



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

## 20<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS DOCUMENTS

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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

## 20<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Geneva, 12 October 2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Agenda

FEM/20/A.1-REV.3  
9 October 2014

### I. Schedule and meeting arrangements

The 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Parliamentarians will take place on the premises of the CICG and will comprise two sittings on Sunday 12 October, from 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 2.30 p.m. to 6.00 p.m. at the latest.

The work of the Meeting will be carried out in accordance with the Rules of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

The President of the Meeting will seek to promote an active and spontaneous dialogue. Interventions should therefore be brief and not exceed three minutes. No list of speakers will be drawn up in advance. In plenary, participants will be able to indicate their wish to take the floor by completing the registration form they will find on their desks and handing it to the ushers who will pass them on to the President.

### II. Annotated provisional agenda

#### 1. Adoption of the agenda

#### 2. Gender activities at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies

- (a) Work of the Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians at its previous sessions and elections to fill vacant posts on the Committee
  - Participants will be informed of the Coordinating Committee's deliberations at its extraordinary session of 29 June 2014 and its session of 12 October 2014, in Geneva;
  - Participants will be called upon to elect one titular regional representative for the Asia-Pacific Group (end of term March 2018) and one substitute regional representative for the Twelve Plus Group (end of term March 2016), and one substitute member for the Africa Group (end of term March 2018) to fill posts that are currently vacant.
- (b) Work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group  
Participants will be informed of the work of the Gender Partnership Group.
- (c) Briefing on recent IPU activities in the area of gender equality
- (d) Briefing on the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly and related events
  - Information on the general debate – Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women
  - Information on the Future Policy Award ceremony jointly organised by the World Future Council, IPU and UN Women.

*The discussion will conclude by 10 a.m.*

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### 3. Special debate on electoral quotas for women in politics

Recent years have experienced a growing trend of use of gender quotas as a policy tool for increasing women's political participation and representation.

The adoption of such measures is still the object of much debate though. The meeting will set aside some time to discuss the findings of a new publication: the "Atlas of Gender Quotas". The publication is based on country-specific information contained in the Global Database of Quotas for Women ([www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org)), a joint initiative of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), IPU and Stockholm University.

Presentations by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General, and Mr. Yves Leterme, IDEA Secretary-General, will address gender quota regulations and their effects on women's representation in parliament. The presentations will be followed by a debate that will provide an opportunity to exchange views and experiences on quotas for women.

*The special debate will be held from 10 to 11 a.m.*

### 4. Future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and celebrations of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary

- a) Participants will be informed about the results of the consultation held in March on the nature, structure and objectives of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, as well as the Coordinating Committee's proposed recommendations on the subject.
- b) Participants will be informed of initiatives planned or encouraged for the celebration of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Meeting of Women MPs in 2015.

*The discussion will conclude by 11:30 a.m.*

### 5. Contribution to the work of the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly

Women parliamentarians will be invited to discuss the following item of the agenda of the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly: *International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights* (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights).

The participants will elect, on the recommendation of the Coordinating Committee, a rapporteur who will present the main elements of the discussion to the afternoon plenary Meeting of Women Parliamentarians.

The rapporteur will also be in charge of drafting the proposed amendments to the draft resolution submitted to the Standing Committee. These amendments will be drafted in consultation with the President of the Coordinating Committee and submitted on behalf of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. The amendments will aim to introduce a gender perspective to the resolution.

*The discussion will take place from 11.30 a.m. to 1 p.m.*

*The Meeting will adjourn from 1 to 2.30 p.m.*

### 6. Panel debate "Women's influence on Parliament"

The question of women's political participation is, for the IPU, first and foremost a question of rights and democratic functioning. Men and women should have the same political opportunities and say in political decisions-making processes. But one cannot avoid the question: what is the influence of women on parliament?

In this panel discussion parliamentarians will discuss the difference women make in Parliament and how this can be made more visible. Tangible results of women's presence and work in parliaments will be presented. Specific attention will be placed on the political and social contexts and their capacity to limit or facilitate the ability of women parliamentarians to cultivate change. Ultimately, the debate will try and identify what can women parliamentarians do to have more influence?

The panel debate will be moderated by:

Ms. G. von Hall, journalist for Svenska Dagbladet

Panellists:

Ms. L. Alansari, Member of the Consultative Council (Saudi Arabia)

Ms. M. Andrée, Senator, Member of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians (France)

Dr. F. Bustamante, Member of the National Assembly (Ecuador) - TBC

Ms. M.L. Krook, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University

*The discussion will conclude by 4:15 p.m.*

**7. Cooperation with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women**

Ms. Patricia Schulz, Swiss member of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, will inform the Meeting on recent developments in the work of the Committee and its cooperation with parliaments and the IPU. The briefing will be followed by a question and answer session.

**8. Hearing of the candidates for the post of IPU President**

The Meeting will have an opportunity to hear the candidates for the post of IPU President. The hearing will begin at 4.45 pm.

**9. Report of the rapporteur**

The rapporteur of the discussion on the contribution to the work of the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly will present her report. The Meeting will then ask her to prepare, in consultation with the President of the Coordinating Committee, amendments to be presented during the general debate of the Third Standing Committee (Monday, 13 October), in accordance with the modalities specified under item 4.

**10. Future Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

The next Meeting of women parliamentarians will be held on 28 March 2015, in Hanoi (Vietnam) on the occasion of the 132<sup>nd</sup> IPU Assembly.





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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 2

FEM/20/2(b)-Inf.1  
11 October 2014

## Gender activities at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies

(b) Work and recommendations of the Gender Partnership Group

Status of the Participation of Men and Women in the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and in Previous Assemblies

### 1. Women parliamentarians participating in the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly and related meetings, in Geneva

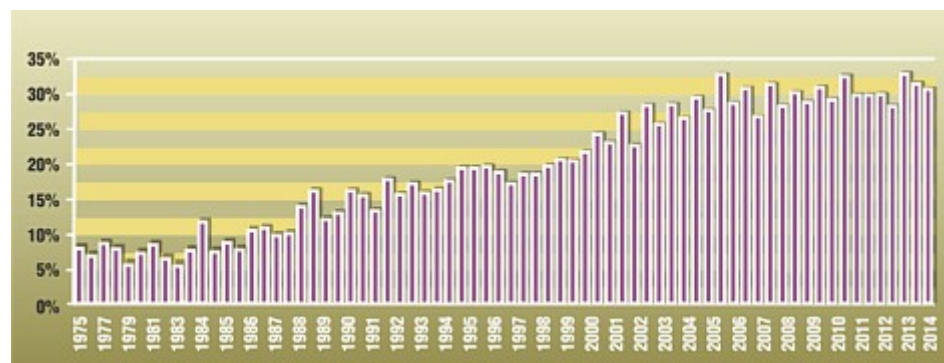
The names and titles of the women parliamentarians participating in the Geneva Meetings may be found in the provisional list of delegates, copies of which have already been placed in the delegates' pigeonholes.

### 2. Comparative proportion of men and women parliamentarians participating in the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (as at 11 October 2014)

Countries	145
Associate members	4
Total number of delegates	1438
Total number of parliamentarians	749
Number of women parliamentarians	232
Percentage of women parliamentarians	31.0%
Number of men parliamentarians	517
Percentage of men parliamentarians	69.0%

### 3. Changes in the participation of women parliamentarians in IPU Conferences/Assemblies since 1975

#### WOMEN MPs IN DELEGATIONS TO IPU ASSEMBLIES



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## Gender activities at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies

(c) Briefing on recent IPU activities in the area of gender equality

### Implementation of the IPU Strategy for 2012-2017 Strategic Objective 2 - Advance Gender Equality

The document provides a brief overview of achievements over the past year. It also draws attention to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU's Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and the Beijing +20 Review.

#### Background

Gender equality is a key characteristic of better parliaments. The advancement of gender equality contributes to achieving representative, accountable and effective parliaments. To achieve this, the Strategy identifies the following four priorities:

- Ensure that the parliamentary and international community have access to and make use of an improved global reference on women in politics.
- Enable more women to gain access to parliament and contribute effectively to its work.
- Help parliaments to become gender-sensitive institutions (i.e. they undertake internal institutional reform and build their capacity to embody and promote gender equality).
- Encourage parliaments to address women's rights, gender inequality and violence against women.

#### Research and data

The IPU continued to monitor progress and setbacks of women in parliament, publishing monthly statistics on women in parliament ([www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm](http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm)); providing data to UNDP's Human Development Report, the Millennium Development Goals monitoring database, UN Women report and the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report. It also produced its annual analysis on *Women in Parliament, The Year in Perspective* ([www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2013-e.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/WIP2013-e.pdf)) as well as its Map on Women in Politics 2014, jointly produced with UN Women ([www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmnmap14\\_en.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/wmnmap14_en.pdf)).

The IPU pursued its work on developing the database on electoral quotas for women ([quotaproject.org](http://quotaproject.org)), a joint initiative with International IDEA and Stockholm University. It also finalized the production of an Atlas of electoral gender quotas, which will be presented at the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly.

It also continued to support the International Knowledge Network of Women in Politics website ([www.iknowpolitics.org](http://www.iknowpolitics.org)), together with International IDEA, the National Democratic Institute, UNDP and UN Women.

The IPU's next research project will focus on assessing the influence of women in parliament. Three consultations with various stakeholders (women parliamentarians, practitioners and researchers) were held and contributed to framing the research project.

### **Access and effectiveness**

At the national level, the IPU has implemented projects in several post-conflict countries and countries in transition to facilitate women's access to parliament as well as in countries with a low representation of women in parliament.

In Egypt, the IPU provided expert advice on legislative drafting to a governmental committee in charge of drafting the electoral law. The support focused on finding legislative solutions to enhance women's participation in parliament in the forthcoming 2014 elections. As a result, a quota system for women's representation was adopted in the country.

The IPU organized a regional seminar for Pacific Island Parliaments with a view to supporting democratic development in the region, including promoting gender equality. With the Pacific region having one of the lowest regional averages of women in parliament, MPs agreed on a wide range of actions that could be taken to increase women's political representation and to promote gender equality across society.

It led to a follow-up activity in Tonga, which currently has only one female parliamentarian. The IPU supported the Legislative Assembly by organizing a nationwide public awareness campaign on women's access to and participation in parliament. The campaign culminated in the holding of the first Practice Parliament for Women (PPW). In view of the general election of November 2014, it provided the perfect opportunity to encourage female participation in politics and to train potential candidates on parliament's functions, roles and processes. Several PPW participants have confirmed their decision to run in the upcoming elections now that they are better informed and equipped to compete.

The IPU has assisted newly elected or appointed women members of parliament by conducting induction courses on parliamentary work, capacity-building workshops that address specific competencies and skills, and information seminars on gender concerns and women's issues. These activities were carried out in various countries, including Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire and Rwanda. In these parliaments, the IPU organized training sessions in leadership, communication, public speaking and gender mainstreaming.

The IPU also provided support to caucuses of women parliamentarians. It produced Guidelines for Women's Caucuses ([www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/caucus-e.pdf](http://www.ipu.org/PDF/publications/caucus-e.pdf)) to assist women MPs wishing to set up a caucus or strengthen an existing one. An online database of women's caucuses has also been published.

In Côte d'Ivoire, a caucus of women MPs was established in 2013 with IPU technical and financial support, using as its basis the IPU's Guidelines on Women's Caucuses. In 2014, the caucus adopted a strategic plan as a result of an IPU training session in team-building and strategic planning. The caucus is using its new strategic plan to raise funds and carry out actions aimed at addressing discrimination against women and mainstreaming gender in the Ivoirian Parliament's work. The IPU provided similar support to the parliaments in Burundi and Rwanda to help the existing caucuses craft a communication strategy and a strategic plan.

### **Gender-sensitive parliaments**

Based on the Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments adopted at the 127<sup>th</sup> Assembly, the IPU has developed a methodology to support parliaments in assessing their level of gender-sensitivity and engaging in reform to embody and champion gender equality. The IPU supported five parliaments in conducting such a self-assessment, namely: Bangladesh, Chile, Rwanda, Turkey and Uganda. The Plan of Action was also used in assessment exercises organized in Mexico and Peru. In Bangladesh, a parliamentary gender mainstreaming policy is being implemented and is now also guiding IPU's and partner organizations' parliamentary support efforts.

The IPU provides support to parliamentarians and parliamentary staff in enhancing their capacities to mainstream gender. It organized training workshops in Turkey, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda. In Turkey, a gender checklist was developed within the framework of the IPU-UN Women support project and is being used in parliament to guide MPs and staff in engendering legislation. In Rwanda and Côte d'Ivoire, gender equality was raised in the parliamentary debate on the budget.

It is encouraging to see that other international organizations are being inspired by the IPU's Plan of Action on Gender-sensitive Parliaments and self-assessment. Partner UN agencies have called on the IPU on several occasions to support their efforts in parliamentary development programmes aimed at mainstreaming gender into parliament. Having said that, the notion of gender-sensitive parliaments is relatively new and needs to be further promoted by the IPU's membership.

### **Discrimination and violence against women**

The IPU has continued to provide national support to parliaments to address discrimination against women. Its strategy is focusing on parliaments that have recently reported to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and supporting briefings in parliament on how to implement the Committee's recommendations. In recent discussions, the Committee has indicated its willingness to work more with the IPU and parliaments, whom it considers to be key partners in the implementation of its recommendations.

Concerning violence against women, the IPU has continued to help parliaments develop and/or improve legislation on violence against women. It provided expert advice to the Parliament of Maldives to help improve a bill on sexual harassment that was adopted a few months later. In Burundi, the IPU provided training in advocacy and community outreach on violence against women just before a Government bill on gender-based violence was sent to Parliament for review. The IPU also provided support to the National Assembly of Burundi for improving the bill and several amendments (about 160) that have been submitted and are currently tabled in Parliament for adoption. In Burkina Faso, the IPU supported a seminar for members of parliament and other stakeholders to help resume the study of a private members' bill to address all forms of violence against women, previously developed with IPU support.

The IPU organized a study visit to the Parliament of Malawi and a workshop in Tonga on implementing legislation on domestic violence. In Sierra Leone, the IPU supported parliamentary outreach efforts and trained MPs on how to address violence against women and girls through more effective law implementation and preventive measures.

The IPU addressed the issue of a parliamentary contribution to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1325 through a parliamentary training workshop held in Mali and through its participation in the UN regional study for parliamentarians on legislation needed for better implementation of the resolution in the Arab world.

### **Upcoming priorities: 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the IPU Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and Beijing + 20 Review**

2015 will mark two important anniversaries. First, the IPU's Meeting of Women Parliamentarians – the first ever global platform of women MPs - will turn 30. Special celebrations will be organized at the 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly in Hanoi.

In 2015, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women will undertake a review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its adoption. The IPU has consistently mobilized its Members and contributed to the various reviews and efforts aimed at honouring the commitments made at the Fourth World Conference on Women and accelerating the implementation of the Platform for Action. In view of the upcoming review, it is proposed that the IPU:

- Partner with UN Women in organizing joint events at the Beijing +20 Review, including the parliamentary event at the CSW;
- Produce information tools for the Beijing +20 Review, focusing on progress achieved by women in politics over the past 20 years; and
- Mainstream the Beijing +20 Review outcomes in its Assembly and work programme for 2015.





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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 2

FEM/20/2c)-Inf.2  
10 October 2014

## Gender activities at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies

(c) Briefing on recent IPU activities in the area of gender equality

### Future Activities

October 2014 – March 2015

IPU GLOBAL AND REGIONAL ACTIVITIES	IPU NATIONAL ACTIVITIES	ACTIVITIES WITH WHICH THE IPU IS ASSOCIATED
<p><b>12-16 October 2014:</b> 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly (Geneva, CICG); <b>12 October:</b> 20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, 34<sup>th</sup> session of the Coordinating Committee (Geneva, CICG)</p> <p><b>25 November 2014:</b> 2014 Future Policy Panel on the International Day on Elimination of Violence against Women, New York</p> <p><b>March, 2015</b> Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 59<sup>th</sup> CSW, New York</p> <p><b>28 March-1 April 2015:</b> 132<sup>nd</sup> Assembly (Hanoi, Viet Nam); <b>28 March:</b> 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, 35<sup>th</sup> session of the Coordinating Committee (Hanoi, Viet Nam)</p>	<p><b>November 2014:</b> Workshop on Implementing the Domestic Violence Protection Act. (Maldives)</p> <p><b>December 2014:</b> Training workshop on CEDAW and violence against women and girls (Mali)</p> <p><b>2014:</b> Gender-sensitive assessment (Mexico)</p> <p><b>2014:</b> Workshop on electoral law to facilitate women's access to parliament (Côte d'Ivoire)</p> <p><b>2014:</b> Induction course for newly-elected MPs (Rwanda)</p>	<p><b>20 October-7 November 2014:</b> 59<sup>th</sup> Session of the CEDAW Committee (Geneva)</p> <p><b>16 February-5 March 2015:</b> 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the CEDAW Committee (Geneva)</p>

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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Governing Council  
Item 10

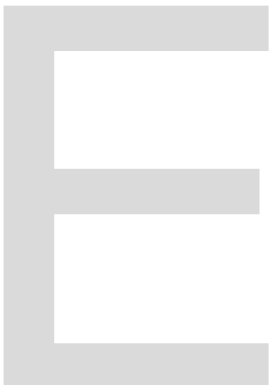
CL/195/10(h)-R.1  
29 September 2014

## Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

### (h) Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament

(Geneva, 4-5 September 2014)

1. The Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament was held at IPU Headquarters in Geneva on 4 and 5 September 2014. Fifteen parliaments headed by Women Speakers attended.
2. Delegates were welcomed by Mr. A. Radi, IPU President, and Mr. M. Chungong, IPU Secretary General. They heard a keynote speech from Ms. L. Puri, UN Women Deputy Executive Director and Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations.
3. The Meeting chose to discuss the question of “Women’s economic empowerment”. The Women Speakers highlighted that this was a strategic and key issue which was at the heart of all discussions regarding the advancement of gender equality and women’s rights. They also saw their Meeting as a way to contribute to several key meetings and processes:
  - The 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly in October 2014, which will focus on achieving gender equality and ending violence against women;
  - The Beijing +20 review, and,
  - Discussions related to the new set of development goals, which should include a goal on gender while also mainstreaming gender issues throughout the others.
4. Building on their discussions and conscious of the fact there is no single solution to addressing the multitude of challenges faced by women with regard to their economic empowerment, the Women Speakers identified a number of priorities and objectives as key to reaching that goal. These ranged from building a strong and effective legal framework and a favourable environment, to supporting women at work and enhancing women’s economic leadership and mentorship, to influencing the international arena. The Women Speakers also stressed that their leadership role gave them a particular responsibility to lead by example. The Meeting adopted a report on its deliberations, which can be found in [Annex I](#).
5. The Women Speakers also adopted a Declaration in solidarity with the Nigerian schoolgirls abducted by Boko Haram and the dramatic situation of women and girls in current situations of conflict. The Declaration can be found in [Annex II](#).



# Report of the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament

IPU Headquarters, Geneva. 4-5- September 2014

We Women Speakers of Parliament, meeting on the occasion of the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament on 4 and 5 September in Geneva, have come together to discuss how to enhance and support women's economic empowerment. Our meeting came at a pivotal moment as in 2015 we will turn the page on the Millennium Development Goals and celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action.

We fundamentally believe that the economic empowerment of women is at the heart of progress for the achievement of gender equality as well as sustainable development.

Though there is no single solution to addressing the multitude of challenges faced by women with regard to their economic empowerment, the following priorities and objectives were identified as key:

1. The economic empowerment of women first lies in the full realization of women's economic rights. It also requires transforming power relations and addressing structural inequalities – in households, markets and States as well as in all sectors of the economy. The objective is to enable women to have viable incomes, decent work and be decisive actors who shape the terms and conditions of their participation in economic life.

## **A strong and effective legal framework**

2. The prerequisite to achieve this objective is to develop a strong and effective legal framework that is conducive to women's economic empowerment. This means a legal framework that:
  - (i) is not discriminatory: For this to be achieved, existing laws have to be reviewed to eliminate discriminatory provisions or indirect discriminatory effects;
  - (ii) supports women's economic empowerment. For this, the legal framework needs to include specific legislation and policies to ensure women's access to means of production, land, financing, technology, training and employment;
  - (iii) addresses all forms of discrimination: This means a legal framework with no loopholes, and one which provides for the possibility to implement temporary special measures and gender mainstreaming.
3. While legislation is necessary, it is not sufficient, as there is often a gap between legislation and its effective implementation. Law and policy implementation monitoring is greatly needed and our oversight role as parliamentarians makes this our responsibility. We can facilitate implementation by including enforcement mechanisms in the legislation and promoting the adoption of rules and protocols. We must scrutinize the budget to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to effectively implement legislation. We must ask the difficult questions and hold governments to account.
4. We also have to develop strategies to improve our oversight role, including by relying on a dynamic women's parliamentary caucus and collaborating closely with grassroots women's organizations that can provide valuable and reliable information and data.
5. Information is key to develop effective laws and assess their impact. We need to build our national statistics capacities. We also need to have access to comparative research that can inform our legislative and oversight work. Access to a database of legislation on women and their economic empowerment, and of best practices, in particular with regard to implementation measures, would be of great use. We call on international organizations, including the IPU, to assist in providing us with such a tool.



6. We must also make sure that laws are known and used. We must therefore ensure that legislation is disseminated, easily accessible and well understood by the people, including through sensitization and educational campaigns, translation into local languages and public debates.

### **A favourable environment**

7. To build a favourable environment for women's economic empowerment gender should be mainstreamed in all legislative and policy-making process, including the budget. This will help ensure that women have access to adequate support and facilities, especially in the field of education and health.
8. Facilitating women's access to work begins with providing them with education, not only to lift them out of poverty, but also to ensure their economic empowerment and security. Education is a powerful equalizer tool. It is at the heart of changing mentalities, addressing stereotypes and discrimination, and building a culture of equality and tolerance. Education should serve to empower girls but also to inculcate principles of equality in the young generation. School curricula should therefore include education on human rights and gender equality.
9. Economic empowerment of women also requires reducing women's lack of physical security and increasing their ability to move freely and without fear. Protection of women in the workplace is a cause for concern, especially with regard to sexual abuse, harassment and exploitation. Measures and legislation must be taken to criminalize such behaviours. Efforts also need to be inclusive and cover all areas of work. Sexual harassment laws should include a watchdog mechanism for both the private and the public sectors.
10. Economic empowerment of women is also linked to the challenge of reconciling family and work. We must explore incentives to enable a more balanced sharing of family responsibilities between the State and families and between men and women, including paternity and parental leave entitlements, child care arrangements, maternity protection, and investments in infrastructure and services. Implementing such policies may require sensitization and educational initiatives aimed at changing mentalities and gender role stereotypes.
11. As Women Speakers and parliamentarians, we also have a special responsibility to pay particular attention to our work space and the way it functions, with a view to ensuring that it facilitates women's participation. Our parliaments need to be gender-sensitive and offer facilities and some flexibility to allow women MPs and women members of the parliamentary staff to reconcile family and work obligations. The provision of certain facilities such as day care centres or the limitation of late/night meetings are some initiatives that could be considered.

### **Supporting women at work**

12. To facilitate and promote women's entrepreneurship we need to implement targeted measures. These can include affirmative action, programmes to ensure that women and men have equal access to resources, ICT, loans, support and opportunities to run businesses, micro-credit facilities, and training programmes. The creation of specific funds and banks to support women's economic activities should also be considered.
13. We need to address the fact that women still perform the vast majority of unpaid economic and care work, the latter being an ever-increasing burden on women given the steadily expanding ageing population. Giving visibility to unpaid work is therefore a priority, not only in terms of its contribution to the economy but also in terms of how it prevents women from entering the paid labour force. When they do enter the labour force, women continue to carry the heavy burden of unpaid work. This situation should also be recognized and remedied. We need to consider what the best policies are to enable women to participate in the paid workforce; we also need to develop mechanisms to include unpaid care work in the formal accounts of national economic activity.

### **Enhancing women's economic leadership and mentorship**

14. Women's representation in economic leadership positions remains extremely weak. We need to open up the way for an increased presence. Women in leadership positions have the power to change things and concretely respond to the interests and challenges faced by other women whose voices are not heard or taken into account. To facilitate access to leadership positions, the adoption of temporary special measures should be considered. These would need to be the result of a broad-based consultation and buy-in from various stakeholders.
15. Mentorship between women should also be supported. Mechanisms should be developed to facilitate exchange of experience and guidance among women. Transferral of skills to young women should be a priority.

### **Influencing the international arena**

16. In the context of globalization, international actors strongly influence countries' development agendas, without necessarily being subject to scrutiny or having national interests as their first priority. It is important therefore that parliaments, and the IPU, have a say in major international processes and forums. This includes dedicated forums for gender issues, such as the UN Commission on the Status of Women.
17. Parliaments need to be involved in major decision-making processes in the economic and financial arenas. This means that we have to increase our own involvement in, and oversight of, the international loan system in order better comprehend its impact at the national level, including on women's economic empowerment. In this context, we agreed to invite the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund to our next meeting to further discuss this issue.

### **Leading by example**

18. As Women Speakers of Parliament we have a particular responsibility to lead, show the way, serve as role models, take bold decisions and shape public opinion. We must pursue our efforts to make gender equality a reality. We commit to making this our priority and will report on progress achieved at our next Meeting.

# Declaration adopted at the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament

Geneva, 5<sup>th</sup> September

We, women Speakers of Parliament, attending the Ninth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament, convened by the IPU on 4-5 September 2014, in Geneva, are deeply concerned that more than four months after the abduction of 273 Nigerian schoolgirls by Boko Haram, most of the girls are still missing.

We are equally concerned and appalled by the vicious crimes being perpetrated against women and girls in countries facing conflict situations, including Syria, Iraq as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. Here too, women and girls are being raped, kidnapped and sold into forced-marriage or to become slaves to their captors for sexual abuse and exploitation.

We call on the Nigerian Government and Parliament to not forget the abducted girls or to abandon them to their fate. We urge the Nigerian authorities to also not forget the families. They have lost much-loved daughters or sisters and desperately want them to return home to a future where their childhood promise can be fulfilled. All efforts to find and rescue the kidnapped schoolgirls must be pursued with full vigour and determination. The momentum for action must not be lost.

We reiterate that children in all countries need to have their security and protection guaranteed. They need to know they can go to school without fear of violence and focus on getting an education that will promote their development and that of their society. For girls, this has never been so important. Education remains the most powerful tool to end violence, poverty and to bring positive change.

We, women Speakers of Parliament, appeal to Governments and Parliaments the world over to make ending violence against women and girls in conflict situations a fixed and urgent priority. Inaction on such terrible crimes is unacceptable. A peaceful, democratic world cannot be built on the abuse of the basic human rights of women and girls.





Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Governing Council  
Item 10

CL/195/10(i)-R.1  
29 September 2014

## Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

(i) **Regional Parliamentary Seminar for Asia-Pacific Parliaments on *Ending the cycle of violence against girls in Asia-Pacific***

**Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 23 to 25 September 2014**

*The Seminar for Asia-Pacific parliaments on "Ending the cycle of violence against girls in Asia-Pacific" took place in Dhaka, from 23 to 25 September 2014. The meeting was jointly organized by the IPU and the Parliament of Bangladesh.*

*The meeting focused on violence against girls and discussed what shape should an effective parliamentary response in terms of legislation and enforcement take. Members of parliament received up-to-date information on the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and special emphasis was placed on the three most prevalent forms of violence against girls in the region: child marriage, sexual violence and domestic violence. The Seminar provided a forum for exchanging experiences and know-how and enabled participants to develop strategies and actions to effectively end violence against girls and women in the region.*

*At a conclusion the Seminar parliamentarians and parliamentary staff from 12 Asian and Pacific countries as well as representatives of national and international organizations, underscored that even the best legislation cannot stand on its own. They adopted a set of conclusions that identify priorities in legislation implementation, policy and actions for parliaments and parliamentarians (see [Annex](#)). It is hoped that these actionable recommendations will boost parliamentary action at the national level to end violence against girls and women.*

E

**CONCLUSIONS OF THE REGIONAL PARLIAMENTARY SEMINAR FOR ASIA-PACIFIC  
PARLIAMENTS ON ENDING THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST  
GIRLS IN ASIA-PACIFIC**

*Prepared by the Rapporteur, Mr. Shahiduzzaman Sarker,  
Whip of the Parliament of Bangladesh*

We, representatives of the parliaments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kiribati, Malaysia, Samoa, Tonga and Viet Nam, as well as representatives of national and international organizations, met in Dhaka, Bangladesh, from 23 to 25 September 2014, for a regional seminar on violence against girls. The seminar was jointly organized by the Parliament of Bangladesh and the Inter-Parliamentary Union.

We discussed effective parliamentary responses to violence against girls in terms of legislation and enforcement. We were provided with up-to-date information on the situation in the Asia-Pacific region with special emphasis on the three most prevalent forms of violence against girls in the region - child marriage, sexual violence and domestic violence. The seminar served as a forum for exchanging experiences and good practices.

We agreed that violence against women and girls is one of most prevalent human rights violations that spares no country. It is also an extreme manifestation of unequal power relations between men and women that is deeply entrenched in both the private and public spheres. We reviewed the different data on prevalence of the three forms of violence and their negative consequences, and agreed that - while appalling - the data revealed only a small portion of violations. Scientific evidence indicated that most victims choose not to disclose their ordeal or seek support. We also took note of the high economic and financial costs of violence against girls and women for victims, families, communities, and society as a whole, and agreed to further explore the relevant data and make the case for advocacy and action.

We also agreed that violence against girls and women is a complex issue that requires a comprehensive and inclusive response. We acknowledge that important achievements had been made in the region in terms of legal and policy reforms. However, many challenges and gaps remain, particularly in the areas of comprehensive service provision, funding, access to justice, attitude and traditional norms, which all stood in the way of effective law enforcement. While efforts had been made to bring national legislation in line with international human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), we underscored the fact that even the best legislation could not stand on its own. Accompanying measures across sectors were needed to ensure that legislation and policies had a positive impact on the ground.

Our discussion on child marriage, sexual violence and domestic violence against girls turned to the following questions: What are the key elements of strong legislation? How can effective implementation of legislation be ensured? How can we, as parliamentarians, play a more active role in the implementation process, including assessing the impact of legislation and accompanying measures?

**Key elements of effective legislation**

We recognized that legislation is a critical first step in an effective response to violence against girls and women. Given the complexity of the issue, laws should cover a range of relevant aspects and take into account the specific vulnerabilities and needs of girls. As a minimum, legislation should:

- Address and recognize the root causes of violence against girls and women, including ingrained cultural and traditional norms and gender discrimination, the negative and stereotypical portrayal of women in the media and other social and economic factors;
- Clearly set the key parameters it aims to address, including a clear definition of “violence” and its various forms, “girls” and “family”.
- Be based on international standards, on research and evidence; and on the results of a wide and transparent consultation process at the national level to ensure buy-in by all stakeholders;
- Take into account and criminalize all forms of violence against girls and women regardless of the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, and if the act of violence is perpetrated in the private or public sphere;

- Address the link between violence against girls and women and HIV-AIDS;
- Be comprehensive and cover both prevention and response, including education; clear and specific provisions on prosecution and sanctions; protection; multi-sector support for victims; and options for remedies;
- Include monitoring mechanisms, a time frame for action and accountability of key sectors for implementation;
- Include mechanisms for sensitizing the public to legislation in clear and accessible language;
- In addition to the foregoing, legislation on child marriage should also include mandatory birth and marriage registration.

### **Priorities in terms of implementation of legislation and policy**

We underscored the fact that implementation is a critical aspect of each piece of legislation. Laws on violence against girls and women have to be accompanied by a resourced action plan or policy at the national level listing actions and indicators that facilitate implementation. We identified the following actions that have to be considered:

- Adopt specific procedures and protocols that do not place the burden of proof on the victims but tackle the cases of violence within the justice system based on victims' rights and protection. Examples of concrete measures include specialized courts, specially trained judges, fast-track procedures, and *in camera* proceedings (no public and media exposure);
- Provide easy, accessible and gender-sensitive support to victims *inter alia* through a national hotline service, one-stop crisis centres, shelters and protection houses, legal aid and victim advocates;
- Ensure that there is a coordination mechanism for all service providers and those in charge of enforcing legislation (magistrates, security forces, attorneys, health care providers, social workers, women's organizations, etc.);
- Also ensure coordination at the interministerial level;
- Identify mechanisms and institutions at the local and regional levels that should be responsible for law enforcement;
- Build the capacity of and sensitize service providers, including health, police and justice, and hold them accountable for enforcing the law;
- Increase the numbers of women in the judiciary, law enforcement, and the security services;
- End impunity by ensuring that all perpetrators are held to account regardless of their socio-economic status or position;
- Ensure that all public areas are safe for girls and women;
- Organize educational and awareness-raising campaigns at the community level to foster positive changes to social norms and attitudes, in particular targeting men and boys, families and educators;
- Conduct large-scale public awareness campaigns to promote zero tolerance of violence, end the culture of impunity and enhance awareness among girls and women of their rights and available services;
- Work with the education sector to ensure that school curricula include awareness of rights and life-skills training of young people;
- Ensure regular and consistent monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of legislation, including its unintended undesired impact, to ensure that progress is gauged and gaps are translated into improvements;
- Define the role of the media and how they report on the issue;
- In addition to the foregoing, define and implement specific strategies to delay the age of marriage and keep girls in school.

With violence against girls and women being a global problem, it is necessary that global accountability mechanisms regularly gauge progress to end this scourge. For this to happen, it is essential that the post-2015 development agenda include a strong target on ending violence against women and girls based on well-defined indicators.

### **Priority actions for parliaments and parliamentarians**

To provide a strong contribution to the effort to end violence against girls and women, we, as parliamentarians, should fully exercise our roles of law-making, oversight, budgeting and representation. In this endeavour, we can and should:

- Familiarize ourselves with the effect of existing laws and amend laws that have an adverse impact on girls and women;
- Continuously bring the issue of implementation of legislation on ending violence against girls and women to parliament and repeatedly put pressure on government ministries;
- Be agents of change in terms of social norms and attitudes, including on ending child marriage;
- Ensure that all standing committees are engaged in ending violence against women and girls and that cross-party collaboration on the issue exists through a variety of parliamentary mechanisms;
- Initiate and submit petitions; ask written and oral questions to the relevant ministers, from the Prime Minister to the line ministers; move motions in parliament for the government to act or to report regularly to parliament on law and programme implementation;
- Scrutinize budget proposals and campaign with the Minister of Finance to ensure adequate funding and long-term sustainability of programmes to tackle violence against girls and women;
- Engage with and involve all those concerned with implementing legislation - the police, law enforcers, health care providers, social workers, civil society and grassroots organizations, as well as religious and community leaders;
- Encourage men, in particular men parliamentarians and opinion leaders whose role is crucial, to speak out against gender inequality and violence against girls and women;
- Act as positive role models and participate in awareness-raising campaigns outside parliament to ensure that legislation is disseminated, easily accessible and understood by the people;
- Participate in the work of relevant mechanisms at the local level to consult relevant stakeholders and the public, meet with victims, monitor the implementation of legislation, and expand the sources of information and data required to evaluate progress.

In order to inspire action on violence against girls and women, we will bring this outcome document to the attention of our colleagues in parliament through all possible channels. We also undertake to bring the document to the attention of other relevant stakeholders.

We also urge the IPU to bring our conclusions and recommendations to the attention of the global parliamentary community and ensure follow-up through its programmes and Assemblies.





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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 2

FEM/20/2(c)-Inf.3  
9 October 2014

## Gender activities at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies

(c) Briefing on recent IPU activities in the area of gender equality

### Statistical data on the status of women in national parliaments

Delegations will find enclosed documents and statistical data giving the status of women in national parliaments as at **1 October 2014**.

These pages may be found on the Union's Internet site ([www.ipu.org](http://www.ipu.org)). Delegations will note that these documents have been established by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, on the basis of information provided by national parliaments. However, these statistics may be out of date. The Secretariat would therefore appreciate any information which complements or updates the data supplied.

- **Please address any requests for changes in the enclosed data to Ms Valeria Sistek at the Secretariat of the Inter-Parliamentary Union.**

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**WORLD CLASSIFICATION**

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
1	Rwanda	16.09.2013	80	51	63.8%	26.09.2011	26	10	38.5%
2	Andorra	03.04.2011	28	14	50.0%	---	---	---	---
3	Cuba	03.02.2013	612	299	48.9%	---	---	---	---
4	Seychelles	29.09.2011	32	14	43.8%	---	---	---	---
5	Sweden	14.09.2014	349	152	43.6%	---	---	---	---
6	Senegal	01.07.2012	150	65	43.3%	---	---	---	---
7	Finland	17.04.2011	200	85	42.5%	---	---	---	---
8	Nicaragua	06.11.2011	92	39	42.4%	---	---	---	---
9	Ecuador	17.02.2013	137	57	41.6%	---	---	---	---
10	South Africa (1)	07.05.2014	400	163	40.8%	21.05.2014	54	19	35.2%
11	Iceland	27.04.2013	63	25	39.7%	---	---	---	---
"	Spain	20.11.2011	350	139	39.7%	20.11.2011	266	89	33.5%
12	Norway	09.09.2013	169	67	39.6%	---	---	---	---
13	Belgium	25.05.2014	150	59	39.3%	03.07.2014	60	30	50.0%
14	Mozambique	28.10.2009	250	98	39.2%	---	---	---	---
15	Denmark	15.09.2011	179	70	39.1%	---	---	---	---
16	Netherlands	12.09.2012	150	58	38.7%	23.05.2011	75	27	36.0%
17	Timor-Leste	07.07.2012	65	25	38.5%	---	---	---	---
18	Mexico	01.07.2012	500	187	37.4%	01.07.2012	128	44	34.4%
19	Angola	31.08.2012	220	81	36.8%	---	---	---	---
20	Argentina	27.10.2013	257	94	36.6%	27.10.2013	72	28	38.9%
21	Germany United Republic of	22.09.2013	631	230	36.5%	N.A.	69	19	27.5%
22	Tanzania	31.10.2010	350	126	36.0%	---	---	---	---
23	Slovenia	13.07.2014	90	32	35.6%	20.11.2012	40	3	7.5%
24	Uganda	18.02.2011	386	135	35.0%	---	---	---	---
25	Serbia	16.03.2014	250	85	34.0%	---	---	---	---
26	Costa Rica	02.02.2014	57	19	33.3%	---	---	---	---
"	Grenada	19.02.2013	15	5	33.3%	27.03.2013	13	2	15.4%
"	The F.Y.R. of Macedonia	27.04.2014	123	41	33.3%	---	---	---	---
27	Austria	29.09.2013	183	59	32.2%	N.A.	62	18	29.0%
28	Algeria	10.05.2012	462	146	31.6%	29.12.2012	144	10	6.9%
29	Zimbabwe	31.07.2013	270	85	31.5%	31.07.2013	80	38	47.5%
30	Italy	24.02.2013	630	198	31.4%	24.02.2013	317	92	29.0%
31	Guyana	28.11.2011	67	21	31.3%	---	---	---	---
"	Portugal	05.06.2011	230	72	31.3%	---	---	---	---
32	Cameroon	30.09.2013	180	56	31.1%	14.04.2013	100	20	20.0%
33	Switzerland	23.10.2011	200	62	31.0%	23.10.2011	46	9	19.6%
34	Burundi	23.07.2010	105	32	30.5%	28.07.2010	41	19	46.3%

**WORLD CLASSIFICATION**

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
35	Nepal	19.11.2013	575	172	29.9%	---	---	---	---
36	New Zealand	20.09.2014	121	36	29.8%	---	---	---	---
37	Trinidad and Tobago	24.05.2010	42	12	28.6%	18.06.2010	31	6	19.4%
38	Luxembourg	20.10.2013	60	17	28.3%	---	---	---	---
39	Tunisia	23.10.2011	217	61	28.1%	---	---	---	---
40	Ethiopia	23.05.2010	547	152	27.8%	22.05.2010	135	22	16.3%
41	Afghanistan	18.09.2010	249	69	27.7%	22.01.2011	102	28	27.5%
42	El Salvador	11.03.2012	84	23	27.4%	---	---	---	---
43	Philippines	13.05.2013	289	79	27.3%	13.05.2013	24	6	25.0%
44	Lesotho	26.05.2012	120	32	26.7%	21.06.2012	33	9	27.3%
45	Belarus	23.09.2012	109	29	26.6%	30.08.2012	57	20	35.1%
46	South Sudan	06.08.2011	332	88	26.5%	05.08.2011	50	5	10.0%
47	Turkmenistan	15.12.2013	125	33	26.4%	---	---	---	---
48	France	10.06.2012	577	151	26.2%	28.09.2014	348	87	25.0%
49	Australia	07.09.2013	150	39	26.0%	07.09.2013	76	29	38.2%
50	Honduras	24.11.2013	128	33	25.8%	---	---	---	---
51	Namibia	27.11.2009	78	20	25.6%	26.11.2010	26	7	26.9%
52	Bolivia	06.12.2009	130	33	25.4%	06.12.2009	36	17	47.2%
53	Iraq	30.04.2014	328	83	25.3%	---	---	---	---
	" Singapore	07.05.2011	99	25	25.3%	---	---	---	---
54	Kazakhstan	15.01.2012	115	29	25.2%	19.08.2011	47	3	6.4%
	" Mauritania	23.11.2013	147	37	25.2%	08.11.2009	56	8	14.3%
55	Canada	02.05.2011	307	77	25.1%	N.A.	96	38	39.6%
56	Lao People's Democratic Republic	30.04.2011	132	33	25.0%	---	---	---	---
	" Latvia	17.09.2011	100	25	25.0%	---	---	---	---
57	Bulgaria	12.05.2013	240	59	24.6%	---	---	---	---
58	Poland	09.10.2011	460	112	24.3%	09.10.2011	100	13	13.0%
	" Sudan	11.04.2010	354	86	24.3%	24.05.2010	29	5	17.2%
58	Viet Nam	22.05.2011	498	121	24.3%	---	---	---	---
59	Lithuania	14.10.2012	141	34	24.1%	---	---	---	---
60	Equatorial Guinea	26.05.2013	100	24	24.0%	26.05.2013	75	8	10.7%
61	Croatia	04.12.2011	151	36	23.8%	---	---	---	---
62	China	05.03.2013	2987	699	23.4%	---	---	---	---
63	Kyrgyzstan	10.10.2010	120	28	23.3%	---	---	---	---
64	United Kingdom	06.05.2010	650	147	22.6%	N.A.	779	182	23.4%
65	Israel	22.01.2013	120	27	22.5%	---	---	---	---
66	Peru	10.04.2011	130	29	22.3%	---	---	---	---
67	Eritrea	01.02.1994	150	33	22.0%	---	---	---	---
	" Uzbekistan	27.12.2009	150	33	22.0%	20.01.2010	100	15	15.0%

**WORLD CLASSIFICATION**

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
68	Guinea	28.09.2013	114	25	21.9%	---	---	---	---
69	Bosnia and Herzegovina	03.10.2010	42	9	21.4%	09.06.2011	15	2	13.3%
70	Greece	17.06.2012	300	63	21.0%	---	---	---	---
71	Cabo Verde	06.02.2011	72	15	20.8%	---	---	---	---
	“ Dominican Republic	16.05.2010	183	38	20.8%	16.05.2010	32	3	9.4%
	“ Monaco	10.02.2013	24	5	20.8%	---	---	---	---
72	Pakistan	11.05.2013	323	67	20.7%	02.03.2012	104	17	16.3%
73	Madagascar	20.12.2013	151	31	20.5%	---	---	---	---
74	Cambodia	28.07.2013	123	25	20.3%	29.01.2012	61	9	14.8%
75	Albania	23.06.2013	140	28	20.0%	---	---	---	---
	“ Liechtenstein	03.02.2013	25	5	20.0%	---	---	---	---
76	Colombia	09.03.2014	166	33	19.9%	09.03.2014	102	23	22.5%
	“ Saudi Arabia	15.01.2013	151	30	19.9%	---	---	---	---
77	Bangladesh	05.01.2014	348	69	19.8%	---	---	---	---
78	Czech Republic	25.10.2013	200	39	19.5%	12.10.2012	81	14	17.3%
79	Panama	04.05.2014	57	11	19.3%	---	---	---	---
80	Kenya	04.03.2013	350	67	19.1%	04.03.2013	68	18	26.5%
81	Estonia	06.03.2011	100	19	19.0%	---	---	---	---
82	Burkina Faso	02.12.2012	127	24	18.9%	---	---	---	---
83	Mauritius	05.05.2010	69	13	18.8%	---	---	---	---
	“ Republic of Moldova	28.11.2010	101	19	18.8%	---	---	---	---
84	Slovakia	10.03.2012	150	28	18.7%	---	---	---	---
85	San Marino	11.11.2012	60	11	18.3%	---	---	---	---
	“ United States of America	06.11.2012	431	79	18.3%	06.11.2012	100	20	20.0%
86	Sao Tome and Principe	01.08.2010	55	10	18.2%	---	---	---	---
87	Togo	25.07.2013	91	16	17.6%	---	---	---	---
88	United Arab Emirates	24.09.2011	40	7	17.5%	---	---	---	---
89	Morocco	25.11.2011	395	67	17.0%	03.10.2009	270	6	2.2%
	“ Venezuela	26.09.2010	165	28	17.0%	---	---	---	---
90	Indonesia	09.04.2014	560	94	16.8%	---	---	---	---
91	Barbados	21.02.2013	30	5	16.7%	06.03.2013	21	6	28.6%
	“ Malawi	20.05.2014	192	32	16.7%	---	---	---	---
	“ Saint Lucia Democratic People's	28.11.2011	18	3	16.7%	05.01.2012	11	2	18.2%
92	Republic of Korea	09.03.2014	687	112	16.3%	---	---	---	---
93	Libya	25.06.2014	188	30	16.0%	---	---	---	---
94	Tajikistan	28.02.2010	63	10	15.9%	25.03.2010	34	4	11.8%
95	Chile	17.11.2013	120	19	15.8%	17.11.2013	38	7	18.4%
96	Ireland	25.02.2011	166	26	15.7%	26.04.2011	60	19	31.7%
	“ Republic of Korea	11.04.2012	300	49	15.7%	---	---	---	---

**WORLD CLASSIFICATION**

Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
97	Azerbaijan	07.11.2010	122	19	15.6%	---	---	---	---
98	Gabon	17.12.2011	120	18	15.0%	18.01.2009	102	17	16.7%
	“ Paraguay	21.04.2013	80	12	15.0%	21.04.2013	45	9	20.0%
99	Chad	13.02.2011	188	28	14.9%	---	---	---	---
	“ Mongolia	28.06.2012	74	11	14.9%	---	---	---	---
100	Montenegro	14.10.2012	81	12	14.8%	---	---	---	---
101	Turkey	12.06.2011	548	79	14.4%	---	---	---	---
102	Malta	09.03.2013	70	10	14.3%	---	---	---	---
103	Somalia	20.08.2012	275	38	13.8%	---	---	---	---
104	Guinea-Bissau	13.04.2014	102	14	13.7%	---	---	---	---
105	Russian Federation	04.12.2011	450	61	13.6%	N.A.	163	13	8.0%
106	Romania	09.12.2012	407	55	13.5%	09.12.2012	176	13	7.4%
107	Guatemala	11.09.2011	158	21	13.3%	---	---	---	---
	“ Niger	31.01.2011	113	15	13.3%	---	---	---	---
108	Bahamas	07.05.2012	38	5	13.2%	23.05.2012	16	4	25.0%
109	Uruguay	25.10.2009	99	13	13.1%	25.10.2009	31	2	6.5%
110	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	13.12.2010	23	3	13.0%	---	---	---	---
111	Dominica	18.12.2009	31	4	12.9%	---	---	---	---
112	Djibouti	22.02.2013	55	7	12.7%	---	---	---	---
	“ Jamaica	29.12.2011	63	8	12.7%	03.09.2007	21	6	28.6%
113	Cyprus	22.05.2011	56	7	12.5%	---	---	---	---
114	Sierra Leone	17.11.2012	124	15	12.1%	---	---	---	---
115	Georgia	01.10.2012	150	18	12.0%	---	---	---	---
	“ Jordan	23.01.2013	150	18	12.0%	25.10.2013	75	9	12.0%
	“ Syrian Arab Republic	07.05.2012	250	30	12.0%	---	---	---	---
116	Suriname	25.05.2010	51	6	11.8%	---	---	---	---
117	India	07.04.2014	543	62	11.4%	07.02.2014	243	29	11.9%
118	Antigua and Barbuda	12.06.2014	18	2	11.1%	25.06.2014	15	5	33.3%
119	Liberia	11.10.2011	73	8	11.0%	11.10.2011	30	4	13.3%
120	Ghana	07.12.2012	275	30	10.9%	---	---	---	---
121	Zambia	20.09.2011	158	17	10.8%	---	---	---	---
122	Armenia	06.05.2012	131	14	10.7%	---	---	---	---
123	Democratic Republic of the Congo	28.11.2011	498	53	10.6%	19.01.2007	108	6	5.6%
124	Malaysia	05.05.2013	222	23	10.4%	N.A.	59	17	28.8%
125	Hungary	06.04.2014	199	20	10.1%	---	---	---	---
126	Bahrain	23.10.2010	40	4	10.0%	24.11.2010	40	11	27.5%
127	Ukraine	28.10.2012	442	43	9.7%	---	---	---	---
128	Botswana	16.10.2009	63	6	9.5%	---	---	---	---

WORLD CLASSIFICATION									
Rank	Country	Lower or single House				Upper House or Senate			
		Elections	Seats*	Women	% W	Elections	Seats*	Women	% W
	“ Mali	24.11.2013	147	14	9.5%	---	---	---	---
129	Cote d'Ivoire	11.12.2011	254	24	9.4%	---	---	---	---
	“ Gambia	29.03.2012	53	5	9.4%	---	---	---	---
130	Kiribati	21.10.2011	46	4	8.7%	---	---	---	---
131	Brazil	02.10.2010	513	44	8.6%	02.10.2010	81	13	16.0%
132	Bhutan	13.07.2013	47	4	8.5%	23.04.2013	25	2	8.0%
133	Benin	30.04.2011	83	7	8.4%	---	---	---	---
134	Japan	16.12.2012	480	39	8.1%	21.07.2013	242	39	16.1%
135	Congo	15.07.2012	136	10	7.4%	09.10.2011	72	10	13.9%
136	Nigeria	09.04.2011	360	24	6.7%	09.04.2011	109	7	6.4%
	“ Saint Kitts and Nevis	25.01.2010	15	1	6.7%	---	---	---	---
	“ Tuvalu	16.09.2010	15	1	6.7%	---	---	---	---
137	Swaziland	20.09.2013	65	4	6.2%	30.10.2013	30	10	33.3%
138	Thailand	07.08.2014	197	12	6.1%	---	---	---	---
139	Maldives	22.03.2014	85	5	5.9%	---	---	---	---
140	Sri Lanka	08.04.2010	225	13	5.8%	---	---	---	---
141	Myanmar	07.11.2010	429	24	5.6%	07.11.2010	224	4	1.8%
142	Nauru	08.06.2013	19	1	5.3%	---	---	---	---
143	Haiti	28.11.2010	95	4	4.2%	28.11.2010	20	0	0.0%
144	Samoa	04.03.2011	49	2	4.1%	---	---	---	---
145	Tonga	25.11.2010	28	1	3.6%	---	---	---	---
146	Belize	07.03.2012	32	1	3.1%	21.03.2012	13	5	38.5%
	“ Iran (Islamic Republic of)	04.05.2012	290	9	3.1%	---	---	---	---
	“ Lebanon	07.06.2009	128	4	3.1%	---	---	---	---
147	Comoros	06.12.2009	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
	“ Marshall Islands	21.11.2011	33	1	3.0%	---	---	---	---
148	Papua New Guinea	23.06.2012	111	3	2.7%	---	---	---	---
149	Solomon Islands	04.08.2010	50	1	2.0%	---	---	---	---
150	Kuwait	27.07.2013	65	1	1.5%	---	---	---	---
151	Oman	15.10.2011	84	1	1.2%	18.10.2011	83	15	18.1%
152	Yemen	27.04.2003	301	1	0.3%	28.04.2001	111	2	1.8%
153	Micronesia (Federated States of)	05.03.2013	14	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
	“ Palau	06.11.2012	16	0	0.0%	06.11.2012	13	3	23.1%
	“ Qatar	01.07.2013	35	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---
	“ Vanuatu	30.10.2012	52	0	0.0%	---	---	---	---

\* Figures correspond to the number of seats currently filled in Parliament

1 - South Africa: The figures on the distribution of seats do not include the 36 special rotating delegates appointed on an ad hoc basis, and all percentages given are therefore calculated on the basis of the 54 permanent seats.



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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Assembly  
Item 3

A/131/3-Inf.1  
23 September 2014

## Concept note for the General Debate on *Achieving gender equality, ending violence against women*

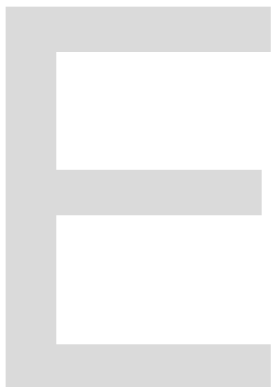
Making gender equality a reality and ending violence against women are growing concerns throughout the world. They affect all sectors of society and call for robust political action.

These two societal issues, which will be the theme of the General Debate, are very topical. They are also closely linked and deserve to be addressed in parallel. One cannot claim to achieve gender equality without first putting an end to violence against women. By the same token, the unbalanced power relations between men and women heighten women's vulnerability to violence.

2015 will mark a turning point, with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action review 20 years after its adoption at the Fourth World Conference on Women. This visionary roadmap for gender equality and women's empowerment contains comprehensive commitments, including in the area of violence against women. The review (Beijing +20) will provide an opportunity for States and the wider public to gauge progress and concrete improvements made to the lives of women and girls over the past 20 years. It will also take stock of those commitments that have not been honoured and the reasons why in order to rekindle the political will needed to achieve the set objectives.

In addition, gender equality – recognized as a factor of sustainable development and a benchmark of progress – will certainly be at the centre of discussions on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is worth recalling that the MDGs, adopted in 2000, did not contain quantifiable targets for combating violence against women - the famous "missing goal". There is no doubt today that this goal must also feature as a strategic development priority.

One in every three women will be a victim of gender-based violence at some point in her life. This type of violence spares no country and is even more rampant in States prone to conflict. Such violence deprives women and girls of their dignity, violates their fundamental rights, reduces their productivity and prevents them from realizing their full potential. Violence against women has serious consequences for peace and security and hampers economic development and poverty-reduction efforts.



Legislation and public policy play a pivotal role in any action aimed at achieving gender equality and ending the various forms of violence against women. Parliaments and parliamentarians must be at the centre of such action. As lawmakers, they have a responsibility to weed out discriminatory provisions and identify loopholes in existing laws. The adoption of a wide range of measures can help foster women's economic empowerment and participation in decision-making - whether in the public or private sphere - starting in the family.

Members of parliament also have a responsibility to ensure that prevailing legislation and policies are in line with applicable international standards. Two thirds of all countries have passed domestic violence and sexual assault laws. This is a relatively recent development that still requires some fine-tuning, but a number of promising practices are already emerging. In fact, some of the best laws and policies in this area will be recognized at the 2014 Future Policy Award prize-giving ceremony, jointly organized by the World Future Council, the IPU and UN Women, during the 131<sup>st</sup> IPU Assembly.

It goes without saying that laws and policies on their own are not enough. They have to be implemented, which requires the allocation of adequate resources. The onus is on governments and parliaments to ensure that all laws and policies are effectively followed up and enforced. Parliamentarians can play a meaningful role here by exercising their oversight and budgetary powers.

As opinion shapers, members of parliament can also make a difference in terms of preventing inequality and gender-based violence. This will require sensitization policies and campaigns aimed at transforming society, notably with a view to breaking stereotypes and social and cultural patterns, and creating an environment that is conducive to gender equality. Prevention must also be premised on State and civil society initiatives. These include inter alia: organizing media campaigns or targeted sensitization programmes; promoting gender equality among young people, in particular through school curricula and social media campaigns; involving men and boys in these initiatives to bring about a change in behaviour and mentality; and showcasing a new social construct of non-violent men and relationships built on respect.

While some progress has been made on this front a lot still remains to be done. Preventive measures – although several and varied – tend to be taken only occasionally and on a small scale. We must be able to evaluate their effectiveness and single out the most promising ones that can be adapted and implemented on a larger scale. As we know, gains remain very fragile and are jeopardized by conservative trends that advocate for maintaining the status quo.

All of these issues must occupy a central place in political action at the local and national levels in order to make gender equality a reality and end violence against women. They will also feature prominently in forthcoming major events on gender equality and sustainable development. The General Debate at the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly will offer parliamentarians an opportunity to exchange their views on these fundamental issues with a view to strengthening their action at home and crafting together a message from parliaments and the IPU that will feed into international processes and forums.

Leading questions for the debate:

- On what types of gender equality and violence against women should we focus, as a matter of priority, in the coming years?
- What priority actions should be taken to achieve gender equality and put an end to violence against women?
- How can effective and lasting implementation of laws and policies in this area be guaranteed?
- How can MPs, as opinion shapers, help change social and cultural patterns and redress gender inequality?
- What innovative partnerships can be envisaged to achieve gender equality and end violence against women?  
What initiatives and strategies have proved successful or have the potential to effect real change? What are the obstacles and how to overcome them?





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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 2

FEM/20/2(d)-Inf.2  
9 October 2014

## Gender activities at the Inter-Parliamentary Union Assemblies

(d) Briefing on the 131st Assembly and related events

### The Future Policy Award 2014

The Future Policy Award is an annual prize recognizing good and effective policies in a given area. It highlights the world's best solutions and encourages policymakers around the world to implement them.

The Future Policy Award 2014, organized by the World Future Council, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, will be given to the world's best policies on ending violence against women and girls.

With one in three women worldwide suffering sexual or physical violence in her lifetime, violence against women is one of the most pervasive and predominant forms of human rights abuses in the world. By restricting women's choices and limiting their ability to act, the persistence of violence against women has serious consequences for peace and security, economic development and poverty reduction.

International experts from academia, civil society and international organizations have nominated 25 policies from around the world which were implemented to improve the lives of women. Together, they reflect the broad scope of existing policy responses at the local, national and transnational levels.

The winning laws and policies will be announced at the Award Ceremony that will take place during the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly, on Tuesday, 14 October 2014, from 5.30 to 6.30 p.m. (Room 2, level 0, CICG). It will be followed by a reception (Events area, level 1, CICG).

**All MPs and staff participating in the 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly are invited to attend the Ceremony, subject to availability of space.**

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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

## Committee to Promote Respect for International Humanitarian Law

### Open session on *Ensuring respect for women's rights in situations of conflict*

14 October 2014 (9.00 – 10.30 a.m.)  
Espace polyvalent, level 0, CICG

#### Concept note

**Background:** Conflicts exacerbate existing gender inequalities and heighten women's vulnerability to discrimination, exploitation and abuse. What is at stake when conflicts arise is women's rights, their status, their access to health, their security. Conflicts place women and girls at a heightened risk of various forms of gender-based violence, especially sexual violence, forced and child marriage, sexual exploitation and abuse. Specific groups of women and girls, such as internally displaced persons and refugees, are even more at risk. Moreover, during and after conflicts women's voices are all too often not heard and their interests marginalized, including during peace discussions and peacebuilding.

The Open session will address the following questions in an interactive discussion:

- What are the main challenges today in ensuring protection for women and girls and respect for their rights in situations of conflict?
- How can these challenges be overcome by building on the complementarities between international humanitarian law, international human rights law, United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security, and international refugee law?
- What must States do to guarantee respect for the rights of women and girls and eliminate violence against women, in particular in situations of conflict?
- What strategies have proven to be effective in ensuring women's full and equal participation in conflict-prevention, peacebuilding and peacemaking processes?
- What forms can parliamentary action take to help ensure respect for women's and girls' rights in situations of conflict?

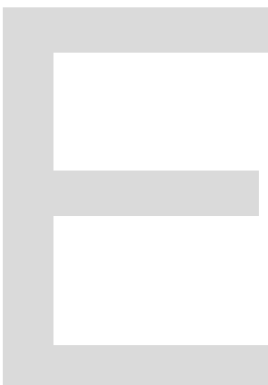
**Expected outcomes:** The Open session will provide parliamentarians with an opportunity to learn more about States' obligations to ensure women's rights, which apply even in conflicts. It will allow them to identify how parliaments can contribute to effective fulfillment of these obligations.

**Format:** The session will take the form of an interactive debate between parliamentarians and experts. After introductory remarks by the panellists, the floor will be open for an exchange of views and questions and answers.

**Moderator:** Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barrón, President of the IHL Committee (Mexico)

#### **Panellists:**

- Ms. Coline Rapneau, International Committee of the Red Cross
- Ms. Bineta Diop, Special Envoy on Women, Peace and Security of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Chair of the Board of Femmes Africa Solidarité
- Ms. Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom







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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 4

FEM/20/4-Inf.1  
9 October 2014

## Future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians and celebrations of its 30th anniversary

### Results of the consultations on the Future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians

The following document presents the results of consultations and debates on the Future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians. It includes recommendations to be discussed by the Coordinating Committee and the Meeting itself.

The Coordinating Committee is also invited to begin a reflection on its own future and role and on how to better complement the work of the Meeting of Women MPs.

1. On the occasion of the 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, held in Geneva in March 2014, a survey questionnaire (see annex) was distributed to the participants in order to gather their views on the objectives, work modalities and functioning of the Meeting.
2. Thirty-eight responses were received; 40% of the respondents were attending the Meeting for the first time and another 40% had attended less than five times. The vast majority of the respondents felt that the Meeting met its objectives, as described in its Rules, well or very well. In their comments, the respondents stressed the importance of facilitating an exchange of experience between parliamentarians.
3. More than 90% of the respondents endorsed the structure of the Meeting, although some encouraged it to include a debate on a specific gender issue in addition to those aimed at providing a gender perspective on IPU resolutions.
4. The survey results strongly indicated a need to include more men in the debates; more than 90% of the respondents said that the Meeting should be open to men. However, the respondents also acknowledged that it might be useful to ensure that one of the current IPU standing committees dealt officially with gender equality issues.
5. A majority of the respondents thought that the name of the Meeting was appropriate. As for enhancing its visibility, the respondents mentioned the importance of maintaining contact between sessions, organizing regional events and asking the participants to report back to their parliaments and national media on the results of the Meeting.

E

6. The Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians discussed the findings of the survey at its 33<sup>rd</sup> (Special) Session, held in Geneva in June 2014.

7. Identifying the Meeting's *strengths*, The Committee considered that:

- The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians provides a useful global platform for women MPs to meet, share experiences and strategize together, making it a powerful empowerment platform;
- The diversity of views, cultures, political tendencies and experiences represented at the Meeting allows for rich and comprehensive debates;
- The topics discussed by the Meeting are of relevance to MPs and are therefore a clear asset;
- The Meeting's regularity (i.e. at 6-month intervals) and its 30 years of history and experience allowed for sustainability and continuity in discussions and strategies;
- The Meeting provides an effective conduit for mainstreaming gender into IPU.

8. The Meeting's *weaknesses* included little influence at the national level, insufficient participation of men parliamentarians in its work and poor visibility in the international media. Committee members also highlighted structural weaknesses related to the nature of the Meeting and reflected on the question of whether it was a forum, a committee or a gathering.

9. The growing number of women parliamentarians, the growing awareness of women's rights and gender equality and the growing number of women's parliamentary caucuses provided the Meeting with many opportunities to expand its work. The fact that it would be celebrating its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in the year in which the Beijing +20 events would be held provided an opportunity to increase its visibility in 2015.

10. The continued success of the Meeting was contingent on the manner in which it dealt with the plethora of meetings taking place concurrently with its sessions during IPU Assemblies and with the recently-established networks of women parliamentarians, which could dilute parliaments' investment in women's participation in international forums.

11. In light of these considerations, the following recommendations were made:

(a) Enhance the role of the Meeting by:

- Dedicating a specific section/sitting to study and discussion of current gender-related issues, including matters of concern to women in specific countries;
- Enabling women MPs to take a position on issues of common interest through the Meeting or the Coordinating Committee;
- Enhancing the Meeting's role as a mentorship or training platform for women parliamentarians;
- Requesting all women parliamentarians participating in the Meeting to report back on its work to their parliaments and national media;
- Building bridges with national and regional parliamentary caucuses on women and gender in order to share the Meeting's reports and key documents;
- Continuing to reflect on the nature and the name of the Meeting in order to better position it as a global platform for women parliamentarians.

(b) Broaden the Meeting's visibility by:

- Positioning it as the main platform for women parliamentarians through regular communication in the media;
- Launching a celebratory campaign for its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary;
- Focusing its work in 2015 on Beijing +20;
- Providing women parliamentarians who attend it with documents and tools so that they can be the main advocates for the Meeting and, in particular, the campaign for its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in their parliaments and countries and at the international level.

(c) Better incorporate gender mainstreaming into IPU by:

- Including gender equality in the terms of reference of one of its Standing Committees or establishing a standing committee on gender equality;
- Organizing parity debates in which each delegation would be represented by a man and a woman MP in order to consider:
  - Setting up a group of men gender equality champions at IPU;
  - Reaching out to young MPs and engaging with them on the issue of gender equality;
  - Requesting that geopolitical group meetings and other meetings do not conflict with the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians at IPU assemblies.

**Consultation on the  
Future of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians**

Name :  
Parliament :

**Your participation in the Meeting of Women MPs**

1. When did you participate for the first time in a Meeting of Women Parliamentarians?
2. How often have you attended the Meeting?

1. This is my first time	
2. Less than five times	
3. More than five times	

**The Objectives and functioning of the Meeting**

3. According to its Rules, the Meeting aims to:
  - (a) To promote contacts and coordination among women parliamentarians on all topics of common interest;
  - (b) To foster democracy by promoting parity and partnership between men and women in all fields, particularly in politics, and to encourage and support the action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to those ends;
  - (c) In the same spirit, to encourage and promote the participation of women parliamentarians in the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and to promote their equitable representation at all levels of responsibility within the Organization;
  - (d) To conduct a preliminary study of certain questions considered by the Assembly or by the Governing Council and, as appropriate, to prepare recommendations on these subjects;
  - (e) To establish mechanisms for relaying information on the work of the Inter-Parliamentary Union to women MPs and women politicians not taking part in IPU meetings.

How do you think the Meeting is currently achieving these objectives?

	Very poorly	Poorly	Well	Very well
Objective (a)				
Objective (b)				
Objective (c)				
Objective (d)				
Objective (e)				

4. Do you think the Meeting should serve other objectives? If so, which ones?
5. Currently the Meeting is structured in two parts: the morning focuses on providing amendments to the resolutions under consideration by the Assembly and the afternoon focuses on a debate on a gender equality issue.

Do you approve of the structure? Yes/No  
If No, what would you suggest?



6. What is the most useful to you at the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians?
  
7. What is the least useful to you?
  
8. What are some of the themes that you would like to see addressed by the Meeting?
  
9. What would you like to see more in the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians?

#### **Participation of men and mainstreaming gender at the IPU**

10. The Meeting of Women Parliamentarians is open to women and men MPs, Participation of men has been very weak. While it is important to involve men in efforts to promote gender equality, the question remains whether the Meeting of Women MPs is the best place do so.

In your view, should the meeting:

- be open to women and men? Yes/No
- be open to women only? Yes/No

11. Should there be another platform dealing with gender equality issues at the IPU (i.e. should one of the Standing Committees be mandated with dealing with gender quality issues)?

#### **Visibility**

*Name*

12. Is the name Meeting of Women Parliamentarians appropriate? Yes/No

If No, what would you like it to be called?

*Visibility*

13. What would you suggest to enhance the visibility of the Meeting of Women Parliamentarians?





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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Standing Committee  
on Democracy and  
Human Rights

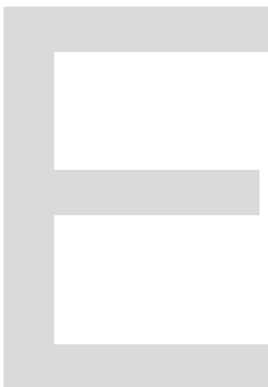
C-III/131/DR  
18 July 2014

## International law as it relates to national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights

***Draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs,  
Mr. Ali Jassim Ahmad (United Arab Emirates) and Mr. Philippe Mahoux (Belgium)***

The 131<sup>st</sup> Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Recalling* the relevant provisions of previous resolutions of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the United Nations General Assembly with regard to international law, national sovereignty, non-intervention in the internal affairs of States and human rights, and the body of relevant legal instruments of the United Nations, particularly the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
- (2) *Reaffirming* that the sovereign equality of States is the basis for international cooperation and a factor of stability,
- (3) *Considering* that international law defines the legal responsibilities of States in their conduct with each other, and their treatment of individuals within State boundaries,
- (4) *Mindful* of the fundamental importance of the rule of law for political dialogue and cooperation among all States, and *underlining* that the rule of law applies to all States equally,
- (5) *Stressing* that an independent judiciary and active civil society and community organizations are important components of the rule of law at the national level and necessary to guarantee the protection of human rights,
- (6) *Aware* that the rule of law, peace and security, human rights and sustainable development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing,
- (7) *Noting* the universal nature of human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the solemn commitment made by all States to respect, observe and protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people, and *underscoring* that this is fully compatible with the principles of State sovereignty and non-intervention in the internal affairs of States enshrined in the UN Charter,
- (8) *Recalling* the responsibility of occupying States for the protection of the human rights of persons living in the occupied territories,



(9) *Recognizing* that the protection of human rights is a matter of concern for all members of the international community,

(10) *Noting* that by ratifying international human rights law instruments, States accept the monitoring mechanisms foreseen in the instruments,

(11) *Considering* that instances of abuse of international human rights law mean that the system of implementation needs to be strengthened, but do not call into question the validity of the law itself,

(12) *Desirous* of seeing positive developments in the system of international cooperation and the settlement of international disputes through dialogue and other peaceful means, within the framework of the international collective security system,

(13) *Convinced* that the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and the future Sustainable Development Goals will greatly contribute to such developments,

1. *Reiterates* the principles of the sovereign equality of States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence;
2. *Reaffirms* its commitment to an international order based on the rule of law and *underlines* the essential role of parliaments in upholding the rule of law at the national level through their legislative and oversight functions;
3. *Underscores* the importance of ensuring that women, on the basis of the equality of men and women, fully enjoy the benefits of the rule of law, and *restates* its determination to uphold their equal rights and ensure their full and equal participation, including in institutions of governance and the judicial system;
4. *Calls on* States to ratify the core international human rights treaties and to fulfill their commitment to respect and protect human rights for all;
5. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that States' obligations under international human rights law are translated into national legislation, in conformity with the original intention of the law, and *calls on* parliaments to play an active role in overseeing the implementation of States' obligations;
6. *Expresses* support for the UN Human Rights Council and the existing independent treaty-based mechanisms that monitor States' compliance with international human rights law, *calls for* such mechanisms to be further strengthened, and *calls on* parliaments to participate actively in these monitoring mechanisms;
7. *Encourages* parliaments to strengthen national systems for the protection of human rights;
8. *Appeals* to States to refrain from the threat or use of force, and to resolve disputes by peaceful means, in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, human rights and fundamental freedoms;
9. *Insists* that collective use of force to uphold and ensure respect for human rights must be decided by the United Nations acting under its Charter;
10. *Strongly urges* States to refrain from unilateral economic, financial and trade measures that run counter to international law and the UN Charter, and particularly from enacting national laws that have extra-territorial effects;

11. *Rejects* unilateral interpretations of international human rights law, including in national legislation, and *calls for* the development of safeguards to prevent the abuse of international human rights law for political purposes;
12. *Strongly supports* the provision of humanitarian and economic aid by the international community in cases of disasters, war or hostilities;
13. *Calls on* States to strengthen the system of collective and individual security, including through reform of the UN Security Council, to ensure greater legitimacy of its decisions, and reform of the United Nations in general;
14. *Appeals* for greater cooperation between parliaments, the IPU and the United Nations in the protection of human rights and the development of the rule of law at the national and international level; and *calls for* the existing cooperation agreement between the IPU and the United Nations to be developed into a strategic partnership;
15. *Proposes* that a committee be set up within the Inter-Parliamentary Union to prepare a declaration based on this resolution as a way of further contributing to the enhancement of peace and international security.





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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 6

FEM/20/6-Inf.1  
9 October 2014

## Panel debate “Women’s influence on Parliament”

### Information note

1. The question of women’s political participation is, for the IPU, first and foremost a question of rights and democratic functioning. Men and women should have the same political opportunities and say in political decisions-making processes. But one cannot avoid the question: what is the influence of women on parliament?
2. In this panel discussion parliamentarians will discuss the difference women make in Parliament and how this can be made more visible. Tangible results of women’s presence and work in parliaments will be presented. Specific attention will be placed on the political and social contexts and their capacity to limit or facilitate the ability of women parliamentarians to cultivate change. Ultimately, the debate will try and identify what can women parliamentarians do to have more influence?

The panel debate will be moderated by:

Ms. G. von Hall, journalist for *Svenska Dagbladet*

Panellists:

Ms. L. Alansari, Member of the Consultative Council (Saudi Arabia)

Ms. M. Andrée, Senator, Member of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians (France)

Dr. F. Bustamante, Member of the National Assembly (Ecuador) - TBC

Ms. M.L. Krook, Assistant Professor of Political Science at Rutgers University

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Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
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FEM/20/7-Inf.1  
23 September 2014

## Cooperation with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### States reporting to the CEDAW Committee in 2015 and reporting or having reported in 2014

#### 62<sup>nd</sup> Session (26 October - 20 November 2015)

- France, Seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Lebanon, Fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Liberia, Seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Madagascar, Sixth and seventh periodic reports
- Malawi, Seventh periodic report
- Portugal, Eighth and ninth periodic reports
- Slovakia, Fifth and sixth periodic reports
- Slovenia, Fifth and sixth periodic reports
- Timor-Leste, Combined second and third periodic reports
- United Arab Emirates, Second and third periodic reports
- Uzbekistan, Fifth periodic report
- Yemen, Seventh and eighth periodic reports

Detailed information is available at  
[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=970&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=970&Lang=en).

#### 61<sup>st</sup> Session (2 - 24 July 2015)

- Bolivia, Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports
- Croatia, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Gambia, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Namibia, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Fourth to eighth periodic reports
- Senegal, Combined third to seventh periodic reports
- Spain, Seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Viet Nam, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports

Detailed information is available at  
[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=944&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=944&Lang=en).

#### 60<sup>th</sup> Session (16 February - 6 March 2015)

- Azerbaijan, Fifth periodic report
- Denmark, Eighth periodic report
- Ecuador, Combined eighth and ninth periodic reports
- Eritrea, Fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Gabon, Sixth periodic report
- Kyrgyzstan, Fourth periodic report
- Maldives, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Tuvalu, Combined third and fourth periodic reports

Detailed information is available at  
[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=901&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=901&Lang=en)



**59<sup>th</sup> Session (20 October - 7 November 2014)**

- Belgium, Seventh periodic report
- Brunei Darussalam, Initial and second periodic reports
- China, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Ghana, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Guinea, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Poland, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Solomon Islands, Initial to third periodic reports
- Venezuela, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports

Detailed information is available at

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=816&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=816&Lang=en).

**58<sup>th</sup> Session (30 June - 18 July 2014)**

- Central African Republic, Fourth periodic report
- Georgia, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- India, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Lithuania, Fifth periodic report
- Mauritania, Combined second and third periodic reports
- Peru, Combined seventh and eighth periodic reports
- Swaziland, Combined initial and second periodic reports
- Syrian Arab Republic, Second periodic report

Detailed information is available at

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=814&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=814&Lang=en).

**57<sup>th</sup> Session (10 - 28 February 2014)**

- Bahrain, Third periodic report
- Cameroon, Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports
- Finland, Seventh periodic report
- Iraq, Combined fourth, fifth and sixth periodic reports
- Kazakhstan, Combined third and fourth periodic reports
- Qatar, Initial report
- Sierra Leone, Sixth periodic report

Detailed information is available at

[http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=813&Lang=en](http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=813&Lang=en)



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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 7

FEM/20/7-Inf.2  
9 October 2014

## Cooperation with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Status of ratification of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination  
against Women and of its Optional Protocol

In the context of its cooperation with the CEDAW Committee, the IPU Secretariat  
keeps track of the status of ratification of the CEDAW Convention and of its  
Optional Protocol.

This information is provided in the annex to this document.

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**CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

States having signed, ratified, acceded or succeeded to the Convention  
Convention entered into force on 3 September 1981 - total States parties at 9 October 2014: 188

State	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)	State	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)
Afghanistan	14 Aug 1980	5 Mar 2003	Ghana	17 Jul 1980	2 Jan 1986
Albania	.	11 May 1994 a	Greece	2 Mar 1982	7 Jun 1983
Algeria	.	22 May 1996 a	Grenada	17 Jul 1980	30 Aug 1990
Andorra	.	15 Jan 1997 a	Guatemala	8 Jun 1981	12 Aug 1982
Angola	.	17 Sep 1986 a	Guinea	17 Jul 1980	9 Aug 1982
Antigua and Barbuda	.	1 Aug 1989 a	Guinea-Bissau	17 Jul 1980	23 Aug 1985
Argentina	17 Jul 1980	15 Jul 1985	Guyana	17 Jul 1980	17 Jul 1980
Armenia	.	13 Sep 1993 a	Haiti	17 Jul 1980	20 Jul 1981
Australia	17 Jul 1980	28 Jul 1983	Honduras	11 Jun 1980	3 Mar 1983
Austria	17 Jul 1980	31 Mar 1982	Hungary	6 Jun 1980	22 Dec 1980
Azerbaijan	.	10 Jul 1995 a	Iceland	24 Jul 1980	18 Jun 1985
Bahamas	.	6 Oct 1993 a	India	30 Jul 1980	9 Jul 1993
Bahrain	.	18 Jun 2002 a	Indonesia	29 Jul 1980	13 Sep 1984
Bangladesh	.	6 Nov 1984 a	Iraq	.	13 Aug 1986 a
Barbados	24 Jul 1980	16 Oct 1980	Ireland	.	23 Dec 1985 a
Belarus	17 Jul 1980	4 Feb 1981	Israel	17 Jul 1980	3 Oct 1991
Belgium	17 Jul 1980	10 Jul 1985	Italy	17 Jul 1980	10 Jun 1985
Belize	7 Mar 1990	16 May 1990	Jamaica	17 Jul 1980	19 Oct 1984
Benin	11 Nov 1981	12 Mar 1992	Japan	17 Jul 1980	25 Jun 1985
Bhutan	17 Jul 1980	31 Aug 1981	Jordan	3 Dec 1980	1 Jul 1992
Bolivia	30 May 1980	8 Jun 1990	Kazakhstan	.	26 Aug 1998 a
Bosnia and Herzegovina	.	1 Sep 1993 d	Kenya	.	9 Mar 1984 a
Botswana	.	13 Aug 1996 a	Kiribati	.	17 Mar 2004 a
Brazil	31 Mar 1981	1 Feb 1984	Kuwait	.	2 Sep 1994 a
Brunei Darussalam	.	24 May 2006 a	Kyrgyzstan	.	10 Feb 1997 a
Bulgaria	17 Jul 1980	8 Feb 1982	Lao People's Dem. Rep.	17 Jul 1980	14 Aug 1981
Burkina Faso	.	14 Oct 1987 a	Latvia	.	14 Apr 1992 a
Burundi	17 Jul 1980	8 Jan 1992	Lebanon	.	16 Apr 1997 a
Cambodia	17 Oct 1980	15 Oct 1992 a	Lesotho	17 Jul 1980	22 Aug 1995
Cabo Verde	.	5 Dec 1980 a	Liberia	.	17 Jul 1984 a
Cameroon	6 Jun 1983	23 Aug 1994	Libya	.	16 May 1989 a
Canada	17 Jul 1980	10 Dec 1981	Liechtenstein	.	22 Dec 1995 a
Central African Rep.	.	21 Jun 1991 a	Lithuania	.	18 Jan 1994 a
Chad	.	9 Jun 1995 a	Luxembourg	17 Jul 1980	2 Feb 1989
Chile	17 Jul 1980	7 Dec 1989	Madagascar	17 Jul 1980	17 Mar 1989
China	17 Jul 1980	4 Nov 1980	Malawi	.	12 Mar 1987 a
Colombia	17 Jul 1980	19 Jan 1982	Malaysia	.	5 Jul 1995 a
Comoros	.	31 Oct 1994 a	Maldives	.	1 Jul 1993 a
Congo	29 Jul 1980	26 Jul 1982	Mali	5 Feb 1985	10 Sep 1985
Cook Islands	.	11 Aug 2006 a	Malta	.	8 Mar 1991 a
Costa Rica	17 Jul 1980	4 Apr 1986	Marshall Islands	.	2 Mar 2006 a
Côte d'Ivoire	17 Jul 1980	18 Dec 1995	Mauritania	.	10 May 2001 a
Croatia	.	9 Sep 1992 d	Mauritius	.	9 Jul 1984 a
Cuba	6 Mar 1980	17 Jul 1980	Mexico	17 Jul 1980	23 Mar 1981
Cyprus	.	23 Jul 1985 a	Micronesia (Fed. States of)	.	1 Sep 2004 a
Czech Rep.	.	22 Feb 1993 d	Monaco	.	18 Mar 2005 a
Dem. People's Rep. of Korea	.	27 Feb 2001 a	Mongolia	17 Jul 1980	20 Jul 1981
Dem. Rep. of the Congo	17 Jul 1980	17 Oct 1986	Montenegro	.	23 Oct 2006 d
Denmark	17 Jul 1980	21 Apr 1983	Morocco	.	21 Jun 1993 a
Djibouti	.	2 Dec 1998 a	Mozambique	.	21 Apr 1997 a
Dominica	15 Sep 1980	15 Sep 1980	Myanmar	.	22 Jul 1997 a
Dominican Rep.	17 Jul 1980	2 Sep 1982	Namibia	.	23 Nov 1992 a
Ecuador	17 Jul 1980	9 Nov 1981	Nauru	.	23 Jun 2011 a
Egypt	16 Jul 1980	18 Sep 1981	Nepal	5 Feb 1991	22 Apr 1991
El Salvador	14 Nov 1980	19 Aug 1981	Netherlands	17 Jul 1980	23 Jul 1991
Equatorial Guinea	.	23 Oct 1984 a	New Zealand	17 Jul 1980	10 Jan 1985
Eritrea	.	5 Sep 1995 a	Nicaragua	17 Jul 1980	27 Oct 1981
Estonia	.	21 Oct 1991 a	Niger	.	8 Oct 1999 a
Ethiopia	8 Jul 1980	10 Sep 1981	Nigeria	23 Apr 1984	13 Jun 1985
Fiji	.	28 Aug 1995 a	Norway	17 Jul 1980	21 May 1981
Finland	17 Jul 1980	4 Sep 1986	Oman	.	7 Feb 2006 a
France	17 Jul 1980	14 Dec 1983	Pakistan	.	12 Mar 1996 a
Gabon	17 Jul 1980	21 Jan 1983	Palau	20 Sep 2011	
Gambia	29 Jul 1980	16 Apr 1993	Panama	26 Jun 1980	29 Oct 1981
Georgia	.	26 Oct 1994 a	Papua New Guinea	.	12 Jan 1995 a
Germany	17 Jul 1980	10 Jul 1985	Paraguay	.	6 Apr 1987 a

State	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)	State	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)
Peru	23 Jul 1981	13 Sep 1982	Suriname		1 Mar 1993 a
Philippines	15 Jul 1980	5 Aug 1981	Swaziland		26 Mar 2004 a
Poland	29 May 1980	30 Jul 1980	Sweden	7 Mar 1980	2 Jul 1980
Portugal	24 Apr 1980	30 Jul 1980	Switzerland	23 Jan 1987	27 Mar 1997
Qatar		29 Apr 2009 a	Syrian Arab Rep.		28 Mar 2003 a
Rep. of Korea	25 May 1983	27 Dec 1984	Tajikistan		26 Oct 1993 a
Rep. of Moldova	.	1 Jul 1994 a	Thailand		9 Aug 1985 a
Romania	4 Sep 1980	7 Jan 1982	The F.Y.R. of Macedonia	.	18 Jan 1994 d
Russian Federation	17 Jul 1980	23 Jan 1981	Timor-Leste	.	16 Apr 2003 a
Rwanda	1 May 1980	2 Mar 1981	Togo	.	26 Sep 1983 a
Saint Kitts and Nevis	.	25 Apr 1985 a	Trinidad and Tobago	27 Jun 1985	12 Jan 1990
Saint Lucia	.	8 Oct 1982 a	Tunisia	24 Jul 1980	20 Sep 1985
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	.	4 Aug 1981 a	Turkey	.	20 Dec 1985 a
Samoa	.	25 Sep 1992 a	Turkmenistan	.	1 May 1997 a
San Marino	26 Sep 2003	10 Dec 2003	Tuvalu	.	6 Oct 1999 a
Sao Tome and Principe	31 Oct 1995	3 Jun 2003	Uganda	30 Jul 1980	22 Jul 1985
Saudi Arabia	7 Sep 2000	7 Sep 2000	Ukraine	17 Jul 1980	12 Mar 1981
Senegal	29 Jul 1980	5 Feb 1985	United Arab Emirates	.	6 Oct 2004 a
Serbia	.	12 Mar 2001 d	United Kingdom	22 Jul 1981	7 Apr 1986
Seychelles	.	5 May 1992 a	United Rep. of Tanzania	17 Jul 1980	20 Aug 1985
Sierra Leone	21 Sep 1988	11 Nov 1988	United States of America	17 Jul 1980	.
Singapore		5 Oct 1995 a	Uruguay	30 Mar 1981	9 Oct 1981
Slovakia		28 May 1993 d	Uzbekistan	.	19 Jul 1995 a
Slovenia		6 Jul 1992 d	Vanuatu	.	8 Sep 1995 a
Solomon Islands		6 May 2002 a	Venezuela	17 Jul 1980	2 May 1983
South Africa	29 Jan 1993	15 Dec 1995	Viet Nam	29 Jul 1980	17 Feb 1982
Spain	17 Jul 1980	5 Jan 1984	Yemen	.	30 May 1984 a
Sri Lanka	17 Jul 1980	5 Oct 1981	Zambia	17 Jul 1980	21 Jun 1985
State of Palestine		2 Apr 2014	Zimbabwe	.	13 May 1991 a

**OPTIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONVENTION  
ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN**

Total States parties: 104 at 9 October 2014

Participant	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)	Participant	Signature	Ratification, Accession (a), Succession (d)
Albania		23 June 2003 (a)	Malawi	7 September 2000	
Andorra	9 July 2001	14 October 2002	Maldives		13 March 2006 (a)
Angola		1 November 2007 (a)	Mali		5 December 2000 (a)
Antigua and Barbuda		5 June 2006 (a)	Mauritius	11 November 2001	31 October 2008
Argentina	28 February 2000	20 March 2007	Mexico	10 December 1999	15 March 2002
Armenia		14 September 2006 (a)	Mongolia	7 September 2000	28 March 2002
Australia		4 December 2008 (a)	Montenegro		23 October 2006 (d)
Austria	10 December 1999	6 September 2000	Mozambique		4 November 2008 (a)
Azerbaijan	6 June 2000	1 June 2001	Namibia	19 May 2000	26 May 2000
Bangladesh	6 September 2000	6 September 2000	Nepal	18 December 2001	15 June 2007
Belarus	29 April 2002	3 February 2004	Netherlands	10 December 1999	22 May 2002
Belgium	10 December 1999	17 June 2004	New Zealand	7 September 2000	7 September 2000
Belize		9 December 2002 (a)	Niger		30 September 2004 (a)
Benin	25 May 2000		Nigeria	8 September 2000	22 November 2004
Bolivia	10 December 1999	27 September 2000	Norway	10 December 1999	5 March 2002
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7 September 2000	4 September 2002	Panama	9 June 2000	9 May 2001
Botswana		21 February 2007 (a)	Paraguay	28 December 1999	14 May 2001
Brazil	13 March 2001	28 June 2002	Peru	22 December 2000	9 April 2001
Bulgaria	6 June 2000	20 September 2006	Philippines	21 March 2000	12 November 2003
Burkina Faso	16 November 2001	10 October 2005 (a)	Poland		22 December 2003 (a)
Burundi	13 November 2001		Portugal	16 February 2000	26 April 2002
Cambodia	11 November 2001	13 October 2010	Rep. of Korea		18 October 2006 (a)
Cameroon		7 January 2005 (a)	Rep. of Moldova		28 February 2006 (a)
Canada		18 October 2002 (a)	Romania	6 September 2000	25 August 2003
Cape Verde		10 October 2011 (a)	Russian Federation	8 May 2001	28 July 2004
Chad	26 September 2012		Rwanda		15 December 2008
Chile	10 December 1999		Saint Kitts and Nevis		20 January 2006 (a)
Colombia	10 December 1999	23 January 2007	San Marino		10 September 2005 (a)
Congo	29 September 2008		Sao Tome and Principe	6 September 2000	
Cook Islands		27 November 2007 (a)	Senegal	10 December 1999	26 May 2000
Costa Rica	10 December 1999	20 September 2001	Serbia		31 July 2003 (a)
Côte d'Ivoire		20 January 2012 (a)	Seychelles	22 July 2002	1 Mar 2011
Croatia	5 June 2000	7 March 2001	Sierra Leone	8 September 2000	
Cuba	17 March 2000		Slovakia	5 June 2000	17 November 2000
Cyprus	8 February 2001	26 April 2002	Slovenia	10 December 1999	23 September 2004
Czech Rep.	10 December 1999	26 February 2001	Solomon Islands		6 May 2002
Denmark	10 December 1999	31 May 2000	South Africa		18 October 2005 (a)
Dominican Rep.	14 March 2000	10 August 2001	Spain	14 March 2000	6 July 2001
Ecuador	10 December 1999	5 February 2002	Sri Lanka		15 October 2002 (a)
El Salvador	4 April 2001		Sweden	10 December 1999	24 April 2003
Equatorial Guinea		16 October 2009 (a)	Switzerland	15 February 2007	29 September 2008
Finland	10 December 1999	29 December 2000	Tajikistan	7 September 2000	22 July 2014
France	10 December 1999	9 June 2000	Thailand	14 June 2000	14 June 2000
Gabon		5 November 2004 (a)	T.F.Y.R. of Macedonia	3 April 2000	17 October 2003
Georgia		30 July 2002	Timor-Leste		16 April 2003 (a)
Germany	10 December 1999	15 January 2002	Tunisia		23 September 2008
Ghana	24 February 2000	3 Feb 2011	Turkey	8 September 2000	29 October 2002
Greece	10 December 1999	24 January 2002	Turkmenistan		20 May 2009 (a)
Guatemala	7 September 2000	9 May 2002	Ukraine	7 September 2000	26 September 2003
Guinea-Bissau	12 September 2000	5 August 2009	United Kingdom		17 December 2004 (a)
Hungary		22 December 2000	United Rep. of Tanzania		12 January 2006 (a)
Iceland	10 December 1999	6 March 2001	Uruguay	9 May 2000	26 July 2001
Indonesia	28 February 2000		Vanuatu		17 May 2007 (a)
Ireland	7 September 2000	7 September 2000	Venezuela	17 March 2000	13 May 2002
Italy	10 December 1999	22 September 2000	Zambia	29 September 2008	
Kazakhstan	6 September 2000	24 August 2001			
Kyrgyzstan		22 July 2002			
Lesotho	6 September 2000	24 September 2004			
Liberia	22 September 2004				
Libya		18 June 2004			
Liechtenstein	10 December 1999	24 October 2001			
Lithuania	8 September 2000	5 August 2004			
Luxembourg	10 December 1999	1 July 2003			
Madagascar	7 September 2000				



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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# 131<sup>st</sup> IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 12 - 16.10.2014

Meeting of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 7

FEM/20/7-Inf.3  
23 September 2014

## Cooperation with the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

### STATEMENT ADOPTED BY THE COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

#### National parliaments and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. At its forty-first session, the Committee adopted a standard paragraph on “Parliament” in its concluding observations in order to draw to the attention of State parties, the importance of involving its parliament in the reporting process under article 18 of the Convention and the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.
2. The aim of the present note is to clarify and strengthen the role of national parliaments vis-à-vis the Convention. The note is also aimed at clarifying the relationship between the Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

#### **I. Role of Parliaments in the process of ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and withdrawal of reservations**

3. The procedure for ratification/accession to international instruments as well as the withdrawal of reservations varies from State to State. In most States, approval by Parliament is necessary before the deposit of the instrument of ratification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Similarly, decisions concerning reservations as well as their withdrawals are also taken in Parliament. This Parliamentary procedure also applies to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Consequently, Parliaments have a strategic role to play with respect to the ratification/accession of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. As the Convention and its Protocol have not attained universal ratification, Parliament can play a significant role in encouraging their State in becoming a party to the Convention and its Protocol. Similarly, as the Convention is the treaty body with the largest number of reservations, Parliament can also play a significant role in their withdrawal.

#### **II. Parliaments and the implementation of the Convention**

4. Parliaments and their members have a vital role to play in ensuring respect for the principles enunciated in the Convention and they have a wide range of tools at their disposal to do so. In discharging their traditional duty of overseeing the work of Government, Parliament can ensure that States parties comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. Parliaments and their members have a fundamental responsibility in their role of “constituency”, which is the basis of the legal system. The functions of Parliaments — notably legislative and budgetary functions and oversight of the executive branch of the Government — are at the heart of the implementation of the principles and rights enshrined in the Convention. The implementation of the Convention includes the incorporation of the principle of non-discrimination against women in national legislation, including in the Constitution of the State party. It also imposes an obligation on the State

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Party to condemn discrimination against women, to abolish all discriminatory laws and to adopt, whenever appropriate, temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men. It also obligates States Parties to adopt appropriate policies and establish mechanisms aimed at promoting equality between sexes. As such, Parliamentarians can take active measures to ensure that national laws, policies, actions, programmes and budget reflect the principles and obligations in the Convention.

The budgetary functions and the monitoring of governmental action are vital for a better implementation of laws relating to equality between sexes, through the approval of adequate budgets and a regular oversight of the impact of governmental measures with respect to the condition of women.

Parliament, as an organ representing the population as a whole, reflects the diversity of opinion and interests in the country by reason of its privileged access to the whole population. As such, Parliamentarians can be key players in raising awareness of the Convention and its Protocol to the population at large and to women in particular.

### **III. Role of Parliaments in the drafting of reports and follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee**

5. States are not legally obliged to involve Parliaments in the drafting of reports under article 18, as it is the State which has the primary responsibility of doing so. However, as the Convention is binding on all branches of Government, it is desirable that States parties involve Parliament in the reporting process under Article 18 of the Convention, the implementation of the Convention and the follow up to the concluding observations of the Committee. States parties are strongly encouraged to establish an appropriate mechanism to facilitate collaboration between Parliament and Government with regard to the input of its Parliament in the elaboration of reports, and its role in following up on the concluding observations of the Committee. The monitoring role of Parliament with respect to the compliance by the State of its international obligations, could considerably enhance the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee.

6. Consequently, it is necessary for States parties to urge Parliament, many of which now have some structures in place, such as Parliamentary Committees focusing on human rights including gender equality, to take an active part in the work of the Committee in general, as well as in the implementation of its provisions in their own country.

### **IV. Action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its relationship with the Committee**

7. IPU has always strived to bring a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation and the work of the Committee. It is playing a key role in disseminating the Convention and its Optional Protocol among parliamentarians. During its conferences and the sessions of its Assembly, the organization regularly invites States that have not ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol to do so. It also encourages States parties that have made reservations to the Convention to withdraw them and to fulfil their obligations. The Secretary-General of IPU writes to the presidents of the legislative assemblies to inform them about the upcoming consideration of the report of their country by the Committee. Once the Committee's concluding observations are available, a letter is sent to the parliament concerned to bring to its attention the recommendations adopted. In 2003 IPU, with the assistance of the Division for the Advancement of Women, published a practical guide for the use of parliamentarians on the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Every year, IPU organizes briefings on the Convention, addressed to women parliamentarians in particular. IPU also provides, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, technical assistance programmes in order to build the capacities of parliaments and help them fulfil their role regarding the implementation of Convention and its Optional Protocol. Since 2006, IPU also provides Committee with country specific information including data on the political participation of women in Parliament and in Government as well as at the local level with regard to States whose reports are under consideration by the Committee.

### **V. Recommendations**

8. The Committee recommends that States parties ensure the full participation of Parliament and its members in the reporting process and the full implementation of the Convention and its Protocol.

9. Given the key role of Parliament, the Committee recommends that States parties ensure that Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, be made aware and informed of the Committee's work so



that they may take it into account in their legislative functions and relay it to their constituencies and to the public at large.

10. The Committee recommends that State parties ensure that all relevant information is made available to Parliamentarians on a regular basis through appropriate Parliamentary support services.

11. The Committee further recommends that information received by Government on its obligations as a State party and other matters of concern are brought to the attention of Parliamentarians.

12. The Committee recommends that whenever members of the Committee are invited to visit a State party, it is desirable that the State party organize meetings with Parliamentarians.

13. The Committee encourages States parties to include in their reports, information on all parliamentary initiatives in the elaboration of laws in order to ensure full incorporation of CEDAW provisions into domestic legislation.

14. The Committee reiterates the importance of strengthening the national machinery dedicated to equality at the level of Parliament, such as Commissions on gender equality, missions and information on inquiries relating to violence against women, and improvement of legislation on equality between women and men.

15. The Committee draws the attention of States parties to the fact that institutional linkages and informal relations with civil society and women's organizations are fundamental to the promotion of women's rights by the Parliament.

16. The Committee encourages States parties to include in their delegation before the Committee for the examination of their report, members of Parliament as well as a special advisor in charge of relations between the Government and the Parliament in order to improve the visibility of parliamentary responsibilities.

17. The Committee calls on State parties to evaluate its collaboration with its national Parliament and other Parliaments and to take appropriate measures to enhance cooperation between Parliaments in order to exchange best practices on the implementation of the Convention.