

Madame president, dear colleagues

The social development goal at the center of our debate asks that we as members of parliament promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels of society.

We cannot achieve these goals without the full democratic participation of women at all levels of society and in our legislative assemblies. We are regrettably very far from achieving these goals and, it seems, not very mindful of their importance.

Our countries will not reach their potential unless we allow the full participation of women in public life and politics. The workforce needs women as much as men. Women belong in the public sphere. They should not be barred from participation in society, relegated to its margins and often subject to poverty.

We, as parliamentarians, need to put the fight for women's rights at the forefront of our politics. The right to education is universal and fundamental to economic development.

Madame president,

In my home country Iceland women went on a day long strike on the 24th of October to demonstrate their power and solidarity, to demand income equality and protest the endemic violence against women.

It delights me to report that a 100 thousand people came together - that is one fourth of the population of Iceland!

In light of the discussion in this assembly on horrific plight of the Palestinian people and the terrorist attacks in Israel I want to use this opportunity to cast light on the importance of UN Security Council's Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security.

Women and children, girls and boys, bear an inordinante impact of wars and violence.

Women are peacemakers and an essential part of conflict prevention and peace-building. If they do not have a seat at the table there will be no peace, there will be no security, there will be no progress and development.