

Canadian Group
Inter-Parliamentary Union



Groupe canadien
Union interparlementaire

SPEAKING NOTES – HEAD OF DELEGATION

General Debate

“Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful world”

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President of the Canadian Group of the
Inter-Parliamentary Union**

**145th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Fellow parliamentarians and colleagues,

- Before I begin my remarks, I want to say on behalf of the entire Canadian delegation how delighted we are to be joining you once again in person at an IPU Assembly.
- That is not to say that we have not been active participants in the activities of the IPU over the last three years. Among other contributions, the Canadian group proposed amendments to draft resolutions and submitted remarks on the themes of the general debate for recent Assemblies.
- Et nous sommes maintenant à Kigali, de retour avec vous, plus motivés que jamais à l'idée de contribuer à nos délibérations et d'apporter une perspective parlementaire aux défis mondiaux.
- Ce n'est pas qu'un simple hasard si le thème général de l'Assemblée au Rwanda est « Égalité des sexes et parlements sensibles au genre : moteurs du changement pour un monde plus résilient et pacifique ».
- Combien parmi nous ont observé le Rwanda émerger des horreurs du génocide en 1994 pour devenir un modèle de parité entre les sexes au parlement, avec l'appui d'une constitution favorisant l'égalité des genres.
- Heureusement, le Rwanda n'a pas agi seul. Le Canada et d'autres pays ont aussi fait des progrès, non seulement en reconnaissant la valeur de l'égalité des genres et des parlements sensibles au genre, mais aussi en incorporant à leurs actions les principes de l'équité entre les sexes, particulièrement lorsqu'il s'agit de situations de crise.
- Take, for example, Canada's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic recovery plan, both of which deliberately reflect the gendered consequences of this global crisis.
 - The Canadian approach was designed and influenced by a cabinet that is 50% women, including a female Deputy Prime Minister and the first ever for Canada female Finance Minister.
 - Of the 14 provincial and territorial chief medical officers who held daily briefings during the pandemic, 7 were women.
 - Imagine the role models an entire generation of Canadian girls now have.
- Was the Canadian response perfect? By no means. Indeed, the House of Commons Committee on the Status of Women made 21 recommendations to the Government of Canada in its March 2021 report on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women.
- One such recommendation called for the collection and dissemination of timely data, disaggregated by gender and ethnicity, to ensure that government programs meet the needs of those they are intended to assist.
- I strongly believe that disaggregated data helps us understand what is going on at the micro level in society and how we should target assistance to build capacity and drive change. Armed with this knowledge, we can provide better public services, as well as empower women parliamentarians and promote gender equality across the country.
- In this spirit, I am very pleased that Canada has made a third in a series of investments – 2 million dollars Canadian over 3 years, for a total to date of 4.4 million dollars Canadian to support the IPU's work on gender equality in parliament. The funding will also go to support parliamentary leadership to integrate the specific needs of women and girls from health, social, economic and law-making perspectives.

- To conclude, our debate is useful, but it is not the first on gender equality at the IPU, and is unlikely to be the last. Nor should it be. We are hearing about best practices, but also that there is still a long way to go. Let us recommit to making that distance that much shorter at our next debate.
- Thank you for your attention. And thank you to our host, the Parliament of Rwanda, for your very generous hospitality.