

**145<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly**  
**Kigali, Rwanda // 11-15 October 2022**

**General Debate on**  
***Gender equality and gender-sensitive parliaments as  
drivers of change for a more resilient and peaceful  
world***

Excellencies,  
Dear Colleagues,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to begin by condemning the new Russian attacks on Ukraine and the illegal annexation of the Ukrainian provinces. The war must be stopped, the revisionists must be defeated.

We stand by Ukraine and we reiterate our firm position that the International Law is our common ground and should be respected by all countries.

Coming to our subject,

**Gender equality** touches many aspects of our lives and although most of our societies have been working for decades to achieve Gender equality, we are not there yet.

One question should be answered. To what degree gender equality exists and which are the necessary policies to be imposed in order to reassure gender equality? For example, in Greece, a National Plan «2021-2025» on Gender Equality was elaborated and structured in 4 axes:

- the prevention and combating of violence against women and domestic violence

- comprising actions for the implementation of the Istanbul Convention

- the equal participation of women in decision making processes,

- the equal participation of women in the labor market and gender mainstreaming in sectoral policies.

In this context the new labor law includes provisions which aim at the empowerment of gender equality in the workplace and the elimination of sexual harassment. Furthermore, particular emphasis was given to initiatives and projects which promote the balance between work and family life, support working mothers and support the creation of childcare units within large companies.

Moreover, Greece belongs to the eight EU member states which have adopted national mandatory gender quotas (25% for the under-represented sex) for listed companies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Parliaments function as mirrors of our societies but they also work as a role model. As such, they have the responsibility to promote and achieve gender equality.

A gender-sensitive parliament ensures that there are no barriers between women and men in participating equally and having equal influence in decision-making processes. Although progress is made, there is still work to be done.

Good practices can be easily adopted, like conducting campaigns on the importance of women's participation, highlighting achievements of women politicians and parliamentarians. Besides, gender quotas ensure a minimum participation of women in Parliament.

In Greece, for instance, the gender quota was increased from 1/3 to 40% for the candidates at parliamentary elections and the European Parliament elections.

But gender-sensitive parliaments have to do more to introduce women to their structures. Statistics show, that there is no gender equality across specific committee portfolios. Women are under-represented in committees on economic or infrastructural functions but they are most represented in committees with socio-cultural function.

Women are less in parliamentary leadership positions or chairing committees, counteracting equal influence on policy and a chance to change old, entrenched parliamentary structures. Such distortions can be easily corrected.

Furthermore, the existence of a parliamentary committee dedicated to equality, including gender-equality - with legislative competence - should be considered.

Except for the composition and processes, the production of gender-sensitive legislation is of extremely high importance. Parliaments are asked to produce legislation to strengthen the legal framework for addressing gender-based violence, the guarantee of work-life balance and the support of working mothers and of course to implement these policies into Parliament.

Moreover, Parliaments should promote gender equality by public actions and by sharing information on gender

equality policies or initiatives via their websites, social media or TV.

We have to admit, that although many positive steps for legal equality have been made, more work is needed to be done to achieve actual equality. Gender stereotypes are still existing in society and in Parliaments.

In order to improve the everyday life of all citizens and ensure a more peaceful, harmonic and gender-balanced world, it is our responsibility to continually work for the removal of barriers, to propose best practices-actions and legal frameworks in order finally to eliminate gender inequality.

Thank you.