



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



25th SESSION OF THE FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

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FEM/25/1-Inf.1

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ITEM 3 - Gender activities

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CL/200/7(j)-R.1 – Report on the Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 61st session of the Commission on the status of Women

(d) Follow-up to the IPU 2012 Plan of Action on Gender-sensitive Parliaments

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FEM/25/6-Inf.1 – Information note

E



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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 3

FEM/25/1-Inf.1
30 March 2017

Election of the President of the Meeting

**Curriculum Vitae
of
Dr. Dipu Moni Nawaz, MP
MBBS (DMC), LLB (NU), LLM (London), MPH (Johns Hopkins)**

Dr. Dipu Moni, MP, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and former Foreign Minister, was the first female Foreign Minister of Bangladesh and the first woman to hold that post in South Asia. She is also one of the four Joint General Secretaries and one of the four official spokespersons of the Bangladesh Awami League. Dr. Dipu Moni represents the Chandpur-3 (Chandpur-Haimchar) constituency as a Member of the 10th National Parliament of Bangladesh. She is the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of the Asian University of Women and a Senate Member of Dhaka University.

After completing her MBBS degree at Dhaka Medical College, the premier medical education institution in Bangladesh, Dr. Moni completed the MPH programme at the School of Public Health, Johns Hopkins University, USA. She obtained a Masters in Law from London University and has completed courses on negotiation and conflict resolution from Harvard and Johns Hopkins universities. She is a lawyer of the Bangladesh Supreme Court.

Dr. Moni led a Bangladesh delegation that successfully settled maritime boundary issues with Myanmar and India through landmark verdicts given by the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea in Hamburg, Germany and the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands. During her tenure, Bangladesh effectively passed her avowed policy of "Friendship towards all and malice to none".

Dr. Moni brought honour to the country through her election as the first female and first South-Asian Chairperson of the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group.

Dr. Moni has led Bangladesh delegations at many high-level and ministerial meetings at the United Nations. Bangladesh was outstandingly successful during her tenure (2009–2013) and was elected to more than thirty international organizations and United Nations bodies.

As the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh, Dr. Moni addressed many think-tanks, institutes, universities, and international organizations. She spoke to the international media in order to foster a better understanding of Bangladesh among other nations.

Besides her responsibilities as Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr. Moni has been able to keep all her electoral promises to her constituency, Chandpur-3.

#IPU136



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS 25th SESSION

Dhaka, 1 April 2017
(9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and 2 to 6 p.m.)

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Agenda

FEM/25/A.1
20 February 2017

I. SCHEDULE OF MEETING AND DEBATING ARRANGEMENTS

The 25th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will be held at the Bangabandhu International Conference Center in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The Forum will meet on Saturday 1 April 2017, from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and from 2 to 6 p.m.

The Forum should provide an opportunity for 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 request the floor by completing the form on their desks.

II. ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of the President of the 25th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians (FEM/25/1-Inf.1)

Welcome remarks

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Gender activities (FEM/25/3(c)-Inf.1, CL/200/7(e)-R.1, CL/200/7(j)-R.1, FEM/25/3(d)-Inf.1)

- (a) Report of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Participants will be informed of the deliberations of the Bureau at its sessions of 23 October 2016 in Geneva and 1 April 2017 in Dhaka.
- (b) Report of the Gender Partnership Group
Participants find out about the work and recommendations of the Group.
- (c) Briefing: recent IPU activities on gender equality
Participants will be briefed on recent IPU work on gender equality.
- (d) Follow-up to the IPU 2012 Plan of Action on Gender-sensitive Parliaments
Presentation of the self-assessment toolkit: [Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliaments](#), followed by a debate on opportunities and challenges for parliaments in conducting a gender-sensitive self-assessment exercise.

The discussion will conclude by 11:00 a.m.

#IPU136

4. Contributing to the work of the 136th Assembly from a gender perspective (FEM/25/4-Inf.1)

Participants will be invited to discuss the following item on the agenda of the 136th Assembly:

- Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development (*Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade*)

Participants will split into two groups to discuss the following sub-themes:

Theme 1: Reforming regulatory frameworks and changing unfavourable cultural norms: a must for the financial inclusion of women

Many obstacles lie on the way to the financial inclusion of women. Discriminatory legislation, gender-based violence, gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms and customs all limit women's access to financial inclusion and economic empowerment. Policies and legislation must be gender-sensitive so as to provide financial services and economic empowerment that work for women.

The group will discuss how to eliminate obstacles to women's access to financial services and economic empowerment. It will explore how social and economic policies should be designed, implemented and monitored to facilitate women's financial inclusion. It will consider how gender-sensitive budgeting can support this endeavour. The group will also discuss how to ensure that financial inclusion is grounded in a favourable environment for women that is promoted by the State and through development cooperation. Discussions may focus on how to eliminate discrimination in rights related to family, land, property and freedom of movement. Participants may look at eliminating discrimination in labour and social security regulations, especially in the informal sector and care economy, where women are most represented. Discussions may also cover ways of tackling discriminatory social norms and customs that prevent women from accessing financial services and support.

Participants will be invited to share good practices and creative initiatives happening in their own countries.

Theme 2: Promoting access to financial services and opportunities for the most vulnerable women

Women make up 70 per cent of the world's poor. The Sustainable Development Goals promise to address the needs of the most vulnerable and to leave no one behind. If financial inclusion is to be an effective strategy for drastically reducing the feminization of poverty, we must ensure that the financial services offered actually reach and really benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized women. Programmes to improve women's access to financial services and support to their economic empowerment should therefore take into account the reality and rights of all women. That should include rural women, women in crisis situations, and women facing multiple layers of discrimination based on ethnicity, marital status, HIV status, migrant or refugee status, age, disability etc.

The group will discuss and share good practices on how to adapt and expand access for all women to financial services. That could include formal credit, micro-credit, saving accounts, health insurance, social benefits, childcare services and support. The group will also discuss how to reach out to and raise the awareness of groups of marginalized women about economic opportunities and financial services from which they could benefit. Participants will also address the importance of providing different groups of women with targeted training and mentorship programmes.

The group will be invited to share good practices and creative initiatives happening in their own countries.

On the recommendation of its Bureau, the Forum will designate a chairperson and a rapporteur for each group. They will agree on recommendations that the rapporteurs will submit to the Forum of Women Parliamentarians at its afternoon sitting.

Each group will meet from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Forum will resume its work at 2 p.m.

5. Debate. Women's political participation: a new impetus to break the glass ceiling (FEM/25/5-Inf.1)

Participants will hear a presentation on the 2017 IPU–UN Women Map on Women in Politics. They will also be briefed on the progress and setbacks of women in parliament in 2016. Participants will then be invited to debate recent developments in women's global and national political participation, and to identify how that participation might be enhanced.

The debate will conclude by 4 p.m.

6. Panel discussion. Empowering girls today to achieve Sustainable Development tomorrow (FEM/25/6-Inf.1)

Gender equality is a prominent feature of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But if we are to deliver for women by 2030, we must start empowering girls now. In recent years, girls' access to education and health has improved. Nevertheless, they continue to face both gender- and age-based discrimination, violence and marginalization. Harmful practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation continue to challenge both the present and future for girls. Gender equality objectives will only be met if we dedicate sufficient attention, political will and resources to the empowerment of girls today. Participants will be invited to share good practices and to identify priorities that parliaments should address in order to uphold girl's rights and ensure their empowerment.

The panel discussion will conclude by 5:30 p.m.

7. Reports of the discussion group rapporteurs

The discussion group rapporteurs will present their reports. The Forum will then ask them to consult with the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and of the President of the Forum's 25th Session, and prepare amendments to be presented during the debate of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade (scheduled for Sunday 2 April from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.).

8. Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum will be called upon to fill the vacant seats on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. There are vacancies for one regional representative from each of the African, Asia-Pacific and Eurasia groups. Elections will be held on the basis of candidatures submitted by those geopolitical groups.

9. Venue and date of the 26th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

**COMPOSITION AND OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU
OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS
(As at 20 February 2017)**

OFFICERS (March 2016–2018)

President	Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)
First Vice-President	Ms. M. André (France)
Second Vice-President	Ms. N. Al Kharoosi (Oman)

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Expiry of term

African Group:

Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)	Ms. J. Nze Mouenidiambou (Gabon)	March 2018
Ms. F. Adedoyin (Nigeria)	<i>Vacancy</i>	March 2020

Arab Group:

Ms. N. Al Kharoosi (Oman)	Ms. S. Kousantini (Tunisia)	March 2018
Ms. H. Alhelaissi (Saudi Arabia)	Ms. M. Azer Abdelmalak (Egypt)	March 2020

Asia-Pacific Group:

Ms. W. A. Khan (Bangladesh)	Ms. A. Khalid Parvez (Pakistan)	March 2018
Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand)	<i>Vacancy</i>	March 2020

Eurasia Group:

Ms. V. Petrenko (Russian Federation)	Ms. E. Shamal (Belarus)	March 2018
Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation)	<i>Vacancy</i>	March 2020

Group of Latin American and the Caribbean:

Ms. A. Ocles Padilla (Ecuador)	Ms. J. Vicente (Dominican Rep.)	March 2018
Ms. E. Mendoza Fernández (Bolivia)	Ms. K. Beteta (Peru)	March 2020

Twelve Plus Group:

Ms. M. André (France)	Ms. P. Ernstberger (Germany)	March 2018
Ms. S. Ataulajhan (Canada)	Ms. P. Locatelli (Italy)	March 2020

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Expiry of term

(ex officio, for the duration of their term on the Executive Committee)

Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria)	October 2018
Ms. M.I. de Oliveira Valente (Angola)	October 2019
Ms. A. Habibou (Niger)	October 2019
Ms. G. Eldegard (Norway)	October 2019
Ms. Y. Ferrer Gómez (Cuba)	October 2020

PRESIDENTS OF THE FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

Expiry of term

(ex officio for two years)

Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan (Viet Nam)	March 2017
Ms. N. Luo (Zambia)	March 2018



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 3

FEM/25/3(c)-Inf.1
22 March 2017

Gender activities

(c) Briefing on recent IPU activities on gender equality

IPU cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

I. The IPU and the CEDAW Committee

1. The IPU plays an active role in promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol within the parliamentary community.

2. As part of its cooperation with the CEDAW Committee (the Committee), the IPU Secretariat urges parliamentarians to keep track of whether their countries have ratified the CEDAW Convention and Optional Protocol as well as whether their countries may have issued any reservations. (This information is available at <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>; it is broken down by country and includes entries for any declarations or reservations made).

II. IPU involvement in the CEDAW reporting process

3. The Convention is an important benchmark for gender equality and comprehensive in scope. The IPU therefore endeavours to ensure that parliaments and their members provide effective oversight of the Convention and contribute to its full implementation. The IPU has consistently argued for more parliamentary involvement in the Convention's reporting obligations, particularly in the work required to follow up on the concluding observations of the Committee.

4. At each Committee session, the IPU presents a report on what it has done to promote respect for and implementation of the Convention, including disseminating information about the role played by parliaments in the reporting process. This is partly done by inviting parliaments from the countries whose periodic reports are to be reviewed at the next Committee session to fill in a questionnaire. The questions cover parliamentary involvement in the reporting process and in the follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations.

5. The following is the list of State parties reporting to the CEDAW Committee in 2017 or having reported in 2016:

68th Session (23 October – 17 November 2017)

- Burkina Faso, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guatemala, Israel, Kenya, Kuwait, Monaco, Nauru, Norway, Oman, Paraguay, Singapore

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1079&Lang=en

67th Session (3-21 July 2017)

- Barbados, Costa Rica, Italy, Montenegro, Niger, Nigeria, Romania, Thailand

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1078&Lang=en

66th Session (13 February 3 March 2017)

- El Salvador, Germany, Ireland, Jordan, Micronesia (Federated States of), Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Ukraine

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1071&Lang=en.

65th Session (24 October - 18 November 2016)

- Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Burundi, Canada, Estonia, Honduras, Netherlands, Switzerland

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1027&Lang=en.

64th Session (4 – 22 July 2016)

- Albania, France, Mali, Myanmar, Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uruguay

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1019&Lang=en.

63rd Session (15 February - 4 March 2016)

- Czech Republic, Haiti, Iceland, Japan, Mongolia, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1007&Lang=en.

III. The CEDAW and parliaments

6. At its 41st session (June-July 2008), the Committee adopted a standard paragraph on parliaments. It was to be added into its concluding observations in order to draw the attention of State parties to the importance of involving parliaments not only in the reporting process under article 18 of the Convention but also in the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. At its 45th session (January—February 2010), the Committee issued a statement on its relationship with parliamentarians that aimed 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 IPU. (See the annex for the text of the statement).

ANNEX

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 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.



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Governing Council
Item 7

CL/200/7(e)-R.1
23 February 2017

Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

(e) Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament

Abu Dhabi, 12-13 December 2016

The IPU and the Federal National Council (FNC) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) organized the Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament. The Summit was the 11th edition of the Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament. It was attended by 34 female Speakers of Parliament and parliamentarians from 50 countries. Global leaders across government, business, industry and civil society were also in attendance.

At the conclusion of the two-day Summit, the women Speakers unanimously adopted the Abu Dhabi Declaration (see [Annex](#)).

The Declaration defines concrete actions that parliaments can take to address geopolitical, socioeconomic, environmental and technological challenges. It identifies the means to better integrate horizon-scanning in parliamentary work to anticipate the impact of policies and legislation on future generations.

The debates focused on setting up structures that examine future megatrends, and how they will affect nations individually and the world as a whole. Women Speakers encouraged more widespread use of digital technology to make parliaments more transparent and accessible. They also proposed that parliaments develop or modify existing future-oriented strategic plans, which include steps to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They also stressed the imperative of associating youth with parliamentary work through representation and participation in policymaking.

In their debates on peace and security, women Speakers agreed to promote and uphold human rights and the principle of tolerance in efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism and advance peace and security. They also stressed that action to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and the promotion of women's economic empowerment are central to resolving problems and challenges to society as a whole. They reiterated their commitment to achieving gender equality in politics and in parliament by 2030. They advocated that each parliament assess institutional gender sensitivity.

The women Speakers agreed to work in partnership to realize the Abu Dhabi Declaration. They urged the IPU to follow-up on the proposals and commitments included in the Declaration and accommodate them in its work programme in such a way as to promote continued and strategic partnerships with government authorities, scientists, academia, youth and representatives from the private sector and civil society.



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FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Abu Dhabi DECLARATION

Abu Dhabi – 12-13 December 2016

United for Shaping the Future, for a better world

We, women Speakers of Parliament from more than 30 countries, met on 12 and 13 December 2016 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, for the Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the UAE Federal National Council for the purpose of shaping the future of parliaments for a better world.

(i) *Affirming* the 38 provisions of the Declaration of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament entitled *Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want*; and *reiterating* the principles and recommended actions of the summary report of the Tenth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament entitled *Innovating for Gender Equality: Making development, peace and democracy a reality for women and men*,

(ii) *Cognizant* of the challenges our world is facing today, and of the geopolitical, socio-economic, environmental and technological megatrends, which are accelerating the pace of change, and which are likely to affect quality of life for generations to come,

(iii) *Committed* to contributing to the realization of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the results of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,

(iv) *Also committed* to contributing to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as to addressing all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls,

(v) *Emphasizing* that today's megatrends are intertwined and interdependent, and that tackling them requires a holistic approach, which encompasses geopolitical, socioeconomic, environmental, demographic and technological responses,

(vi) *Stressing* our willingness and duty to work together to address the challenges we face, as well as our conviction that parliamentarians must form a united front and work towards a better future with the other branches of power, the private sector, civil society and the community at large,

(vii) *Asserting* that solutions to the challenges that our world faces cannot be realized without democratic governance, respect for human rights and the achievement of gender equality at all levels throughout the world; and *recalling* that the attainment of gender equality is not only a question of human rights but also a matter of efficiency that would harness all the potential and talent required for innovation and transformation,

(viii) *Recognizing* that young people should be included as active participants in the decisions we make,

(ix) *Convinced* of the need to take account of the interests and aspirations of future generations in our parliamentary work, and *committed to* working for change through collective action,

We stand:

(1) **“United for Shaping the Future”** by committing to work together and forge partnerships across government, the private sector and society at large in order to address the challenges that our world faces;

We agree that:

(2) Peace and security. Our parliaments are crucial in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security. As representative institutions, through their legislative and oversight functions, they can take effective measures to prevent violence and conflict as well as to promote conflict resolution through peaceful means, including dialogue and reconciliation, with full respect for international law. Inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation can advance peace across nations. Winning the war on terrorism will require parliaments to come together and work with governments, civil society - including youth -, religious groups and leaders. Promoting peace and security is underpinned by democratic governance and institutions, the protection and promotion of human rights and the values of tolerance, inclusiveness, diversity, equality and dialogue.

(3) Inclusive society. Regardless of gender, age, race, class, geography or religion, inclusive societies should empower their members. Marginalization can lead to violent extremism and even terrorism. While the world has made progress, much work remains to be done on every front, especially in the critical area of gender equality. To achieve a more inclusive society, parliaments must be more proactive in addressing discrimination and eliminating violence against women and girls. They should ensure that every woman, child and adolescent across the world survives, thrives and reaches their full potential. They should promote girls' education. Parliaments must also advance tolerance, economic equity, equal access to education and employment, women's economic empowerment, and equal participation in the political process, including decision-making institutions.

(4) Economic prosperity and well-being. Megatrends across many sectors affect economic prosperity and well-being. Such trends include transformative innovation in science and technology, changing geopolitical landscapes, resource scarcity, insecurity, hyper-urbanization and aging populations. Major challenges for the global economy continue to include: high and persistent unemployment rates, especially among young people; high indebtedness in developed and developing countries; slow growth; and rising inequality. As such, parliaments need to develop holistic frameworks and action plans that tackle these challenges, address inequalities, take advantage of the opportunities created by the megatrends mentioned above and promote equitable and sustainable economic growth across and within nations.

(5) Climate change and resource scarcity. Our parliaments can and should promote the ratification of the Paris Agreement and take all necessary action to implement it. They should implement the IPU Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change. Parliaments must enact practical and appropriate legislation and establish regulatory frameworks to progressively reduce their nations' carbon footprints, while continuing to grow their economies and to create opportunities for all, including the most marginalized. Through their legislative and oversight work, parliaments must promote the innovation needed to provide clean energy on a massive scale. They must contribute to protecting and ensuring the rational use of water resources. Parliaments must also consider legislation that will protect natural habitats, biodiversity and the overall ecosystem. Internationally, parliaments need to ensure funding that will preserve and rehabilitate the carbon sinks of the world.

(6) Citizen participation. Parliaments now have tremendous opportunities to dramatically increase citizen participation through mobile communication platforms and social media; but they also need to enact appropriate legislation and work with governments and the judiciary to limit the abuse of mobile communications for criminal purposes or by terrorist organizations for political gain.

(7) Advancing tolerance. Intolerance leads to violence, discrimination and terrorism. Parliaments can and should contribute to promoting tolerance through: legislation, policy-making and parliamentary debates; and by working with governments, the judiciary, civil society and religious leaders. Parliaments should lead by example, by acting with propriety as representative and inclusive institutions in their composition, processes and procedures.

(8) Innovations in science and technology. Our quality of life could improve significantly as a result of scientific and technological innovation. However, this could come at a significant cost, unless parliaments begin to find ways of addressing the ethical and moral implications of technological advances, including: human rights such as privacy; global issues such as security; economic issues such as the digital divide leading to a larger knowledge divide; and employment such as humanoid robots replacing humans.

We commit to:

(9) *Placing* the well-being of our people, peace, prosperity, and the integrity of both our planet and humanity at the core of our parliamentary strategic objectives, and making them central to our development efforts;

(10) Through parliamentary action, *making a contribution* that responds to the needs of all people, including those on the economic and social margins, and improves the health and socio-economic well-being of all, particularly women and girls.

(11) *Using* the opportunities offered by the digital era to open up parliaments, *engaging* citizens in parliamentary processes and *increasing* international cooperation so as to narrow the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

(12) *Proposing* to the IPU to consider an international parliamentary declaration on tolerance aiming at promoting and upholding human values and the principle of tolerance to advance peace and security and combat terrorism and violent extremism;

(13) *Working* with all stakeholders, executive bodies, private sector and civil society representatives, especially young people, in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, which is our agenda for the future;

(14) *Sharing* knowledge and experiences so as to promote democratic standards, tolerance and mutual respect, and to prepare for the future;

Action imperatives:

(15) Focusing on the future. (a) Encourage the IPU to consider establishing a structure on the future which would assess future changes and global trends as well as their impact on people's lives, and which would mobilize efforts of parliaments and stakeholders in responding to these challenges; (b) Consider establishing in every parliament an appropriately resourced structure for horizon-scanning, such as a committee on the future and/or administrative unit on the future, which would inform parliament's legislative and oversight work regarding the implications of megatrends that affect our world, and which would act as a means to ensuring a better quality of life for future generations.

(16) Strategic planning. (a) Develop new or modify existing strategic plans to better meet the challenges of the future, in light of the megatrends and challenges that we face today and are likely to face in the future. Strategic planning efforts should include measures to ensure that parliaments are fit for purpose and able to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) Encourage parliaments to review existing strategic plans to reflect the conclusions of our Summit; (c) Encourage the IPU to consider developing a global Code of ethics for parliaments in order to address the ethical implications of technological advances.

(17) Promoting youth empowerment. (a) Develop regulations, mechanisms and processes within every parliament to increase youth representation and facilitate youth contribution to legislation and policymaking; (b) Promote youth economic empowerment through legislation, policies and action plans that create opportunities for education and employment; (c) Promote youth cultural empowerment through relevant policies and strategies including education; (d) Contribute to bridging the technology gap among young people.

(18) Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. (a) Increase and accelerate women's participation in every aspect of legislative and oversight work with a view to attaining gender equality in politics and in parliaments by 2030, including by using electoral gender quotas where applicable; (b) Review the functioning of our parliaments to ensure that they are gender-sensitive institutions and that they provide family friendly facilities; (c) Take action to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; (d) Address pay gaps, inequality of access to economic opportunities and harassment in the work place; (e) Ensure that women and girls have access to health and education in all instances, including in times of war and conflict; and (f) Work in partnership with women and men to those ends.

(19) Following-up to the Abu Dhabi Declaration. Urge the IPU to follow-up on the proposals and commitments included in the Abu Dhabi Declaration and accommodate them in its work programme in such a manner as to promote continued and strategic partnerships with government authorities, scientists, academia, youth and representatives from the private sector and civil society.

(20) Institutionalizing our united efforts. (a) Within three months of this Declaration submit proposals for establishing a coordination mechanism within the IPU for discussion at the IPU Executive Committee meeting and at the Forum of Women Parliamentarians during the 136th IPU Assembly (Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 2017), in order to set timelines for the action imperatives listed above; (b) Mobilize financial resources to implement this Declaration; (c) Use IPU Assemblies to further the goals and actions of this Declaration.

We are profoundly grateful to the IPU, and the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates as the gracious host of this Summit, for bringing together leaders from across parliaments, governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society in order to participate in our debates.

United we stand in shaping the future, for a better world.



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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Governing Council
Item 7

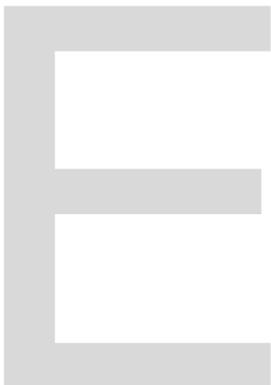
CL/200/7(j)-R.1
27 March 2017

Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

(j) Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 61st session of the Commission on the status of Women

(New York, 17 March 2017)

1. On 17 March 2017, the IPU and UN Women held their annual parliamentary meeting on the occasion of UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.
2. This year's event was entitled *Empowering parliaments to empower women – Making the economy work for women*. It was very well attended, with 191 participants, including 139 members – of whom 13 were men – from parliaments of 47 countries.
3. The meeting was opened by Mr. M. Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, and Ms. P. Mlambo-Ngucka, Executive Director of UN Women, and chaired by Ms. M. Mensah-Williams, President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and Chairperson of the National Council of the Parliament of Namibia. The other speakers included members of parliament, experts and representatives of international organizations.
4. The debates focused on parliamentary strategies to achieve women's economic empowerment. In the first session, participants discussed means to eliminate legal and social barriers to women's economic empowerment. In the following session, they analyzed how parliaments can empower women at work, in both the formal and informal economies. In the third and final session, the focus was on how to promote women's financial inclusion, in particular by ensuring women's access to financial services and business opportunities.
5. The participants agreed on the following points:
 - Women's economic empowerment requires addressing cross-cutting issues, such as a gender stereotypes, discriminatory legislation, gender-based violence and unequal access to education and decision-making positions. Nearly 155 countries in the world still have gender-discriminatory legislation. There is an urgent need to repeal any legal provision that discriminate against women. The participants stressed the need to enhance women's political participation, which currently stands at merely 23.3 per cent in parliament on average. Having more women in decision-making positions will promote women's economic empowerment. The participants urged the IPU to pursue its efforts in this regard in collaboration with national parliaments and partners, such as UN Women.



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- Parliaments must review labour and social policies so as to promote equality at work. They must promote affordable childcare and ensure that unpaid care work is shared between men and women so as to ensure equality in paid work. This is key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5, and in particular target 5.4. Legislation on equal pay is also needed. Parliaments must also provide for social protection coverage across all sectors, including those where women predominate – such as the care economy and the informal sector – but also for self-employed women. They must ensure work is a safe work-place for women and combat sexual harassment. Also, measures are needed to ensure that women are at the leadership of companies.
- Parliaments should promote women's ability to make economic decisions – so as to enable them to own land, access credit, freely invest, make savings and start their own businesses. This is a key element of SDG 5, in particular target 5.A. Specific, targeted measures for women's financial inclusion are required. Financial services must be accessible and affordable, but women also need support to increase their chances of accessing available opportunities. Budgets and fiscal policies must also be scrutinized through a gender lens to ensure that they deliver for women.

6. The participants also identified cross-cutting issues that also need to be addressed by parliaments.

- Women are not a homogenous group; some may need specific measures to have equal economic opportunities. Women with disabilities require particular attention and need to be represented in political decision-making.
- All legislation on women's economic empowerment requires strong oversight from parliamentarians to ensure that it is implemented, resourced, monitored and delivers for women.
- Data collection, in particular sex-disaggregated data, is needed so as to inform parliamentary decisions and promote gender-sensitive reform. That way, parliaments can also ensure accountability.
- It is crucial to form partnerships, including with fellow women, as well as with men and financial institutions and civil society organizations.

7. The parliamentary meeting was webcast and can be viewed at; <http://webtv.un.org/meetings-events/watch/empowering-parliaments-to-empower-women-making-the-economy-work-for-women/5363532505001>. It received good coverage on social media.

8. Women's economic empowerment will continue to be at the core of IPU's work and objectives. The proceedings of the 2017 IPU-UN Women parliamentary meeting at CSW, alongside the resolution on *Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development* to be adopted at the 136th IPU Assembly, will inform IPU's continued efforts to advance women's economic empowerment. Parliaments are encouraged to use these tools in their work and debates at the national level.

9. In addition to the Parliamentary meeting, the IPU also organised a series of side events on the occasion of the 61st session of the CSW. The side events took place between 14 and 16 March and were all very well attended, with 50 to 60 participants from governments, parliaments and civil society at each event. The focus was on: violence against women in politics; women's participation in politics; repealing discrimination in nationality laws; preventing violent extremism by changing economic policies and promoting gender equality; and, protecting children from violence.

10. Also on the occasion of the 61st session of the CSW, on 15 March, the IPU and UN Women launched the *Map Women in politics 2017* at a joint press conference. The event received wide media coverage with more than 500 articles using freshly released data on women in parliament and in executive positions.



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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 3(d)

FEM/25/3(d)-Inf.1
24 March 2017

Debate on

Follow-up to the IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments

In October 2012, IPU Members adopted a [Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments](#). The Plan of Action defines a gender-sensitive parliament as one in which there are no barriers – substantive, structural or cultural – to women’s full participation and to equality between its men and women members and staff.

The Plan identifies seven key areas for action: equality in participation, strong legal and policy frameworks, gender mainstreaming tools, gender-sensitive parliamentary infrastructure and culture, women’s and men’s shared responsibility for gender equality, political parties as gender equality champions and gender-sensitive recruitment and staff development policies.

One key step is to take stock of progress made and identify persisting challenges. The IPU encourages parliaments to engage in self-assessments or gender audits as a means to inform and trigger gender-sensitive action. To facilitate such reviews, the IPU recently published a self-assessment toolkit, [Evaluating the gender-sensitivity of parliaments](#).

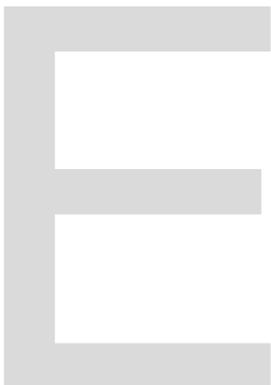
The discussion will start with a presentation of the IPU self-assessment toolkit, which will be followed by a Q&A with panelists and an exchange of views and experiences.

Participants are invited to share good practices and address the following questions:

- Why is it important to take stock of the level of gender-sensitivity of parliament?
- What are the main challenges and benefits of engaging in a gender-sensitive self-assessment?
- What are the lessons learned from gender-sensitive self-assessments? How can follow-up be ensured and how can positive change be achieved?

Panelists :

- Mr. David Ekwee Ethuro, Speaker of the Senate (Kenya)
- Ms Liz McInnen, Member of the House of Commons, United Kingdom



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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

FEM/25/4-Inf.1
30 March 2017

Contributing to the work of the 136th Assembly from a gender perspective

Information note

I. Arrangements for the debate

1. In order to contribute to item 5 of the agenda of the 136th Assembly from a gender perspective, women parliamentarians will divide into two working groups from 11 a.m. until 12:30 p.m. They will debate the following sub-themes of the draft resolution *Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development* (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade):

Theme 1 - Reforming regulatory frameworks and changing unfavourable cultural norms: a must for the financial inclusion of women <i>Chair: Ms. Parvez (Pakistan); Rapporteur: Ms. Ataulajhan (Canada)</i>	<i>Celebrity Hall (first floor, BICC)</i>
Theme 2 - Promoting access to financial services and opportunities for the most vulnerable women <i>Chair: Ms. Locatelli (Italy) ; Rapporteur: Ms. Al Kharoosi (Oman)</i>	<i>Windy Town (first floor, BICC)</i>

2. At the end of the discussion, each working group will agree on the key ideas that the rapporteur will present to the afternoon plenary sitting of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

3. Before the Forum splits into groups, the co-rapporteurs of the resolution of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade will present the resolution to the Forum.

4. The rapporteurs of the working groups will be in charge of drafting gender-related amendments to the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade. The amendments will be drafted in consultation with the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, the President of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and the Chairs of the working groups. Amendments will be submitted on behalf of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the Standing Committee on Sustainable Development, Finance and Trade at its first sitting on Sunday 2 April from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Group 1 – Reforming regulatory frameworks and changing unfavourable cultural norms: a must for the financial inclusion of women

Many obstacles lie on the way to the financial inclusion of women. Discriminatory legislation, gender-based violence, gender stereotypes and discriminatory social norms and customs all limit women's access to financial inclusion and economic empowerment. Policies and legislation must be gender-sensitive so as to provide financial services and economic empowerment that work for women.

Participants in Group 1 are invited to discuss the following main issues:

- *How to eliminate discrimination in rights related to family, land, property and freedom of movement;*
- *How to eliminate discriminatory aspects of labour and social security law, especially in the informal sector and care economy, where the majority of workers are women;*
- *How to ensure that social and economic policies are designed, implemented and monitored to facilitate women's financial inclusion;*
- *The importance of gender-sensitive budgeting for women's economic empowerment and financial inclusion;*
- *What role can development cooperation play to ensure that financial inclusion is grounded in a favourable environment for women;*
- *How to tackle discriminatory social norms and customs that prevent women from accessing financial services and support.*

Group 2 – Promoting access to financial services and opportunities for the most vulnerable women

Women make up 70 per cent of the world's poor. The Sustainable Development Goals promise to address the needs of the most vulnerable and to leave no one behind. If financial inclusion is to be an effective strategy for drastically reducing the feminization of poverty, we must ensure that the financial services offered actually reach and really benefit the most vulnerable and marginalized women. Programmes to improve women's access to financial services and support to their economic empowerment should therefore take into account the reality and rights of all women. That should include rural women, women in crisis situations, and women facing multiple layers of discrimination based on ethnicity, marital status, HIV status, migrant or refugee status, age, disability etc.

Participants in Group 2 are invited to discuss and share good practices on:

- *How to adapt and expand access for all women to financial services, including formal credit, micro-credit, savings accounts, health insurance, social benefits, childcare services and support.*
- *How to reach out to and raise the awareness of groups of marginalized women about economic opportunities and financial services from which they could benefit.*
- *How to provide different groups of women with targeted training and mentorship programmes.*



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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Standing Committee on
Sustainable Development,
Finance and Trade

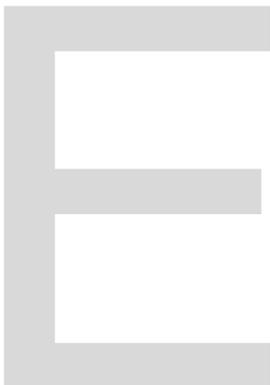
C-II/136/DR
10 January 2017

Promoting enhanced international cooperation on the SDGs, in particular on the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development

***Draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs
Mr. N.K. Premachandran (India) and Ms. G. Cuevas (Mexico)***

The 136th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Reaffirming* that sustainable development refers to the idea of development that meets the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs,
- (2) *Expressing* satisfaction that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is based on a holistic approach to sustainable development with a reasonably balanced emphasis on economic growth, social development and environmental protection,
- (3) *Accepting* that one challenge of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to make sure that developmental processes are more inclusive and broad-based, allow wide participation from all segments of society, and are equally beneficial to all,
- (4) *Acknowledging* that another challenge of implementing the SDGs is to ensure effective delivery of public services by strict monitoring, regular evaluation and restructuring of public services, all of which will depend on the availability of basic infrastructure support, both in rural and urban areas,
- (5) *Also acknowledging* that eradicating poverty in all its forms is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, and that to this end, sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, as well as empowering the poor through education and skills development must all be promoted,
- (6) *Further acknowledging* that women's financial inclusion is an engine of development that fights poverty, reduces inequalities, and improves children's health, nutrition and schooling,
- (7) *Underscoring* that, according to the Global Findex of the World Bank, women are 15 per cent less likely than men to have a bank account, and nearly 50 per cent of women across the world do not have a bank account,
- (8) *Considering* that the 2030 Agenda and its 17 SDGs recognize the importance of financial inclusion as part of eradicating poverty and achieving well-being for all,



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(9) *Recalling* that in 2016, the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, established the High-Level Panel on Women's Economic Empowerment to address the specific economic issues that affect women and to support both the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its promise to leave no one behind,

(10) *Bearing in mind* that the Outcome Document of the General Debate endorsed by the 131st IPU Assembly points out that achieving gender equality and ending violence against women is the responsibility of both men and women, and that effective change requires both a strong institutional framework and national bodies with the power to take action,

(11) *Mindful* that access to formal financing institutions helps to increase the equality of income between men and women, generate employment, reduce people's vulnerability to emergency situations, facilitate entrepreneurship, and foster both medium- and long-term saving and planning activities,

(12) *Reiterating* that mobilizing domestic and international financial resources, as well as capacity-building and technology transfer to developing countries on favorable terms will all play a vital role in providing essential services, public goods and low-cost money transfers or remittances,

(13) *Recognizing* that parliaments have a strong obligation to champion international law on the empowerment of women and adapt their national legislation accordingly,

(14) *Underscoring* that the role of parliaments in embracing the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development should be conceived in accordance with international and national laws and with the 2030 Agenda,

1. *Invites* parliaments to promote the development of national and international public policies and strategies that focus on eliminating the legal and cultural barriers which discriminate against women and prevent their full inclusion in the financial systems of each of all countries;
2. *Urges* parliaments to identify the needs and limitations of each region and society by making a complete diagnosis based on disaggregated information, which will allow the root causes of this challenge to be addressed, both according to its particular circumstances and from a gender perspective;
3. *Calls on* parliaments and political parties to adopt legal frameworks and policies that increase financial inclusion in general, the financial inclusion of women in particular, and gender perspectives in all financial policies;
4. *Proposes* the implementation of educational programmes aimed at capitalizing on the knowledge and expertise associated with financial services and new technologies;
5. *Requests* parliaments to promote the inclusion of women in the extensive use of widely accessible information technologies that facilitate women's access to digital financial services, and enable innovative initiatives such as establishing digital payment systems, electronic money and access to accounts via mobile telephony;
6. *Calls on* parliaments to encourage private companies and banks to design a portfolio of attractive financial products that provide incentives for women to develop good savings habits;
7. *Invites* parliaments to develop cooperative links with international financial institutions, such as the World Bank, for the implementation of programmes aimed at promoting the financial inclusion of women;
8. *Encourages* parliaments to promote partnerships with governments and civil society so as to accomplish financial and digital inclusion, especially for women;

9. *Urges* parliamentarians to develop a distinct and specific method to facilitate the financial inclusion of poor women, which should ensure that they have access to credit, as well as to financial and business training;
10. *Calls on* parliaments to ensure that women have continued access to formal credit in order to close the gender gap and empower women entrepreneurs worldwide;
11. *Strongly urges* parliaments to encourage reforms that offer women the right to access economic resources and financial services on an unbiased basis;
12. *Calls on* parliamentarians to encourage the private banking sector to reduce the costs of opening and maintaining a savings account and to design financial products tailored to women's specific needs;
13. *Advises* governments and parliaments to assume responsibility for championing the financial inclusion of women as a driver of development.



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136th IPU Assembly

Dhaka, Bangladesh, 1- 5 April 2017



Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 5

FEM/25/5-Inf.1
24 March 2017

Debate on

Women's political participation: a new impetus to break the glass ceiling

Gender equality in politics is essential to democracy and to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Yet, progress has been very slow at all levels. The global average of women in national parliaments is 23.3 per cent, up from 22.6 per cent a year ago. At this pace, it would take another 50 years to reach gender parity in parliament.

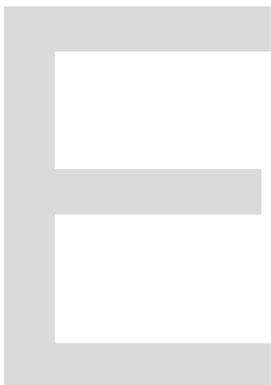
While quotas have proved effective in making progress in many parliaments, ensured a minimum level of women's representation but have not always extended beyond that. Achieving gender equality in politics will therefore require a new impetus, strong political will and more ambitious measures.

The discussion will start with a presentation of IPU's latest data on women in politics. Participants will hear a presentation on the IPU-UN Women Map [Women in Politics: 2017](#). They will also be briefed on the [progress and setbacks of women in parliament in 2016](#).

Following the presentation the participants will exchange views, experiences and good practices and identify priorities to achieve gender equality in politics.

Participants are invited to:

- Share information on recent developments in women's participation in parliament and in government;
- Present/Draw lessons from measures, including quotas, that have been most effective in enhancing women's political participation;
- Identify persisting challenges to bringing women's political participation to the next level, and to moving towards gender parity;
- Identify means to broaden the pool of women candidates in elections.



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136th IPU Assembly

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Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 6

FEM/25/6-Inf.1
24 March 2017

Debate on

Empowering girls today to achieve sustainable development tomorrow

Gender equality features prominently on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. But if we are to deliver for women by 2030, we must start empowering girls now.

In recent years, girls' access to education and health has improved. Nevertheless, they continue to face both gender- and age-based discrimination, violence and marginalization. Harmful practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, continue to challenge both the present and future for girls.

Gender equality objectives will only be met if we dedicate sufficient attention, political will and resources to the empowerment of girls today.

Participants in the panel discussion will address the following questions:

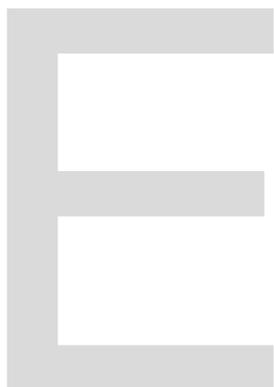
- How will empowering girls help to achieve sustainable development?
- What are effective actions and strategies to protect girls' rights, promote their health and wellbeing, and facilitate their social, educational and economic empowerment?
- What are the successes, challenges and good practices in eliminating child marriage and female genital mutilation?
- What are the priority actions for parliaments? How can parliamentarians contribute to empowering girls and to fulfilling their rights?

The discussion will allow participants to share good practices and to identify priorities that parliaments can establish in order to uphold girl's rights, promote their well-being and ensure their empowerment.

The discussion will start with introductory remarks from panellists. Participants will then exchange views and experiences.

Panellists:

- Mr. Augusto Lopez Claros, Director of the Global Indicators Group, Development Economics (World Bank)
- Prof. Nkandu Luo, Member of Parliament, Member of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, former Minister (Zambia)
- Mr. Ian Askew, Director of Reproductive Health and Research (WHO)
- Ms. Sajeda Farisa Kabir, Head of Human Rights and Legal Services Program, BRAC (Bangladesh)



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