

15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament (15SWSP)
Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)
Monday, 28 July 2025, from 10 a.m. to 2.30 p.m.
ILO, route des Morillons 4

Excellencies,

Dr. Tulia Ackson [*IPU President*],

**Ms. Maja Riniker [*President of the
National Council of Switzerland and
President of the Summit*],**

**Distinguished Speakers and Presidents of
Parliament,**

Ladies and gentlemen,

- **It is a great honour to welcome you all to Geneva – the heart of multilateral diplomacy – for the 15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament.**
- **Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Swiss Parliament for convening**

this important gathering, and for your longstanding leadership in promoting inclusive governance and gender equality at the highest levels of political decision-making.

- **This year marks several significant milestones.**
- **Thirty years ago, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action charted a bold path for women's empowerment.**
- **Twenty-five years ago, the adoption of the Women, Peace, and Security agenda, marked a turning point by recognizing, for the first time, the crucial role women play in preventing conflict and building peace.**

- **And ten years ago, the world agreed on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, placing gender equality at its heart.**
- **Yet, despite these historic commitments, the pace of progress remains far too slow. Globally [*as of early 2025*], women hold just over 27% of seats in national parliaments and 35% in local governments – a marginal increase compared to the previous decade¹. The 2024 “super election” year, with over 12 000 parliamentary seats renewed across 59 countries, was a missed opportunity: women representation saw little change.**
- **To achieve meaningful progress, we must act with bold political will, adopt**

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/report/2025/The-Sustainable-Development-Goals-Report-2025.pdf>

transformative policies, and take deliberate actions to dismantle the structural and cultural barriers holding women back. Ambitious gender quotas, zero-tolerance policies against violence in politics and systematic support for women candidates are not optional – they are essential.

Dear parliamentarians,

- **Gender equality is not just a goal in itself – it is a prerequisite to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. SDG 5 specifically calls for women’s full and equal participation in decision-making.**

The recently adopted Pact for the Future reaffirms this imperative, stressing that none of our global objectives will be met without the full, safe, equal, and meaningful participation of women at every level of political, economic and public life.

- At the United Nations, gender equality is at the heart of our mission – both around the world and within the Organization itself. Thanks to the leadership and determination of the UN Secretary-General, we have already achieved key milestones. Notably, we have achieved gender parity among Resident Coordinators, as well as Heads and Deputy Heads of Missions in peace operations well**

ahead of schedule. This is a clear demonstration that where there is a will, there is indeed a way.

- **Here at the United Nations Office at Geneva, we have achieved gender parity at all professional levels three years ago – well ahead of the UN Secretariat’s global targets – and have sustained it ever since.**
- **We are also witnessing notable progress when it comes to gender representation within senior roles in International Geneva. Today, more than half [22 out of 42] of the UN entities and international organizations based here are led by women – for many, this marks the first time they have been led by a female executive.**

Among the Permanent Representatives and Observers to the UN in Geneva, about one third [*63 out of 209*] are now women, reflecting a positive trend in diplomatic leadership.

- **Geneva is also the birthplace of the International Gender Champions initiative – a leadership network that recently marked its tenth anniversary. It brings together decision-makers committed to breaking down gender barriers. Sometimes, simple actions – such as refusing to speak on panels lacking gender balance – send powerful signals and help reshape cultures of leadership.**

- **Many activities take place here to promote gender equality. For example, for the 80th anniversary of the United Nations and on the International Day of Women in Diplomacy in June, we organized the exhibition called “Not a Woman’s Job?”, where Member States presented photos of women with success stories in multilateralism and diplomacy. In previous years, this exhibition - which has become an annual collaborative event - featured women in sports and women in science and technology. We plan to focus our next edition next year on women leading their societies and communities.**

Ladies and gentlemen,

- **The United Nations deeply values its cooperation with parliaments, which are the beating heart of democracy. Parliamentary leadership is indispensable to the multilateral system: you craft laws, shape budgets, and hold governments to account.**
- **When women lead in these institutions, they bring new perspectives and drive policies that are more inclusive, more equitable, and just for all.**
- **Let me close by expressing my deepest appreciation to all of you for your commitment and leadership. You are not only trailblazers in your own countries –**

**you are role models for a new generation
of women leaders around the world.**

Thank you.