



# INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

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## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE IPU EXPERT MISSION

*This mission was conducted to advise the Subcommission tasked with drafting the election law on how to promote the representation of women in the future Constituent Assembly of Tunisia. The Subcommission was formed by the High Commission for the realization of goals of the revolution, political reform and democratic transition.*

The citizen-led revolution can bring genuine democracy only if men and women participate as equal partners in the construction of a new society, a tenet enshrined in the Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1997.

The inclusion of both men and women in the management of public affairs is a prerequisite for political, economic and social development; one that meets the aspirations of Tunisian men and women, in particular Tunisian youth.

The historical process of democratic reform currently under way in Tunisia is a window of opportunity to fulfil these aspirations, particularly that of parity.

Based on consultations with women politicians and members of civil society organizations, the Subcommission tasked with drafting the election law, youth movements and representatives of national agencies and international organizations, the mission wishes to make the following recommendations:

1. Clearly and strongly reaffirm the principle of gender equality in the draft election law;
2. Adopt an election system based on proportional representation, which is the most conducive to a balanced representation of men and women, especially if coupled with large constituencies. This system has to provide for the following:
  - Gender parity of candidates on party lists;
  - Strict adherence to the rule that every other candidate on the list must be a woman;
  - Rejection by the independent election commission of lists that do not respect the principles of parity and of alternating women and men candidates, with a reasonable deadline to allow the non-compliant party to correct its list; and
  - A common ceiling on contributions and campaign expenses.
3. Facilitate the political participation of women in the electoral process, notably through:
  - Awareness campaigns on the importance of having women in politics;
  - Encouraging women to take part in elections both as candidates and voters;
  - Equal access for men and women candidates to public media; and
  - A balanced representation of men and women in the future independent election commission, with consideration given to the equal participation of men and women in the election process in the work of the former.
4. In view of future phases, incorporate or maintain the principles of gender equality and non-discrimination against women in the future constitution of Tunisia and ensure that gender issues remain a priority of the future Constituent Assembly.

Should the Commission opt for a uninominal majority system with two rounds of voting, which is not recommended by the mission, sanctions should be provided for in the framework of State funding of parties, whereby those parties that do not respect the principle of parity vis-à-vis their candidates are penalized by receiving less or no funding. In view of the fact that this election system does not favour the representation of society in all its diversity, innovative ideas should be developed to reconcile the concern for respecting gender parity with territory- and diversity-sensitive representation.

Tunis, 24 March 2011

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