30.9	35.6	39.1	36.3	35.6	35.8
Americas	26.6	29.8	28.5	33.7	30.9	35.0	32.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>27.9</b>	<b>26.8</b>

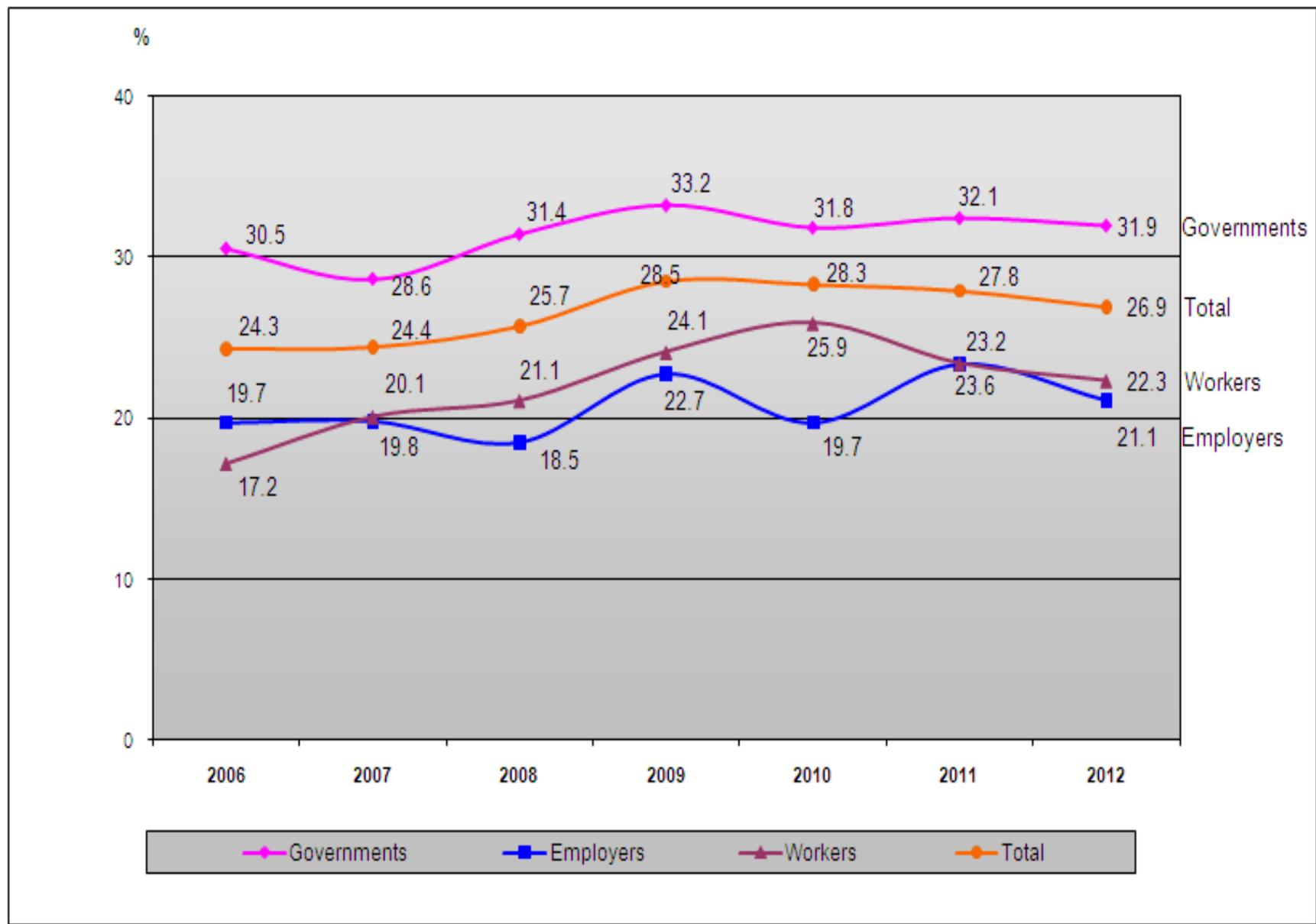
**Graph 2. Total number of Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by Region, including Ministers (2006-2012)**



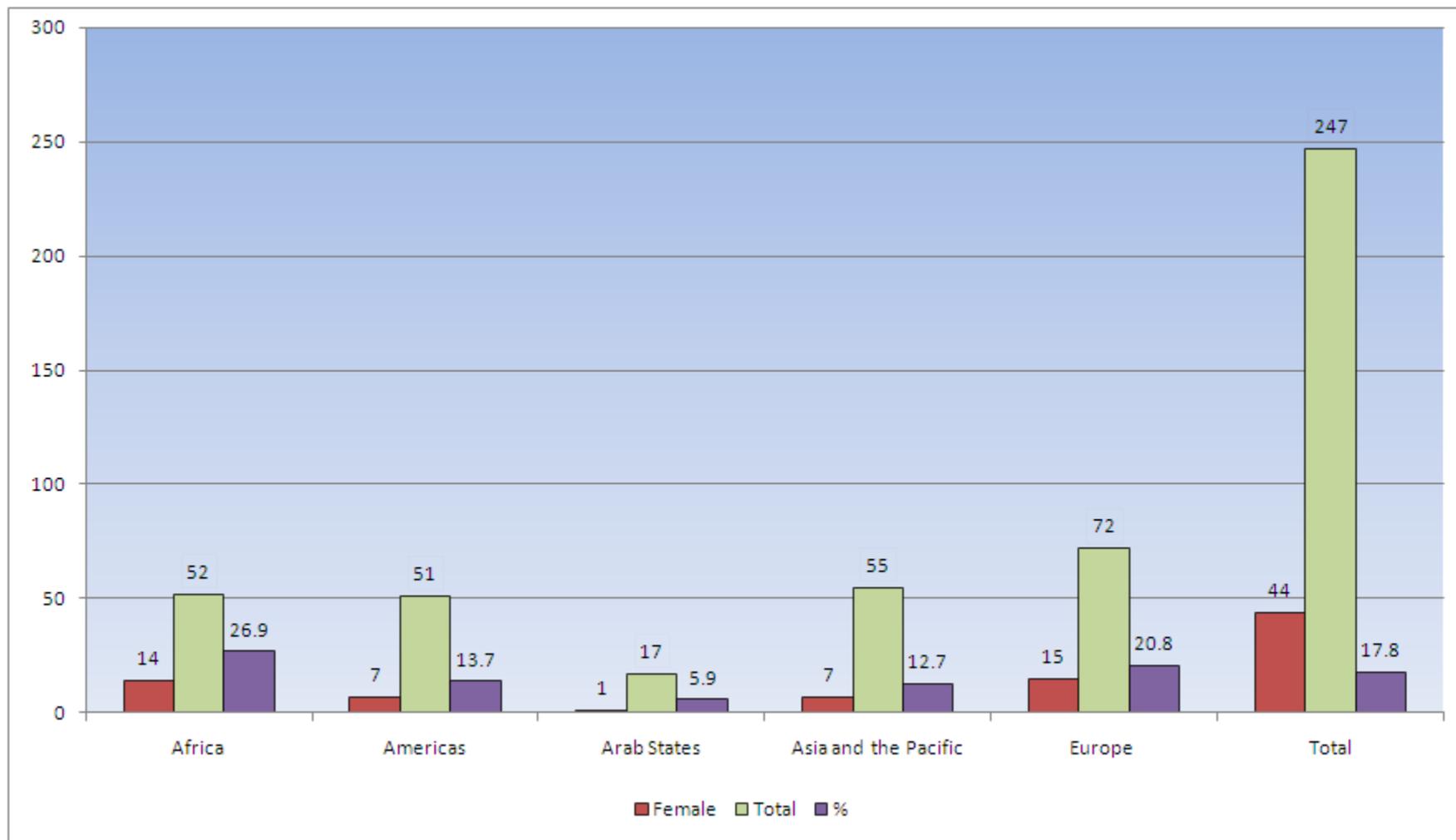
**Graph 3a. Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC *by Group* (2006-2012)**



**Graph 3b. Women Participants (Delegates, Substitute Delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by Group (2006-2012)**



**Graph 4. Percentages of Women speaking in ILC 2012 Plenary, by Region (based on informal daily summaries of the published Plenary Speakers)**



## The ILO Bureau for Gender Equality

The Bureau for Gender Equality, based at the ILO headquarters in Geneva, supports the implementation of the organization's Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming. This entails offering advice to constituents and ILO staff on measures to help ensure that policies, legislation, programmes and institutions are more gender-equitable. Such measures include ratifying and implementing relevant labour standards, increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, promoting women's entrepreneurship and paying attention to areas where women face discrimination in the labour market. The Bureau also carries out capacity building and knowledge sharing to help strengthen the ability of constituents and ILO staff to address gender issues in their work.

The Bureau reports directly to the ILO Director-General and liaises with the organization's Governing Body and International Labour Conference on gender issues. It coordinates the global ILO Gender Network, which comprises gender specialists and gender focal points in the regions and at ILO headquarters in Geneva.

The Bureau participates in United Nations inter-agency activities and with UN Women to promote gender equality and women's empowerment and advocates for including gender equality considerations in UN reform processes. The Bureau also liaises with civil society groups and academic institutions.



Bureau for Gender Equality  
International Labour Office  
4, route des Morillons  
1211 Geneva 22  
Switzerland

Tel.: +41 22 799 6730

Fax: +41 22 799 6388

[gender@ilo.org](mailto:gender@ilo.org)    [www.ilo.org/gender](http://www.ilo.org/gender)