

145th IPU Assembly

Kigali, Rwanda

General debate on the theme

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

Statement by the leader of the delegation from Nepal, the Right
Honorable GANESH PRASAD TIMILSINA, Chairperson of the National
Assembly of the Federal Parliament.

Your Excellency the President of this Assembly,

I thank you for this opportunity to put my statement on behalf of the
Federal Parliament of Nepal.

Mr./Madam President,

We are living in a world surrounded by crises. Whether it be health
epidemics, climate crisis, armed conflict or economic crisis, if we analyze
these crises closely, we can notice a surprising similarity. None of these
crises are gender neutral.

Crisis magnifies the inequalities and discrimination prevalent in the
society. Gender inequality is no exception. For example, the COVID-19
pandemic led to a steep rise in violence against women. UNFPA has
estimated around 30 million incidents of domestic and sexual violence

against women in six months of the lockdown. If we consider the incidents that went unreported, the real number could be even higher. Many pregnant women and new mothers lost their lives owing to the lack of specialized health care needed at such times. COVID pandemic has affected women more than men in employment as well. The existing social structures left the women with the responsibility to look after the children, which meant they had to leave their jobs. Add to it the fact that the most severely affected areas happened to be the service sector, where a larger proportion of women are employed.

Climate change and the disasters caused because of it has also affected women unfairly. As climate change leads to reduced productivity resulting in the shortage of food, the traditionally oppressed women become the first victims of hunger. The women displaced as a consequence of flood, landslides and similar climate induced disasters are vulnerable to trafficking and sexual violence.

The impact of climate change is higher in mountainous countries such as Nepal. Increasing temperature melts the snowcaps which affects the island countries and the countries at the lower riparian zone too. Thus, the excessive carbon emitting industrial countries should increase their investment and commitment towards the climate risk reduction. They must compensate the low carbon emitting countries in the form of development cooperation and poverty alleviation programs.

Mr./Madam President,

To rid the world from the largely prevalent health crisis, climate crisis and conflict induced crisis and make the world more resilient and peaceful, the empowerment and inclusion of the women who have borne a huge

consequence of these crises is a must. Such complex crises cannot be resolved without the active and decisive participation of the women. Breaking the dominance of men in the decision-making process and including women equally will certainly introduce new ideas and perspectives. The fact that women leadership is capable to face the most daunting challenges has been established by the most excellent performance of New Zealand in COVID pandemic prevention and management.

The inherent differences between men and women make them complements. The decisions made in the absence or inactivity of one of them cannot be as effective and mature as those made in the participation and activity of both. It is now time to end the centuries old inequalities to eliminate dissents and use the resulting positive energy to fight against the global challenges.

Mr./Madam President,

Parliament should take a lead to establish gender equality. Significant progress has been made in this regard too. The proportion of women in Parliaments globally has reached from 13% in 2000 to 26% in 2022. The output accomplished by today's host Rwanda in this area has been exemplary.

Nepal has guaranteed one-third representation of women in federal Parliament and provincial Assemblies in its Constitution of 2015. Currently women comprise of 34% of the Federal Parliament and provincial assemblies.

The women MPs raise issues of women's problems as well as issues of global concern such as SDGs and climate change. This July, the Federal

Parliament passed a bill amending laws on sexual violence. This amendment is expected to reduce the unfortunate situation where the statute of limitation expires by the time the victim recovers from the trauma and goes for legal remedy. The strong voices and initiative of women MPs played a big role in this amendment.

Mr./Madam President,

It is imperative to end all forms of inequalities to achieve sustainable solution to world's burning problems. Gender inequality is a common problem of every country. We need to unite in a common pledge to ensure effective role of parliaments to solve this problem.

I thank the Rwanda Parliament and government for the warm hospitality offered to me and my delegation in this beautiful city of Kigali.

I thank everyone for your kind attention.

Thank You.