



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

12th Summit of Women Speakers

Women Speakers: Working so every voice counts

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Cochabamba Declaration

Women Speakers: Working so every voice counts

Cochabamba, 26 April 2018

We, *women Speakers of parliament*, gathered at the 12th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament in Cochabamba, Bolivia, on 25 and 26 April 2018, recognizing our vital role in building inclusive societies and inclusive parliaments where women and men representing all sectors of society can participate fully and freely without discrimination, harassment or violence, agreed on the following conclusions:

- (1) *Reaffirming* the Abu Dhabi Declaration of Women Speakers of December 2016, United for shaping the future, and *reiterating* a commitment to follow-up on its provisions;
- (2) *Stressing* the commitments made by the inter-parliamentary community through the adoption of the 2012 *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments* (127th IPU Assembly) and of the 2016 resolution *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective* (135th IPU Assembly);
- (3) *Highlighting* the urgency in empowering the powerless and echoing the voices of the voiceless in our respective societies and in parliament, by developing and implementing policies that are fully inclusive and gender-responsive, and *further stressing* that inclusivity is vital for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030;
- (4) *Reaffirming* that women's equal participation in politics contributes to more prosperous and peaceful societies, where there is increased social cohesion, tolerance and inclusivity;
- (5) *Recognizing* that women's underrepresentation in political decision-making is rooted in gender inequality in other spheres of life and requires a holistic approach that addresses not only legal and political obstacles, but also social, economic and cultural barriers, including gender stereotypes and discrimination in the family and in marriage;
- (6) *Welcoming* the IPU-UNDP Global Parliamentary Report 2017 titled *Parliamentary oversight: Parliament's power to hold government to account*;
- (7) *Seriously concerned* by the slow pace of progress and the insufficient action in increasing women's representation in parliaments globally;

- (8) *Further concerned* by the apparent complacency at the high prevalence of violence against women in politics;

Commit to:

1. Step up measures to achieve gender equality in parliament and parity democracy, by embarking on a process where every parliament sets targets and deadlines to gradually achieve an equal representation of women and men; and *further commit to* conducting reforms to achieve these objectives;
2. Address the root causes of women's underrepresentation, in particular by:
 - encouraging more gender-sensitive political parties and parliaments and advocating for their accountability on this matter;
 - strengthening gender equality in our laws and programmes;
 - tackling intersecting forms of discrimination against minority and young women that impede their access to political decision-making;
 - developing targeted education programmes fostering political engagement for girls and boys, youth, women and men;
 - ensuring educational policies that can build a culture of equality at an early age through school curricula, and addressing gender stereotypes through media outreach and sensitisation programmes; and,
 - engaging male and female role models that can champion gender equality.
3. Conduct an assessment of our parliamentary policies, processes, structures and outputs through a gender lens, by applying the IPU self-assessment toolkit, *Evaluating the gender sensitivity of parliament*, based on this assessment, develop an action plan to make our Parliaments more gender-sensitive, including by setting up and implementing policies that effectively address sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament;
4. Conduct reforms and developing plans and campaigns in order to open up our Parliaments to citizens across all sectors of society, regardless of their age, origin or social background, so that they are duly represented and their voices are heard and taken into account in all stages of parliamentary work; In that regard, we commit to:
 - making better use of digital tools to transform how our parliaments work, enhance citizen engagement and build a stronger, more vibrant culture of openness and transparency in Parliament;
 - strengthening ties and engagement with civil society organisations;
 - examining and taking measures and initiatives, including legal ones, to enhance youth participation in parliaments and eliminate discrimination based on age to run for office in our legal frameworks: if you are old enough to vote, you are not too young to run;
 - tracking diversity of representation in all its forms in decision-making positions and bodies within Parliament and address internal imbalances;
 - encourage political parties to engage all sectors of society;
 - produce a set of international guidelines, based on our experiences and good practices, in order to guide and ensure the elimination of political violence and harassment inflicted on women in our parliaments;

5. Enhance our capacity to hold our governments to account on all matters and in particular on gender equality, including by questioning policies and legislation from a gender perspective and mainstreaming gender in the functioning of our parliaments;
6. Advocate for the adoption of legislation to address political violence directed towards women and violence in electoral processes;
7. Take concrete, immediate and robust action that helps make our parliaments models of inclusivity and gender-sensitivity, where there is zero tolerance towards sexism, racism, stereotyping and violence.