



International  
Labour  
Organization

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# Gender Balance in the International Labour Conference

Statistics on the representation of  
women and men in the ILC

*2005 – 2011*

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 Bureau for Gender Equality

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\*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, Mr Juan Somavia, challenged member States' delegations to set for the 2010 Session of the ILC a target of 35 per cent women. In 2010 the per centage achieved for women accredited delegates was 28.3.

The historic 100<sup>th</sup> Session of the ILC in June 2011 was an ideal opportunity for member States to work towards improved gender balance in their tripartite delegations, closer to the 35% target. There were a number of important gender-related items on the Conference agenda including: the discussion and voting on texts for a domestic workers Convention and Recommendation, a gender-inclusive recurrent item discussion on social security, a high-level inter-active panel on the Global Report on Discrimination entitled *Equality at work: the continuing challenge*, and a resolution concerning gender equality and the use of language in legal texts of the ILO (which was accompanied by an Editor's Note to be attached to the Organization's 1919 Constitution in order to avoid sexist language).

Did this platform translate into results for women's and men's equal representation in 2011? Unfortunately we have to report no improvement: **the overall ratio of women to men was 27.8%.**

The tables and graphs in this paper show the 2011 percentages, drawn from the following final, official figures: a total of 818 women compared to 2,125 men attended (or 27.8% of total delegates, substitute delegates and advisers). There were 477 women government representatives with 44 women Ministers, 151 female employers' representatives, and 190 female workers' representatives. The governments group had the strongest overall participation of women with 32.1%, followed by the employers with 23.6%, and the workers with 23.2%. As in past years the North American region had the highest ratio, with 54.1% women participants, Europe was next with 35.8% and the Arab States had the lowest with 12.5% (a drop for that region compared to 2010, when it had achieved 13%).

Beyond these broad percentages, it is worthwhile recording the following breakdown of data. Of the 169 government delegations present in 2011, there were no women in eleven of them and eight of them had 10% or less women. Congratulations are due to 22 delegations that achieved parity of at least 50 per cent or more women, namely: Austria (58.8%), Bahamas (63.6%), Barbados (55.6%), Bulgaria (50%), Canada (57.7%), Cape Verde (50%), Croatia (72.2%), Estonia (77.8%), Finland (55.6%), Greece (60.7%), Hungary (55.2%) Ireland (50%), Italy (50%), Kyrgyzstan (100%), Lithuania (50%), Mongolia (50%), Montenegro (50%), Norway (53.3%), Serbia (50%), Seychelles (60%), Slovenia (50%) and the United States (51.4%).

This year - in order to present a more in-depth indicator of women's participation in the proceedings of the ILC - we have 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. The data are based on an informal daily summary (prepared by Office staff) of the published plenary speeches. In total 256 women took the plenary floor at this 100<sup>th</sup> Session. Africa (33.9%), the Americas (27.3%) and Europe (25.3%) had the most number of women speakers in plenary. Clearly having equal numbers of women attending the ILC is a positive step, but those women must also be able to engage fully in the proceedings!

How can the Office assist to improve the situation? Publishing and disseminating this statistical profile (in three languages and in a cross-year comparability data set) is one way. The figures in this paper provide the empirical base for arguing to have more women as delegates and advisers at the annual Conference. For some years, the Office has carefully stressed gender balance in all background documents for the ILC. Now it is up to the decision-makers among the constituents to nominate more women to represent their constituencies at the international level.

This paper on *Gender Balance in the International Labour Conference*, 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

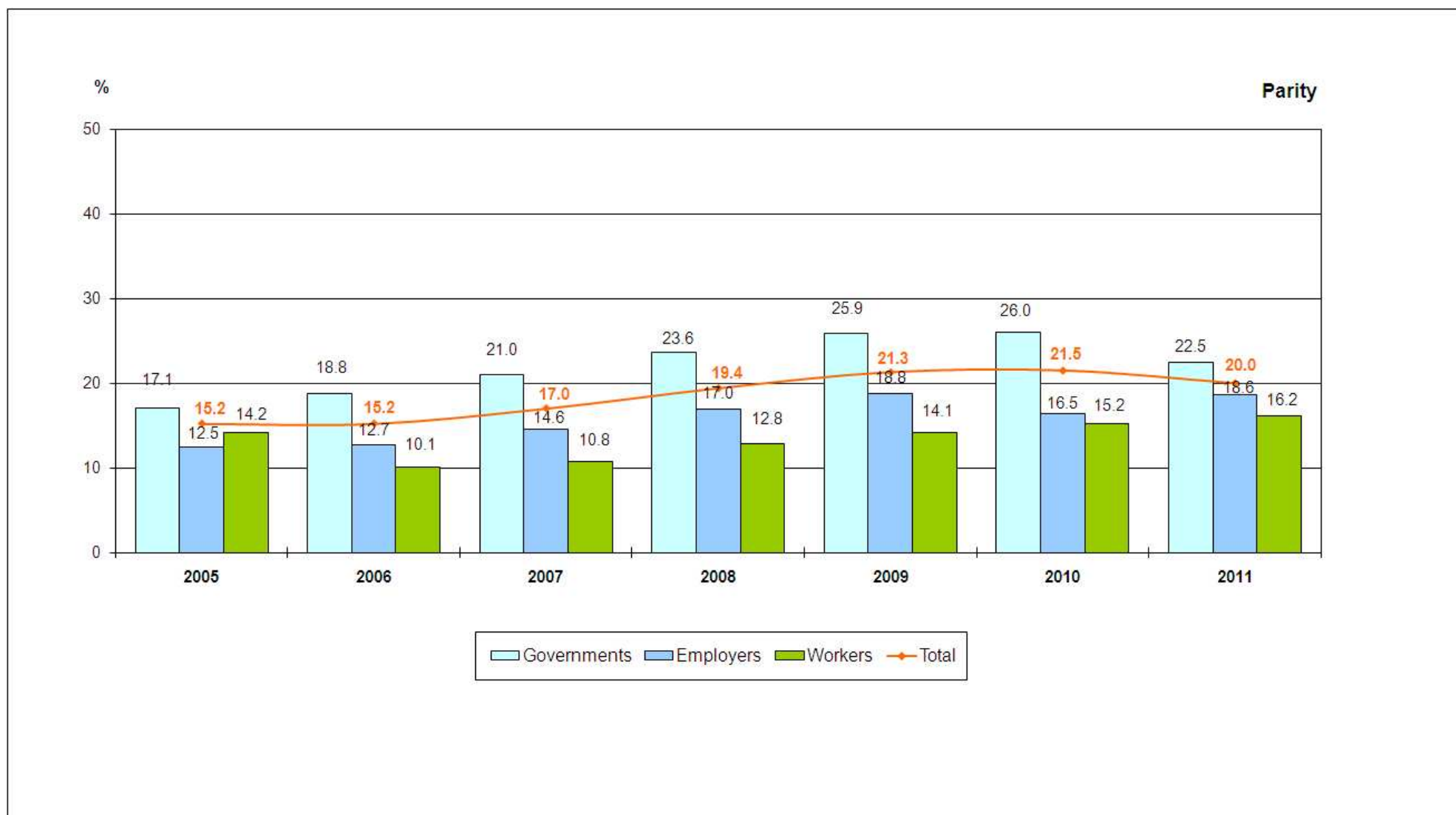
**Table 1. Women participants (Delegates, Substitute delegates and Advisers) at the ILC by position and group, without ministers (2005-2011)**

2005	Delegates %	Substitute Delegates %	Advisers %	Total %
Governments	17.1	31.4	29.7	27.0
Employers	12.5	19.8	20.1	18.5
Workers	14.2	18.6	16.4	16.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>24.0</b>	<b>22.3</b>
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	34.7	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>

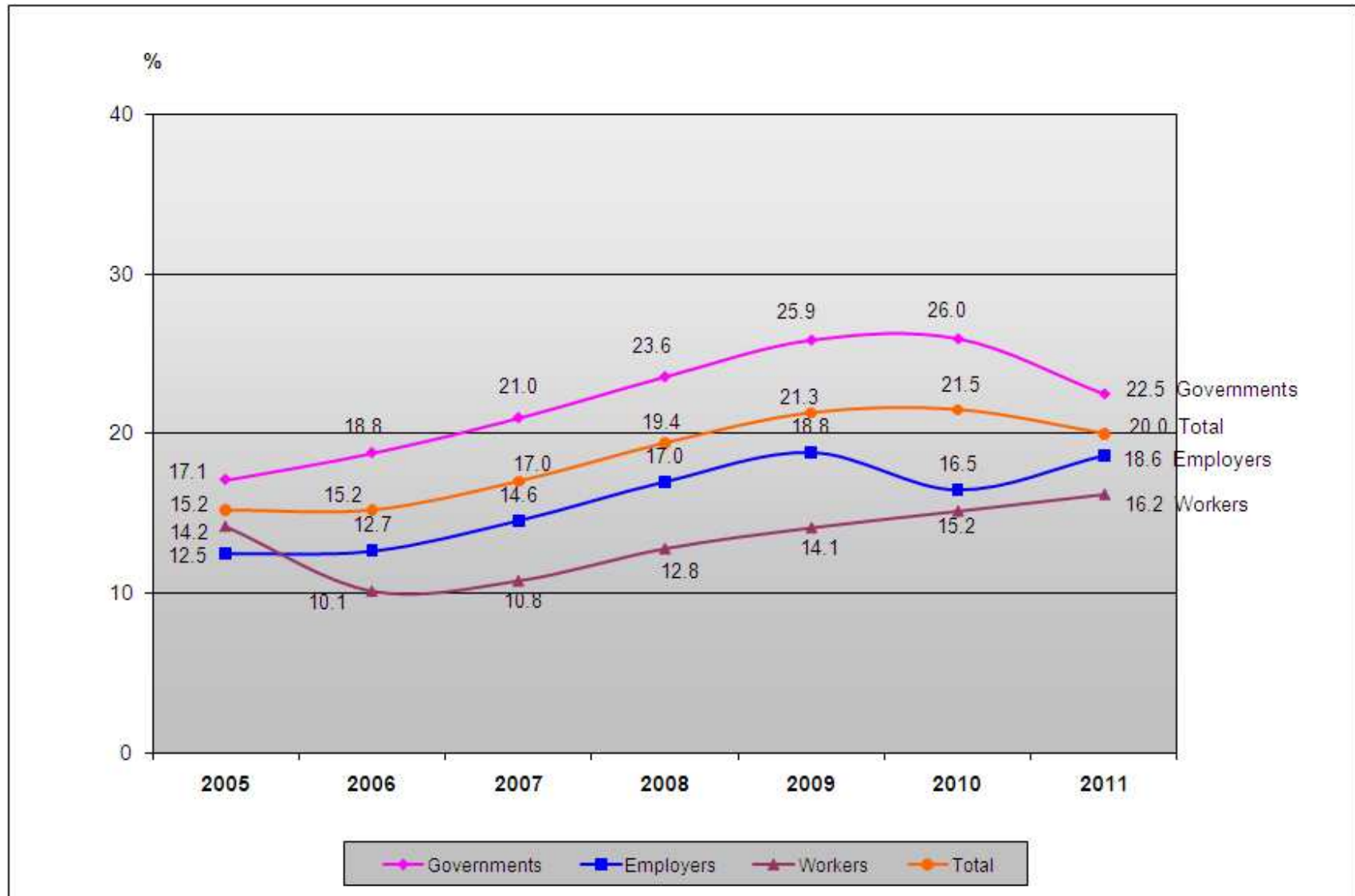
**Table 2. Women ministers at the ILC (2005-2011)**

	2005 %	2006 %	2007 %	2008 %	2009 %	2010 %	2011 %
Women Ministers	14.5	15.6	19.6	19.4	27.6	25.4	29.3

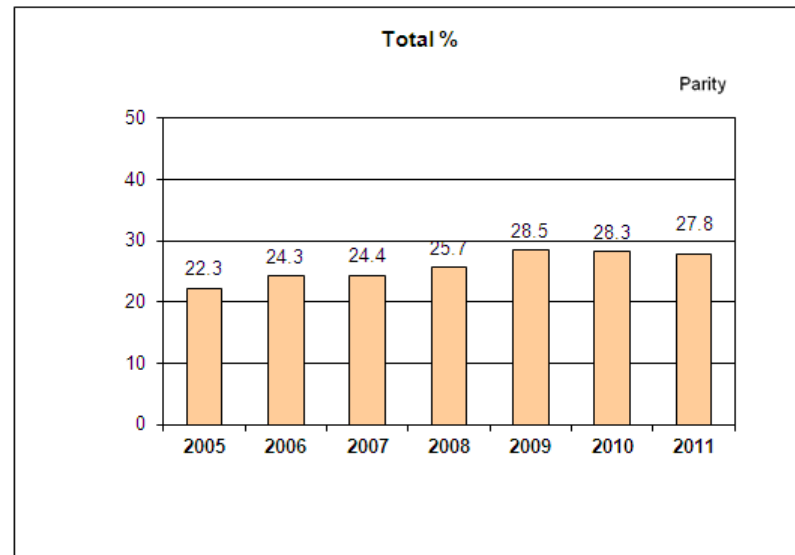
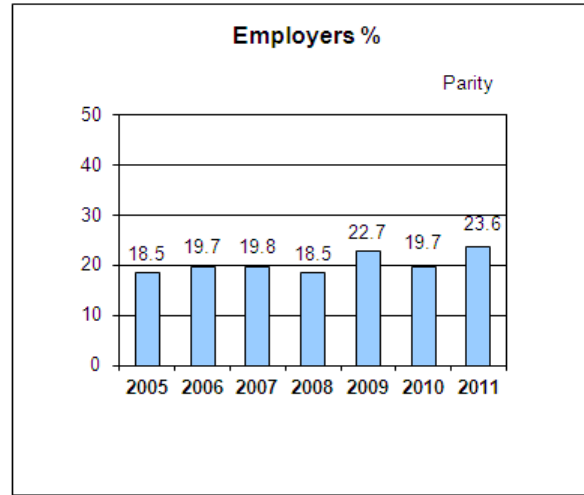
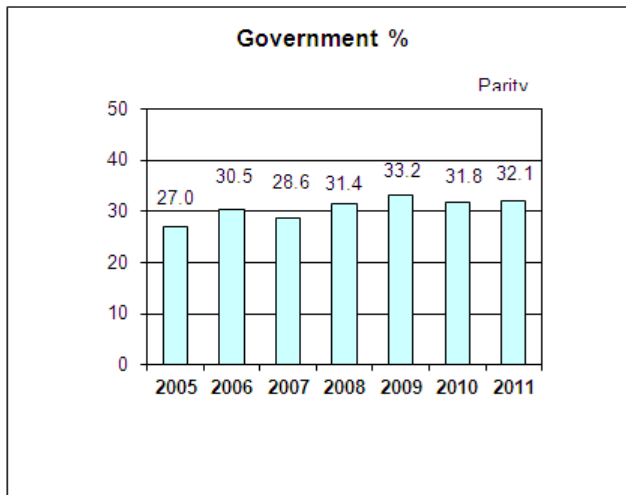
**Graph 1a. Women delegates at the ILC by group (2005-2011)**



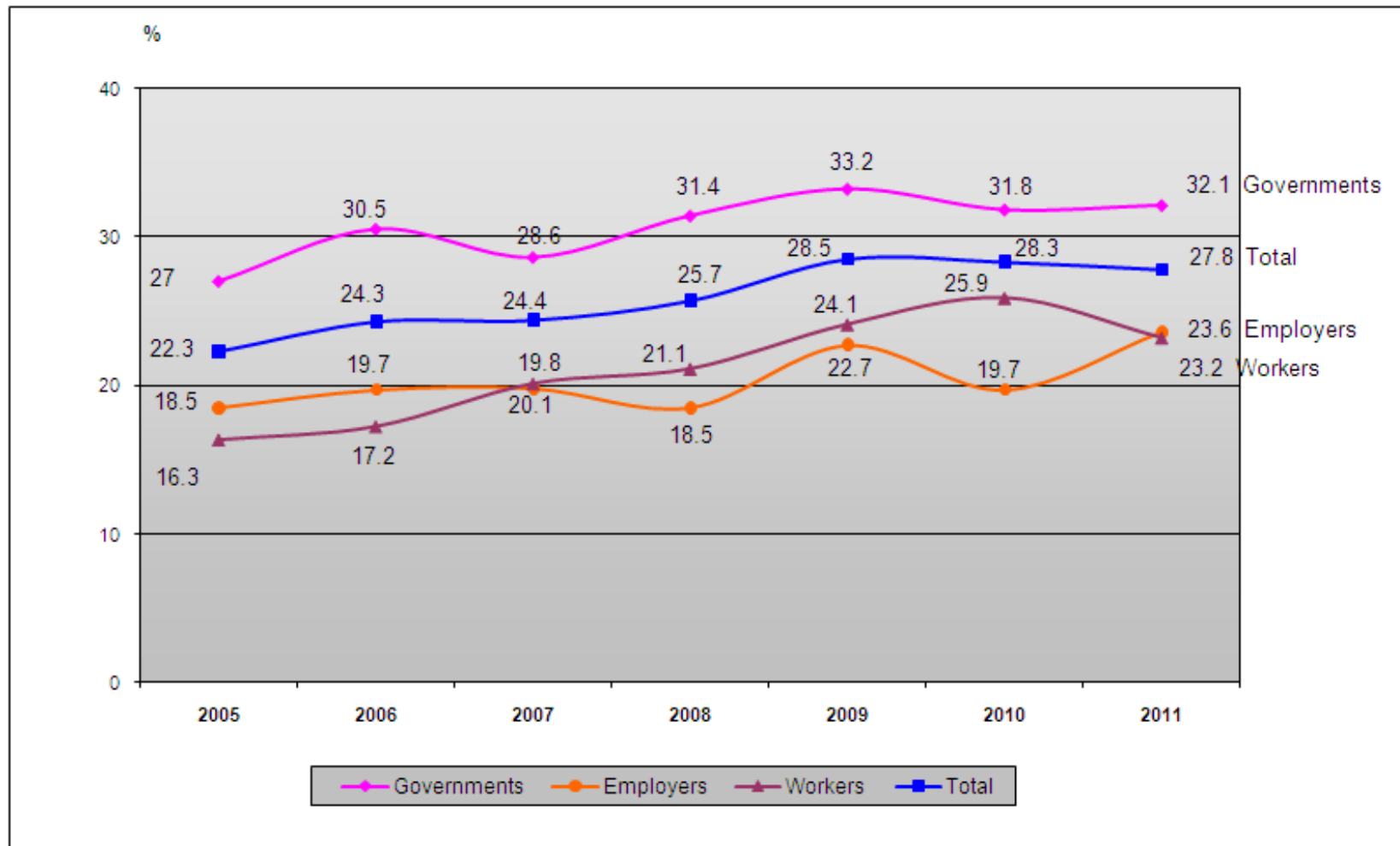
**Graph 1b. Women delegates at the ILC by group (2005-2011)**



**Graph 2a. Women participants (Delegates, substitute delegates and advisers) at the ILC *by group* (2005-2011)**



**Graph 2b. Women participants (Delegates, substitute delegates and advisers) at the ILC *by group* (2005-2011)**

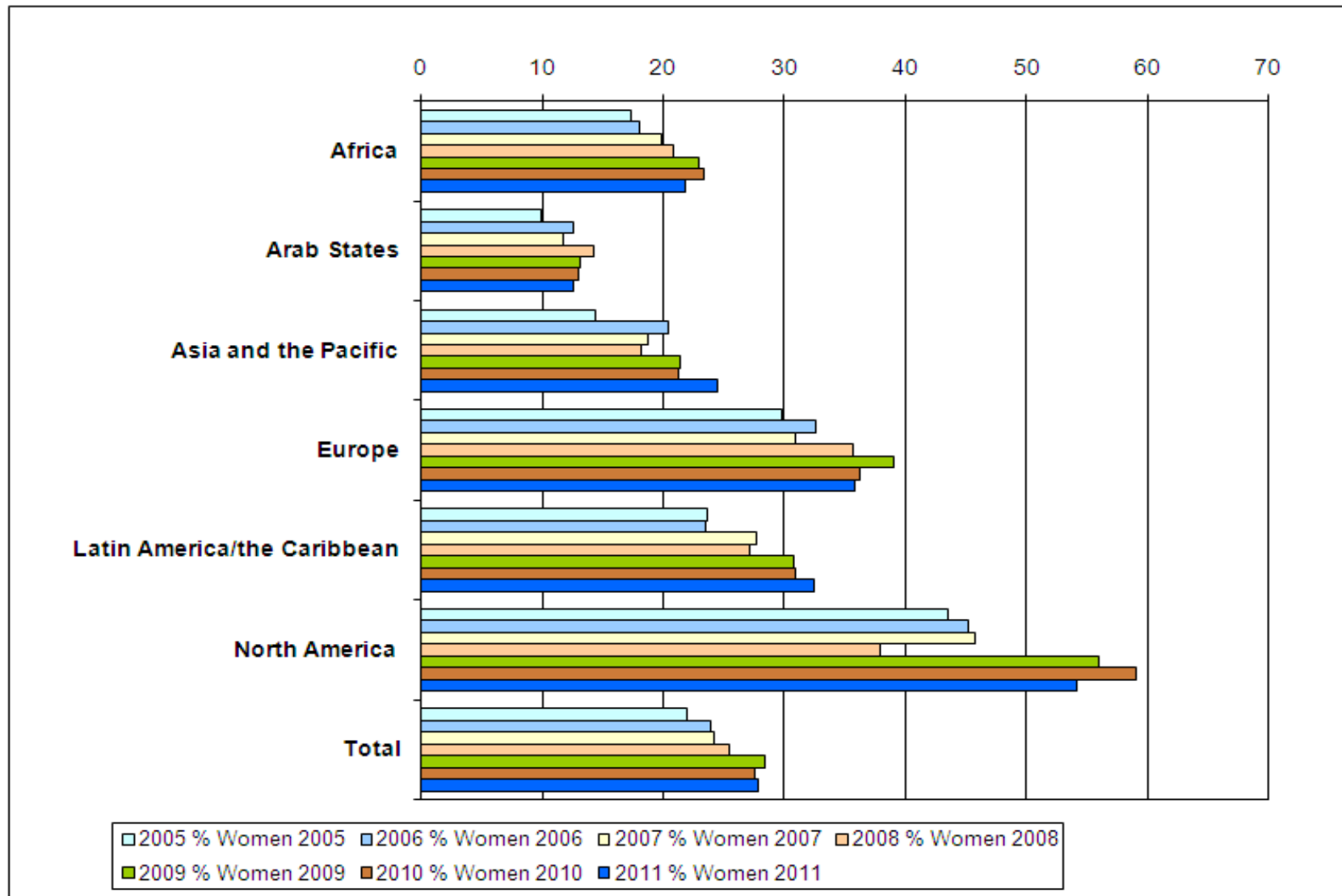




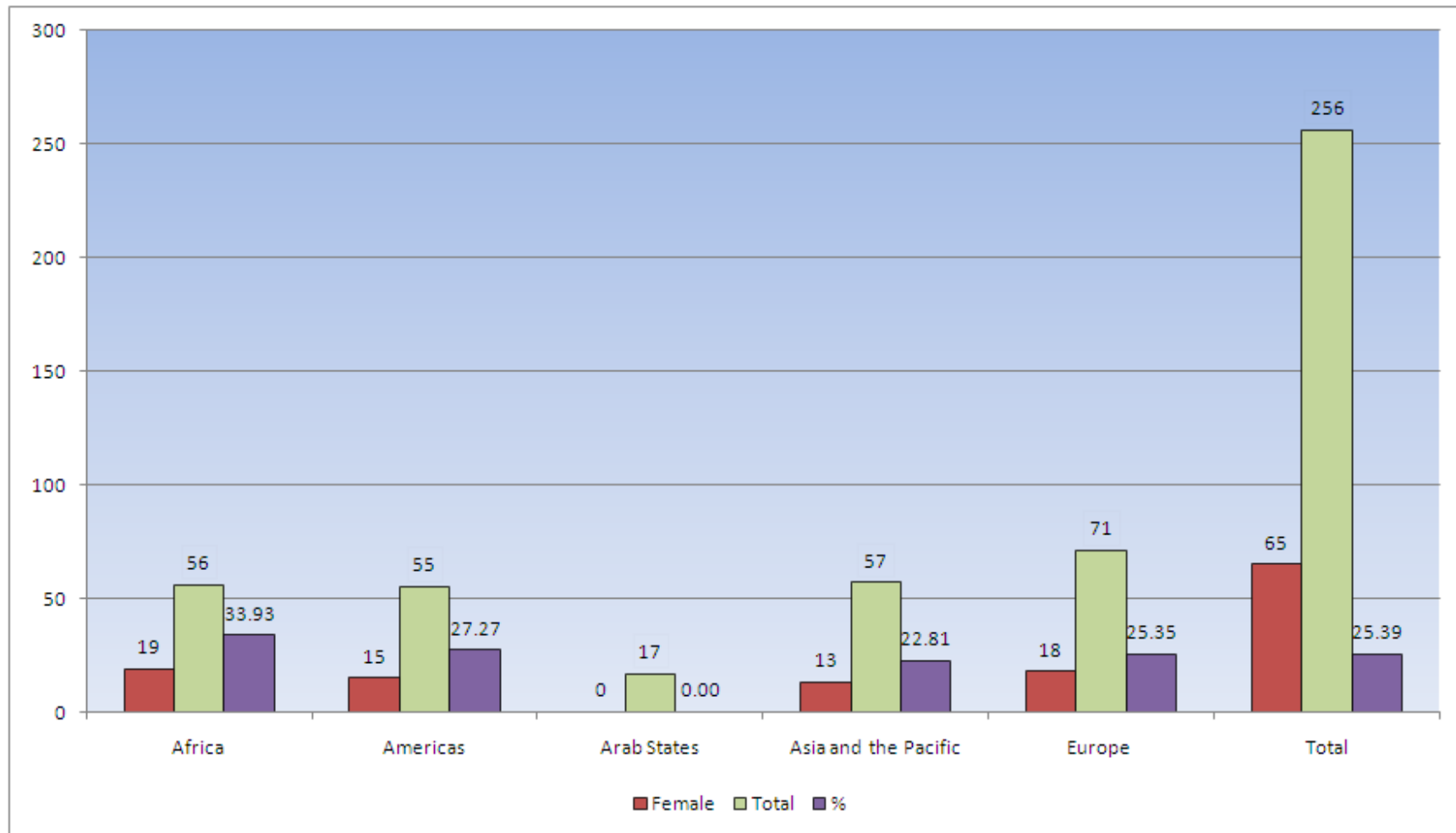
**Table 3. Total number of women participants (Delegates, substitute delegates and advisers) at the ILC *by region*, including ministers (2005-2011)**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
	% Women 2005	% Women 2006	% Women 2007	% Women 2008	% Women 2009	% Women 2010	% Women 2011
Africa	17.4	18.0	19.9	20.8	22.9	23.4	21.8
Arab States	9.9	12.6	11.7	14.2	13.1	13.0	12.5
Asia and the Pacific	14.4	20.4	18.8	18.1	21.4	21.3	24.5
Europe	29.8	32.6	30.9	35.6	39.1	36.3	35.8
Latin America/the Caribbean	23.7	23.6	27.6	27.2	30.8	30.9	32.5
North America	43.5	45.2	45.8	37.9	56.0	59.0	54.1
Total	21.9	23.9	24.1	25.4	28.4	27.6	27.8

**Graph 3. Total number of women participants (Delegates, substitute delegates and advisers) at the ILC by region, including ministers (2005-2011)**



**Graph 4. Percentages of Women, *by region*, speaking in ILC 2011 plenary  
(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 advocates for including gender equality considerations in UN reform processes. The Bureau also liaises with civil society groups and academic institutions.



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