



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

31st SESSION OF THE WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

DOCUMENTS

ITEM 2 – Adoption of the agenda

FEM/31/A.1-rev

ITEM 3 – Recent activities to advance gender equality

(b) Update on recent IPU activities for the promotion of gender equality

FEM/31/3(b)-Inf.1 – Presentation (PPT) on Women in parliament and links to recent IPU publications: report on Women in parliament in 2020 and Map on Women in Politics 2021

FEM/31/3(b)-Inf.2 – Report of the IPU-UN Women Parliamentary Meeting on the occasion of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

FEM/31/3(b)-Inf.3 – IPU cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

ITEM 4 – Contribution to the work of the 142th Assembly from a gender perspective

FEM/31/4(a)-Inf.1 – Report on the Inter-parliamentary dialogue series on *Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series of virtual meetings on gender-responsive recovery post COVID-19* held in March and April 2021

FEM/31/4(a)-Inf.2: Guidance note for the interactive discussion: *Towards a gender responsive post-COVID recovery*

FEM/31/4(b)-Inf.1: Links to Resolutions considered during the 142nd IPU Assembly on *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences* (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security) and on *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production* (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development)

Link to documents on the draft resolution to be considered at the 143rd IPU Assembly on *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation* by the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights

ITEM 5 – Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

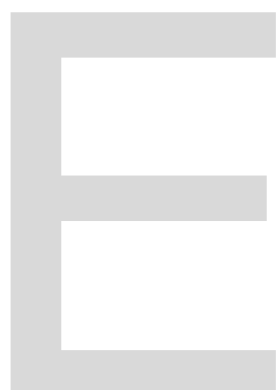
FEM/31/5-Inf.1 - Document on elections of the regional representatives to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

ITEM 6 – Panel discussion. *Generation Equality in and through parliaments*

FEM/31/6-Inf.1 – Information note

ITEM 7 – Elections of the presiding officers of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

FEM/31/7-Inf.1 – Note on the election of the Presiding officers at the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS May 2021

FEM/31/A.1-rev
22 April 2021

31st session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

Provisional agenda

I. MEETING SCHEDULE AND SPEAKING ARRANGEMENTS

The 31st session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will be held virtually on an integrated digital platform. The Forum will have two sittings: the first on **Monday, 10 May, from 14:00 to 17:00 CEST**; and the second on **Wednesday, 12 May, from 14:00 to 16:00 CEST**.

The session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians is open to women and men parliamentarians who wish to take part in the various discussions and debates. The session is meant to elicit spontaneous and active debate. Speaking time may not exceed two minutes. There will be no formal list of speakers. In plenary, participants will be able to request the floor using the raise hand button of the digital platform.

II. ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

<i>First sitting</i> <i>Virtual, Monday, 10 May 2021, from 14:00 to 17:00 CEST</i>

1. **Welcoming remarks**
2. **Adoption of the agenda**
3. **Recent activities to advance gender equality**
 - (a) Report of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Participants will be briefed about the Bureau's deliberations at its sessions held in Belgrade on 13 October 2019 and virtually on 9 March 2021.
 - (b) Update on recent IPU activities for the promotion of gender equality
Participants will be briefed about the IPU's recent publications and activities to promote gender equality.

The session will conclude by 14:45 CEST

4. Contributing to the work of the 142nd Assembly from a gender perspective

(a) *Gender-related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and prioritizing parliamentary action for gender-responsive recovery*

The General Debate of the 142nd Assembly of the IPU focuses on the theme *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*.

The impacts of crises are never gender neutral, and the COVID-19 crisis is no exception. Beyond the public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about dire economic and social consequences. As in other crises, rampant inequalities have once again been revealed and further exacerbated. The economic and social fallouts are felt hard by women as they are more likely to be found in vulnerable socioeconomic situations: they are more likely to be employed in the hard-hit economic sectors and occupy ill-protected jobs. Lockdown measures and economic pressure have also further amplified the various forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) – the shadow pandemic.

Parliaments and their members are in a unique position to exercise political will and contribute gender-responsive action to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on women and girls and to drive a gender-responsive post-pandemic recovery.

Participants will have an interactive discussion on the theme *Towards a gender-responsive recovery post COVID-19*. Following short briefings on recent IPU debates on the gendered dimensions of COVID-19, they will be provided with an opportunity to exchange on priority action in this area.

Under the leadership of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, the IPU organized the *Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series of virtual meetings on gender-responsive recovery post COVID-19* held in March and April 2021 in partnership with UN Women.

The Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series aimed to build an evidence-based understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the advancement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; exchange peer to peer experiences, good practices, lessons learned and advice; and to identify legislative, oversight and budgetary parliamentary actions for gender-responsive recovery. The virtual meetings focused respectively on women's political participation, women's economic empowerment, violence against women and girls, and gender-sensitive parliaments and gender-responsive legal reforms.

The series also aimed to inform the Forum of Women Parliamentarians in the preparation of its contribution to mainstreaming gender equality in the deliberations and outcomes of the 142nd Assembly of the IPU.

Reports of the *Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series of virtual meetings on gender-responsive recovery post COVID-19*, including findings and recommendations, will be presented by members of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians who led the Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series.

Interactive discussion: Towards a gender responsive post-COVID recovery

The presentation of findings and recommendations of the Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series will be followed by an interactive discussion among the members of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians. The discussion will focus on prioritizing legislative, oversight and budgetary parliamentary actions for gender responsive post-COVID recovery.

The conclusions of the discussion will form the contribution from a gender equality perspective of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the work of the 142nd Assembly of the IPU on *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*.

(b) Mainstreaming gender equality in the draft resolutions under consideration at the 142nd and 143rd Assemblies

Two draft resolutions are on the agenda of the 142nd Assembly, entitled “*Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences*” (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security) and “*Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production*” (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development).

Under the special procedure put in place in light of the current pandemic, the Standing Committees will meet in the weeks preceding the Assembly and will endorse the resolutions through a written silence procedure. Members of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians take part as ex-officio members in the bureaus, drafting committees and meetings of the respective Standing Committees, in order to ensure a gender perspective is integrated in their work.

The participants will be briefed on the above-mentioned draft resolutions and the inclusion of a gender perspective in each of them.

In preparation for the 143rd Assembly, participants will discuss the theme of the next resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights, entitled “*Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation*”, to be adopted at the 143rd Assembly. The objective of the discussion is to identify gender-related priorities to share with the co-rapporteurs for the upcoming resolution. On behalf of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, a discussion summary will be presented by a member of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians at the Standing Committee’s meeting on 18 May on the theme of its next resolution.

The session will end by 16:30 CEST

5. Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians will renew half of the membership of its Bureau to replace those regional representatives whose terms expired in 2020 and had been extended until the 142nd Assembly, as well as those members who have lost their seats in parliament.

After the elections, the sitting will be suspended until 12 May to allow the newly constituted Bureau of Women Parliamentarians to meet *in camera* and select candidates for the positions of presiding officers: President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Bureau.

The sitting will end at 17:00 CEST

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Second sitting</i> <i>Virtual, Wednesday, 12 May 2021, from 14:00 to 16:00 CEST</i></p>

6. Panel discussion – Generation Equality in and through parliaments (Concept note attached)

The panel discussion will conclude by 15:30 CEST

7. (continued) Elections of the presiding officers of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians (15:30–15:55 CEST)

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians will resume its sitting to elect the President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President proposed by the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians.

8. Venue and date of the 32nd session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

The sitting will end at 16:00 CEST.

**COMPOSITION AND OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU
OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS
(as at 15 March 2021)**

PRESIDING OFFICERS (April 2018–2020)

President: Ms. S. Wakarura Kihika (Kenya)

First Vice-President: *Vacant*

Second Vice-President: *Vacant*

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Expiry of term

African Group:

Vacant

Ms. K. Bukar Abba (Nigeria)

Ms. S. Wakarura Kihika (Kenya)

Vacant

April 2022

April 2020

Arab Group:

Vacant

Ms. H. Alhelaissi (Saudi Arabia)

Ms. I. Almlohi (Syrian Arab Republic)

Vacant

April 2022

April 2020

Asia-Pacific Group:

Ms. P. Maadam (India)

Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand)

Vacant

Ms. R.W. Karirathna (Sri Lanka)

April 2022

April 2020

Eurasia Group:

Ms. E. Vtorygina (Russian Federation)

Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation)

Ms. Z. Greceanii (Rep. of Moldova)

Vacant

April 2022

April 2020

Group of Latin American and the Caribbean:

Ms. J. Álvarez Vera (Chile)

Vacant

Vacant

Vacant

April 2022

April 2020

Twelve Plus Group:

Vacant

Ms. S. Ataullajhan (Canada)

Ms. L. Vasylenko (Ukraine)

Ms. S. Koutra-Koukouma (Cyprus)

April 2022

April 2020

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

(ex officio, for the duration of their term on the Executive Committee)

Ms. B. Argimón (Uruguay)

Ms. E. Anyakun (Uganda)

Ms. C. Widegren (Sweden)

Ms. P. Krairiksh (Thailand)

Ms. A.D. Mergane Kanouté (Senegal)

Ms. L. Fehlmann Rielle (Switzerland)

Expiry of term

October 2024

October 2023

October 2023

October 2023

April 2023

October 2021

PRESIDENTS OF THE FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

(ex officio for two years)

Ms. R. Al Mansoori (Qatar)

Expiry of term

April 2021



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 3

FEM/31/3(b)-Inf.2
6 May 2021

RECENT ACTIVITIES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

b) Update on recent IPU activities for the promotion of gender equality

Parliamentary meeting on the occasion of the 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Virtual event – 23 March 2021

1. The IPU and UN Women organized a virtual parliamentary event entitled *What will it take to reach gender parity in political participation in a post-COVID-19 world?* The meeting took place on 23 March 2021 on the virtual platform Interprefy, on the occasion of the virtual 65th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). It included two sittings to accommodate different time zones.

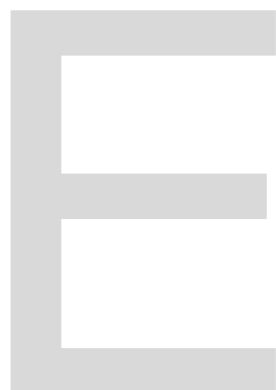
2. The event – both sittings combined – brought together 164 parliamentarians (155 women parliamentarians) from 88 countries, as well as 566 observers, including parliamentary staff, government officials, representatives of international organizations and civil society.

3. The sittings were respectively opened by Ms. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director of UN Women, Ms. Asa Regner, Deputy Executive of UN Women, and Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Susan Kihika, member of the Kenyan Senate and President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians. Panellists included members of parliament from Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Rwanda, Senegal, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom.

4. Participants discussed recent developments in their respective countries in the area of women's participation in parliament, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in this regard. They exchanged on good practices, including on electoral law reform carried out during the pandemic, the challenges lying ahead, as well as on priority actions for achieving gender parity in parliaments. The following views were shared and a way-forward was proposed.

5. Gender parity in decision-making was key to adequately addressing the gendered impacts of the pandemic. However, women remained substantially underrepresented among decision makers worldwide. Women made up only a quarter (25.5%) of members of national parliaments. Out of a total of 225 COVID-19 task forces across 137 countries, less than a quarter were led by women and women made up only 27 per cent of their members.

6. The COVID-19 pandemic had affected women's political participation in many ways, providing both challenges and opportunities. During the pandemic, women's ability to fully participate in public life was further limited as they were increasingly shouldering domestic and care work and had less access to financial resources. For politicians, both women and men, online platforms had become effective tools for interaction with their



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

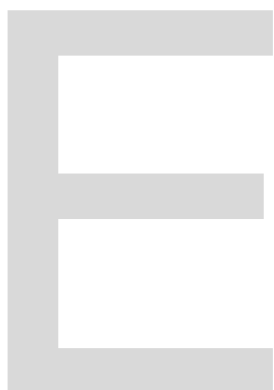
constituents. While online parliamentary work had helped facilitate the work-life balance for some, for others it had also revealed the gender divide in access to technology and had exacerbated online violence against women legislators.

7. A number of parliaments had already seized the opportunity of the COVID-19 pandemic to promote women's leadership and gender parity in decision-making. However, parliaments must do much more, in particular to:

- Enhance or adopt new gender quotas with a view to achieving gender parity at all levels of decision-making. For electoral gender quotas to work they must be well-designed, ambitious and combined with strong enforcement mechanisms.
- Promote additional measures such as targeted incentives for political parties, educational and sensitization measures, and measures capping campaign financing.
- Parliaments also had a key role to play in building a more inclusive political and parliamentary environment and combatting violence, including online, against women members of parliament, starting with a strong anti-discrimination and anti-harassment regulatory framework within parliament.

8. The parliamentary meeting, which can be viewed [here](#), received good coverage on social media.

9. In addition to the parliamentary meeting, the IPU also organized a side event at the margins of the 65th session of CSW, entitled "*We Have Your Back*" - *Breaking the cycle from online harassment to threats to violence against women and girl leaders*. The side event took place on 24 March and was very well attended. It included the perspectives of parliamentarians, government representatives, journalists, civil society and academia. The event was jointly organized with the League of Women Voters of the United States (LWV), UN Women and the Permanent Missions of Albania, Australia and Canada, among other partners. The side event was also webcast and can be viewed [here](#).



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 3

FEM/31/3(b)-Inf.3
5 May 2021

RECENT ACTIVITIES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY

- b) Update on recent IPU activities for the promotion of gender equality

IPU cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

I. The IPU and the CEDAW Committee

1. The IPU plays an active role in promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention) and its Optional Protocol within the parliamentary community.
2. As part of its cooperation with the CEDAW Committee (the Committee), the IPU Secretariat encourages parliamentarians to keep track of whether their countries have ratified the CEDAW Convention and Optional Protocol as well as whether their countries may have issued any reservations. (This information is available at <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>; it is broken down by country and includes entries for any declarations or reservations made.)
3. To mark International Women's Day, on 8 March 2021, the IPU and the Committee issued a *Joint Call* to achieve gender parity in politics, urging "parliaments and governments to craft and adopt National Plans of Action setting concrete objectives, strategies, actions and deadlines suited to their national context" and to "regularly monitor and evaluate progress towards the goal of gender parity in politics by 2030" (see Annex I). The *Joint Call* builds on the 2019 joint statement to mark the fortieth anniversary of the CEDAW Convention, titled *Women's political leadership: Striving for balance – 50/50 by 2030*.
4. In 2021, the IPU and the CEDAW Committee, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), will develop a revised edition of the 2003 handbook for parliamentarians on the CEDAW Convention.

II. IPU involvement in the CEDAW Convention reporting process

5. The Convention is an important benchmark for gender equality and is comprehensive in scope. The IPU therefore endeavours to ensure that parliaments and their members provide effective oversight of the Convention and contribute to its full implementation. The IPU has consistently argued for more parliamentary involvement in the Convention's reporting obligations, particularly in the work required to follow up on the Committee's concluding observations.
6. At each Committee session, the IPU presents a report on what it has done to promote respect for and implementation of the Convention, including the



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

dissemination of information about the role played by parliaments in the reporting process. This is partly done by inviting parliaments from the countries whose periodic reports are to be reviewed at the next Committee session to fill in a questionnaire. The questions cover parliamentary involvement in the reporting process and in the follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations.

7. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, no examination of State reports by the Committee took place in 2020. The IPU therefore presented reports to the Committee on countries under consideration for the adoption of lists of issues prior to reporting or prior to review of State reports. In February 2021, the Committee examined a State report in a virtual session for which the IPU had prepared a report under the usual procedure.
8. The following is the list of State parties that reported or will be reporting to the CEDAW Committee in 2021:

78th virtual Session (15 – 25 February 2021)

- Denmark

Detailed information is available at

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2417&Lang=en.

79th Session (21 June – 9 July 2021)

- Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Nicaragua, Russian Federation, South Sudan, Spain, Yemen

Detailed information is available at

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2488&Lang=en.

80th Session (18 October – 5 November 2021)

- Azerbaijan, Ecuador, Egypt, Indonesia, Lebanon, Peru, South Africa, Sweden

Detailed information is available at

https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=2489&Lang=en.

III. The CEDAW Committee and parliaments

9. At its 41st session (June–July 2008), the Committee adopted a standard paragraph on parliaments. It was to be added into its concluding observations to draw the attention of State parties to the importance of involving parliaments not only in the reporting process under article 18 of the Convention but also in the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. At its 45th session (January–February 2010), the Committee issued a statement on its relationship with parliamentarians that aimed to clarify and strengthen the role of national



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

parliaments vis-à-vis the Convention. The note also aimed at clarifying the relationship between the Committee and the IPU. (See Annex 2 for the text of the statement.)

E

#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

ANNEX 1: Joint Call by the IPU and CEDAW Committee on International Women's Day 2021

Our shared commitments

Since the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations Member States have recognized the equal right of women and men to participate in public affairs and decision-making bodies, positions and processes.

This fundamental right is reaffirmed in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women (CEDAW Convention), the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), and the United Nations Security Council's Resolution No.1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security.

The establishment of inclusive and representative governance is also an essential condition for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, in particular Goal 5.

Where do we stand collectively today?

The impacts of crises are never gender neutral, and the COVID-19 crisis is no exception. An effective response to the pandemic and its social and economic consequences requires inclusive participation and leadership for strong and sustained action that is beneficial for everyone. The goal of achieving gender parity in decision-making and leadership is more crucial than ever.

While acknowledging the advancements made towards ensuring the participation of a constantly growing number of women in political decision-making positions and processes, progress is still slow and the average representation of women in political offices remains far lower than that of men.

In 2020, women accounted for only a quarter of parliamentary membership worldwide and 36.3 per cent of elected officials in local deliberative bodies. Globally, only 21.3 per cent of ministers were women. In only 30 cabinets worldwide did women make up at least 40 per cent of ministers. Women's under-representation as health ministers was especially concerning in the midst of the pandemic: while women made up 70 per cent of health sector workers, only 24.7 per cent of the world's health ministers were women. The scourge of violence against women in politics hinders development and challenges democracy everywhere. IPU studies have revealed that more than 80 per cent of women parliamentarians surveyed had faced psychological violence, at least 25 per cent had suffered physical violence and 20 per cent had been sexually harassed.

Shifting the paradigm now

To build back better, the world needs a paradigm shift based on inclusive and representative governance by 2030. To achieve this objective, progress towards equality in politics can no longer be simply incremental. It requires prompt and firm action. While specific action may need to take into account the individual context of States around the



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

world, progress essentially requires a widespread move towards concrete and impactful solutions.

The IPU and the CEDAW Committee call for an acceleration towards the equal representation and leadership of men and women in political office. Such acceleration should build on establishing gender parity targets and adopting and implementing national action plans to reach the parity target.

Gender parity in political office and leadership is key to:

- Remove barriers – substantive, structural or cultural – to equality between men and women;
- Open the world of politics to women from diverse backgrounds and groups in society;
- Transform the political arena into an enabling space/environment wherein women feel comfortable to work and contribute;
- Offer a positive example to society at large;
- Address and reflect the equality demands of a modern society; and
- Make political institutions and processes more efficient, effective and legitimate.

Our call

The IPU and the CEDAW Committee urge parliaments and governments to craft and adopt National Plans of Action setting concrete objectives, strategies, actions and deadlines suited to their national context. They should also regularly monitor and evaluate progress towards the goal of gender parity in politics by 2030.

National Action Plans should aim to accelerate progress to reach gender parity by 2030, including by:

Reforming legal and policy frameworks to achieve gender parity:

- Adopting electoral gender quotas to reach the gender parity target;
- Reforming or repealing laws that discriminate against women and adopting comprehensive legislation that guarantees gender equality in all areas of life;
- Capping spending on electoral campaigns; and
- Adopting laws to prevent and criminalize gender-based violence against women in politics, including harassment and sexual harassment, and ensuring reparation for survivors.

Making institutions gender-sensitive and gender-responsive:

- Adopting the target of parity in all spheres of public life, including in political and administrative, as well as executive, legislative and judiciary bodies, at both the national and subnational levels;
- Ensuring that internal rules and codes of ethics help prevent all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence against women and provide for effective mechanisms to address them; and
- Mandating, institutionalizing and resourcing dedicated mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in State institutions.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Ensuring a conducive environment for gender equality:

- Fighting against negative gender stereotypes;
- Mobilizing all media formats and technological tools;
- Mobilizing and incentivizing political parties;
- Implementing information campaigns, raising awareness and training;
- Protecting and supporting women's human rights defenders and NGO representatives;
- Ensuring gender parity in peace and constitution-building processes; and
- Promoting human rights education and gender equality in education curricula.

E

#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

ANNEX 2

Statement adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

National parliaments and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. At its forty-first session, the Committee adopted a standard paragraph on “Parliament” in its concluding observations in order to draw to the attention of State parties, the importance of involving its parliament in the reporting process under article 18 of the Convention and the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.
2. The aim of the present note is to clarify and strengthen the role of national parliaments vis-à-vis the Convention. The note is also aimed at clarifying the relationship between the Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

I. Role of Parliaments in the process of ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and withdrawal of reservations

3. The procedure for ratification/accession to international instruments as well as the withdrawal of reservations varies from State to State. In most States, approval by Parliament is necessary before the deposit of the instrument of ratification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Similarly, decisions concerning reservations as well as their withdrawals are also taken in Parliament. This Parliamentary procedure also applies to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Consequently, Parliaments have a strategic role to play with respect to the ratification/accession of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. As the Convention and its Protocol have not attained universal ratification, Parliament can play a significant role in encouraging their State in becoming a party to the Convention and its Protocol. Similarly, as the Convention is the treaty body with the largest number of reservations, Parliament can also play a significant role in their withdrawal.

II. Parliaments and the implementation of the Convention

4. Parliaments and their members have a vital role to play in ensuring respect for the principles enunciated in the Convention and they have a wide range of tools at their disposal to do so. In discharging their traditional duty of overseeing the work of Government, Parliament can ensure that States parties comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. Parliaments and their members have a fundamental responsibility in their role of “constituency”, which is the basis of the legal system. The functions of Parliaments — notably legislative and budgetary functions and oversight of the executive branch of the Government — are at the heart of the implementation of the principles and rights enshrined in the Convention. The implementation of the Convention includes the incorporation of the principle of non-discrimination against women in national legislation, including in the Constitution of the State party. It also imposes an obligation on the State party to condemn discrimination against women, to abolish all discriminatory laws and to adopt, whenever appropriate, temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men. It also obligates States Parties to adopt appropriate policies and establish mechanisms aimed at promoting equality between sexes. As such, Parliamentarians can take active measures to ensure that national laws, policies, actions, programmes and budget reflect the principles and obligations in the Convention.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

The budgetary functions and the monitoring of governmental action are vital for a better implementation of laws relating to equality between sexes, through the approval of adequate budgets and a regular oversight of the impact of governmental measures with respect to the condition of women.

Parliament, as an organ representing the population as a whole, reflects the diversity of opinion and interests in the country by reason of its privileged access to the whole population. As such, Parliamentarians can be key players in raising awareness of the Convention and its Protocol to the population at large and to women in particular.

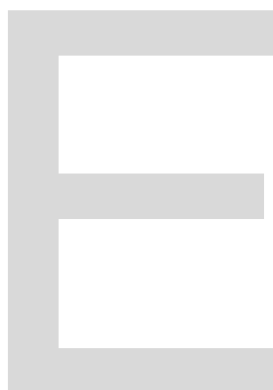
III. Role of Parliaments in the drafting of reports and follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee

5. States are not legally obliged to involve Parliaments in the drafting of reports under article 18, as it is the State which has the primary responsibility of doing so. However, as the Convention is binding on all branches of Government, it is desirable that States parties involve Parliament in the reporting process under Article 18 of the Convention, the implementation of the Convention and the follow up to the concluding observations of the Committee. States parties are strongly encouraged to establish an appropriate mechanism to facilitate collaboration between Parliament and Government with regard to the input of its Parliament in the elaboration of reports, and its role in following up on the concluding observations of the Committee. The monitoring role of Parliament with respect to the compliance by the State of its international obligations could considerably enhance the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee.

6. Consequently, it is necessary for States parties to urge Parliament, many of which now have some structures in place, such as Parliamentary Committees focusing on human rights including gender equality, to take an active part in the work of the Committee in general, as well as in the implementation of its provisions in their own country.

IV. Action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its relationship with the Committee

10. IPU has always strived to bring a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation and the work of the Committee. It is playing a key role in disseminating the Convention and its Optional Protocol among parliamentarians. During its conferences and the sessions of its Assembly, the organization regularly invites States that have not ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol to do so. It also encourages States parties that have made reservations to the Convention to withdraw them and to fulfil their obligations. The Secretary-General of IPU writes to the presidents of the legislative assemblies to inform them about the upcoming consideration of the report of their country by the Committee. Once the Committee's concluding observations are available, a letter is sent to the parliament concerned to bring to its attention the recommendations adopted. In 2003 IPU, with the assistance of the Division for the Advancement of Women, published a practical guide for the use of parliamentarians on the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Every year, IPU organizes briefings on the Convention, addressed to women parliamentarians in particular. IPU also provides, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, technical assistance programmes in order to build the capacities of parliaments and help them fulfil their role regarding the implementation of Convention and its Optional Protocol. Since 2006, IPU also provides Committee with country specific information including data on the political



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

participation of women in Parliament and in Government as well as at the local level with regard to States whose reports are under consideration by the Committee.

V. Recommendations

8. The Committee recommends that States parties ensure the full participation of Parliament and its members in the reporting process and the full implementation of the Convention and its Protocol.

9. Given the key role of Parliament, the Committee recommends that States parties ensure that Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, be made aware and informed of the Committee's work so that they may take it into account in their legislative functions and relay it to their constituencies and to the public at large.

10. The Committee recommends that State parties ensure that all relevant information is made available to Parliamentarians on a regular basis through appropriate Parliamentary support services.

11. The Committee further recommends that information received by Government on its obligations as a State party and other matters of concern are brought to the attention of Parliamentarians.

12. The Committee recommends that whenever members of the Committee are invited to visit a State party, it is desirable that the State party organize meetings with Parliamentarians.

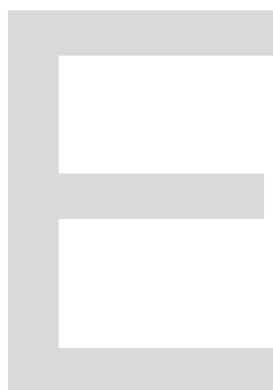
13. The Committee encourages States parties to include in their reports, information on all parliamentary initiatives in the elaboration of laws in order to ensure full incorporation of CEDAW provisions into domestic legislation.

14. The Committee reiterates the importance of strengthening the national machinery dedicated to equality at the level of Parliament, such as Commissions on gender equality, missions and information on inquiries relating to violence against women, and improvement of legislation on equality between women and men.

15. The Committee draws the attention of States parties to the fact that institutional linkages and informal relations with civil society and women's organizations are fundamental to the promotion of women's rights by the Parliament.

16. The Committee encourages States parties to include in their delegation before the Committee for the examination of their report, members of Parliament as well as a special advisor in charge of relations between the Government and the Parliament in order to improve the visibility of parliamentary responsibilities.

17. The Committee calls on State parties to evaluate its collaboration with its national Parliament and other Parliaments and to take appropriate measures to enhance cooperation between Parliaments in order to exchange best practices on the implementation of the Convention.





Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

FEM/31/4(a)-Inf.1
5 May 2021

CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORK OF THE 142ND ASSEMBLY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

a) Gender-related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and prioritizing parliamentary action for gender-responsive recovery

In March and April 2021, the IPU, in collaboration with UN Women, organized a series of online events that focused on gender and COVID-19 as was reflected in the titles of the meetings:

- *What will it take to reach gender parity in political participation in a post-COVID-19 world?* (virtual parliamentary meeting held on 23 March 2021 on the occasion of the 65th session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women)¹
- *Women's economic empowerment* (virtual meeting held on 7 April 2021)
- *Violence against women and girls* (virtual meeting held on 14 April 2021)
- *Gender-sensitive parliaments and gender-responsive legal reforms* (virtual meeting held on 21 April 2021)

The parliamentary meeting held in March 2021 on the occasion of the 65th session of CSW brought together 164 parliamentarians, while the April 2021 virtual meetings were each attended by about 60 parliamentarians.

Both the participants and panellists of the virtual meetings emphasized that the impacts of crises were never gender neutral and that the COVID-19 crisis was no exception. Women, who represented the majority in the health sector and care economy, were on the frontline of the COVID-19 response. Apart from being a public health crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic had brought about a full-fledged economic and social crisis. Rampant inequalities had once again been revealed and further exacerbated. The economic and social fallouts were felt hard by women and girls. Lockdown measures and economic pressure had further amplified the violence against women and girls (VAWG) – the shadow pandemic. Without coordinated action to mitigate the gendered impacts of COVID-19, there was a risk that the fragile gender equality gains achieved over the past 25 years would be lost. In such a crucial time, as countries strive to respond to that multifaceted crisis and its gendered dimensions, women remained underrepresented in most decision-making processes.

Participants agreed that parliaments, through coordinated action, were in a unique position to contribute to the political will to achieve gender-responsive legislation, provide oversight of government actions and resource allocation, as well as to mobilize society in their gender-responsive recovery efforts.

Women's economic empowerment

Women were hit harder than men by the COVID-19 impact on the world economy. In 2020 employment losses for women stood at five per cent compared to 3.9 per cent for

¹ A more detailed account of the parliamentary meeting held on the occasion of the 65th session of CSW can be found in a separate report.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

men, the reason being that more women (44%) than men (36%) worked in sectors such as accommodation, food services, wholesale, and retail which were hugely affected by lockdown measures. Many women had also lost their jobs only to meet increased household and care responsibilities expected of them as unpaid caregivers. The pandemic had thus widened the gender wage gap.

Low-paid women, in particular informal women workers, domestic workers, migrant workers, and women without internet access or without literacy skills, as well as poor and marginalized women bore the brunt of the economic collapse. Not only were they not protected by labour laws, were excluded from social protection schemes and had no access to loans but they were also overlooked by pandemic relief and recovery packages. As a result, by 2021 around 435 million women and girls had been living on less than US\$ 1.90 a day and 47 million had been pushed into poverty.

The economy would not recover without the reintegration of women in the labour force and the elimination of the gender gap in employment. Measures must be taken to support women who had been most affected by COVID-19 restrictions, to prevent further setbacks and ease the return of women to work. Such measures included providing:

- Financial support to women who had lost their source of income
- Support to families and women in unpaid work
- Assistance to women in finding jobs outside of hard-hit sectors
- Access to affordable, quality childcare services.

The above measures were essential in the short term but would not suffice to eliminate the gender gap. It was also long-term investments in universal and gender-responsive social protection systems for women that were urgently needed as, currently, 60 per cent of women were not covered by any type of social protection.

Post-COVID recovery plans also needed to address long-standing inequalities, including unequal division of work at home, the gender pay gap and the pervasive undervaluation of unpaid care work done mostly by women. Some countries had already developed transparent wage policies and well-designed care leave policies. Others had undertaken to invest in the care economy, education, health, and social sectors, and to prioritize care workers by compensating justly for care work and providing adequate safety nets and employment benefits.

The shadow pandemic: violence against women and girls (VAWG)

In the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, due to confined living conditions, economic stress and fear about the virus, reported cases of violence against women and girls had increased across countries. In 2020, 245 million women experienced sexual or physical violence from their partner. The risks were likely higher for women of vulnerable groups and marginalized communities, adolescent girls, women with disabilities, and women and girls in contexts of conflict, violent extremism, terrorism, displacement and migration. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic had also exacerbated shortcomings related to protection and provisions of essential services, community support to survivors, and limited access to justice.

The first imperative was therefore to provide and increase resources for services for survivors – a key part of national responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although many shortcomings remained, situations varied significantly and there were also countries that had expanded and adapted such services in the context of the crisis by:

- Ensuring access to sexual and reproductive healthcare



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

- Providing 24/7 helplines and counselling, online included
- Enhancing efficiency and timely delivery of protection orders
- Maintaining the functioning of justice for cases of VAWG.

Such efforts prioritized survivors' needs and ensured that their rights and dignity were respected. Efforts also needed to be deployed so that women's rights organizations and all those who were first responders for survivors had the adequate means and training to carry out that work effectively.

With the increased use of the internet, more women and girls had been subjected to online violence such as threats, harassment, misinformation, images-based abuse. While much remained to be done in that area, some parliaments had adopted strong laws that covered such extremely widespread and harmful violence.

Parliaments also needed to advance regulatory frameworks of online platforms and ICT companies, and call on them to:

- Ensure online accountability, duty of care and transparency
- Erect guardrails to protect women and girls online
- Provide reporting pathways.

The economic downturn and the closing down of schools had strongly affected girls, often leading to their dropping out of school to help with increasing household work. As a result, child marriage, sexual violence against girls and girl pregnancy had also increased. Prioritizing girls' continued education, safe schooling and investing in distance learning programmes remained a priority so that girls could reach their full potential.

A number of good practices showed that prevention of VAWG must remain a priority and be emphasized when:

- Promoting income stability and women's economic empowerment.
- Working with boys and men to question gender roles to break the transgenerational transmission of violence.
- Prioritizing gender-sensitive care work policies.
- Partnering with civil society, including religious leaders, to change harmful gender norms.

Women's leadership is now more important than ever

Gender parity in decision-making was key to adequately addressing the gendered impacts of the pandemic. However, women remained substantially underrepresented among decision makers worldwide. Women made up only a quarter (25.5%) of members of national parliaments. Out of a total of 225 COVID-19 task forces across 137 countries, less than a quarter were led by women and women made up only 27 per cent of their members.

The COVID-19 pandemic had affected women's political participation in many ways, providing both challenges and opportunities. During the pandemic, women's ability to fully participate in public life was further limited as they were increasingly shouldering domestic and care work and had less access to financial resources. For politicians, both women and men, online platforms had become effective tools for interaction with their constituents. While online parliamentary work had helped facilitate the work-life balance for some, for others it had also revealed the gender divide in access to technology and had exacerbated online violence against women legislators.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

A number of parliaments had already seized the opportunity of the COVID-19 pandemic to promote women's leadership and gender parity in decision-making. However, parliaments must do much more, in particular, to:

- Enhance or adopt new gender quotas with a view to achieving gender parity at all levels of decision-making. For electoral gender quotas to work they must be well-designed, ambitious and combined with strong enforcement mechanisms.
- Promote additional measures such as targeted incentives for political parties, educational and sensitization measures, and measures capping campaign financing.
- Parliaments also had a key role to play in building a more inclusive political and parliamentary environment and combatting violence, including online, against women members of parliament, starting with a strong anti-discrimination and anti-harassment regulatory framework within parliament.

Gender-sensitive parliaments must lead the way, including on gender-responsive legal reforms

A gender-sensitive parliament was premised on the principle of gender equality; was a parliament that advanced gender equality in all aspects of its work and functioning; and that provided a conducive environment for men and women to equally participate and lead. While the promotion of policies and laws on gender equality had often been the result of women's increased role in decision-making, sustainable progress could only be achieved if gender equality was promoted by women and men, parliamentarians and parliamentary staff alike, as well as by political parties and parliament at large.

Promoting gender-sensitive parliaments was key to ensuring a proper COVID-19 response and recovery from a gender perspective. To build more resilient societies where women could thrive without discrimination, all legal provisions that held women back must be lifted. There was a long way to go: currently, 2.5 billion women and girls were still being discriminated against by their countries' laws. Parliament had a paramount role to play and must be fit for purpose to adopt gender-responsive legislation and policies and ensure their adequate implementation. For that to happen, change must start within parliaments and, eventually, parliamentary outcomes would be more likely to advance gender equality for all.

A number of steps must be taken to build gender-responsive parliamentary processes, including gender-sensitive legislation, budgets and oversight to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and build back better. Some parliaments had already taken or were stepping up the following measures in the wake of the pandemic:

- Ensuring women's equal participation and leadership in all law-making and oversight processes, including those relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Supporting the creation of cross-party women's parliamentary caucuses and synergies with women's groups from civil society.
- Providing a mandate to all standing and ad hoc committees to advance gender equality and ensuring they had the capacity to do so.
- Mandating gender budgeting and provision of sex-disaggregated data by the government so that parliament could adequately monitor the impact of laws, budgets and policies, including how they related to health, economic and social responses to the COVID-19 crisis, and could amend them accordingly.

Reforming parliamentary processes required strong political will and the buy-in of different stakeholders. Already before but also after the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, a number of parliamentary leaders had promoted internal review processes



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

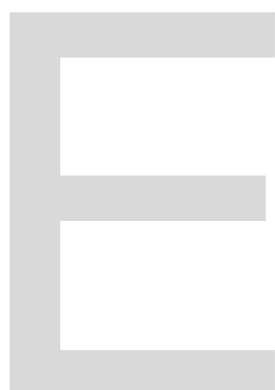
Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

building on the IPU's *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments* and its related self-assessment toolkit.

Follow-up

More than half of the participants in the said series of virtual events who had responded to the IPU evaluation questionnaire said that such meetings made them feel much better equipped to take gender-responsive action in at least one of the four above-mentioned focus areas (scores of at least 4 out of 5).

The conclusions of the above-mentioned meetings will feed into the deliberations and conclusions of the 142nd IPU Assembly's General Debate on the overall theme *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*.



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

FEM/31/4(a)-Inf.2
29 April 2021

CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORK OF THE 142ND ASSEMBLY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

a) *Gender-related impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and prioritizing parliamentary action for gender-responsive recovery*

GUIDANCE NOTE ON SPEAKING RIGHTS

During the first sitting (10 May) of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, participants will be invited to an interactive discussion on the topic entitled ***Towards a gender responsive post-COVID recovery***. The interactive discussion will follow the presentation of findings and recommendations of the Inter-parliamentary Dialogue series held virtually under the leadership of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, in collaboration with UN Women.

The discussion will focus on prioritizing legislative, oversight and budgetary parliamentary actions for gender responsive post-COVID recovery. The conclusions of the discussion will inform the contribution from a gender equality perspective of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the work of the 142nd Assembly of the IPU and its overall theme *Overcoming the pandemic today and building a better tomorrow: the role of parliaments*.

During this segment, members of parliaments are invited to address the following main questions:

- What measures is your parliament taking to achieve gender parity in decision making in parliament and in COVID-19 task forces?
- How are gender considerations included in economic packages, budgets and related reforms, including in relation to social protection and support to women workers and entrepreneurs as part of COVID-19 response and recovery?
- How has your parliament addressed the issue of gender-based violence against women and girls in the context of the pandemic?
- Has parliament undertaken efforts to enhance its own capacity to mainstream gender equality in its law-making and oversight work, including by setting up new mechanisms such as a gender unit or committee? Has parliament initiated gender-responsive legal reforms?

The interactive discussion will be introduced by the Chairperson after which participants will be invited to a lively debate on the topic.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Members of national parliaments of countries that are recognized by the United Nations and/or are Members of the IPU are entitled to take the floor during the interactive discussion.

Members of regional and international parliamentary assemblies that are Associate Members of the IPU can also take the floor during this segment if time allows.

Members of parliaments can request the floor to deliver a spontaneous statement. The list of speakers will not be announced in advance. Members of parliaments will be invited to take the floor by the Chairperson as time allows.

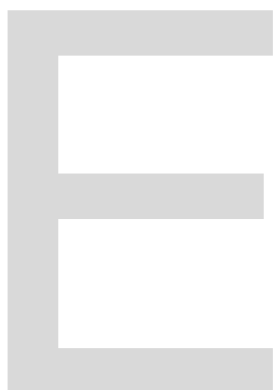
In order to facilitate lively and interactive debates, it will not be possible to contribute via pre-recorded video statements.

Live interventions from the floor **should not exceed two minutes (maximum).**

Members of national parliaments and members of regional and international parliamentary assemblies are welcome to provide their remarks via the event's chat function.

Other participants including the IPU Permanent Observers may take the floor if and when time allows. Live interventions from the floor should not exceed one minute (maximum).

In addition, to guarantee the smooth running of proceedings, it is strongly recommended that participants familiarize themselves with the technical arrangements note which will be made available on the IPU webpage: <https://www.ipu.org/event/142nd-ipu-assembly#event-sub-page-documents/>.



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

FEM/31/4(b)-Inf.1
7 May 2021

CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORK OF THE 142ND ASSEMBLY FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

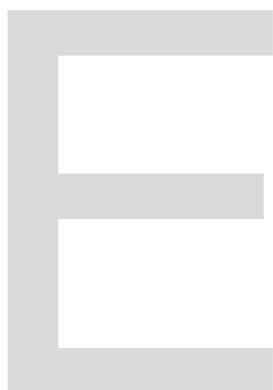
b) Mainstreaming gender equality in the draft resolutions under consideration at the 142nd and 143rd Assemblies

I. Links to draft resolutions considered during the 142nd IPU Assembly

- Draft resolution on *Parliamentary strategies to strengthen peace and security against threats and conflicts resulting from climate-related disasters and their consequences* (Standing Committee on Peace and International Security):
<file:///C:/Users/LOFF17~1/Temp/452/CMT1-Draft%20resolution-consolidated%20drafting%20comm-e.pdf>
- Draft resolution on *Mainstreaming digitalization and the circular economy to achieve the SDGs, particularly responsible consumption and production* (Standing Committee on Sustainable Development):
<file:///C:/Users/LOFF17~1/Temp/452/CMT2-Draft%20Resolution-Drafting%20Committee-final-e.pdf>

II. Link to documents on the draft resolution to be considered at the 143rd IPU Assembly

- Concept note - Preparatory debate on the next resolution on *Legislation worldwide to combat online sexual child exploitation* (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights): <file:///C:/Users/LOFF17~1/Temp/452/CMT3-Concept-note-debate-resolution-e.pdf>



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 5

FEM/31/5-Inf.1
27 April 2021

Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

At the next statutory Assembly, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will be required to renew half of the membership of its Bureau. Two regional representatives are to be elected from each geopolitical group, for a four-year term, to replace those regional representatives whose term expired in April 2020.

According to the [Rules of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians](#), a retiring member of the Bureau shall not be eligible for re-election for two years.

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians will be also called upon to fill the vacant seats on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians:

- One regional representative for the African Group (end of term April 2022) to fill the seat left vacant by Ms. Drame (Mali), who is no longer a parliamentarian
- One regional representative for the Arab Group (end of term April 2022) to fill the seat left vacant by Ms. Al-Basti (United Arab Emirates), who is no longer a parliamentarian
- One regional representative for the Asia-Pacific Group (end of term April 2022) to fill the seat of Ms. Hosseini (Islamic Rep. of Iran), who is no longer a parliamentarian
- One regional representative for GRULAC (end of term April 2022) to fill the seat of MS. Sosa de Rodas (El Salvador), who is no longer a parliamentarian
- One regional representative for the Twelve Plus Group (end of term April 2022) to fill the seat left vacant by Ms. Tolley (New Zealand), who is no longer a parliamentarian.

Elections will be held on the basis of candidatures received from the corresponding geopolitical groups.

In light of the Forum's rule on the promotion of gender equality and of its current composition, only female parliamentarians may submit their candidatures for these five vacancies.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 6

FEM/31/6-Inf.1
15 April 2021

Panel discussion: *Generation Equality in and through parliaments*

Wednesday, 12 May 2021, 14:00–16:00 CEST
Virtual event

2020 marked several important milestones: 25 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the 20th anniversary of Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and five years since the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development came into force. And yet, many of the targets set in these key instruments are still far from reach.

It is against this backdrop that UN Women, in partnership with the governments of France and Mexico and civil society groups, decided to launch the [Generation Equality Forum](#), a unique platform centred on intergenerational dialogue and multi-stakeholder collaboration to achieve gender equality. The aim is to scale up commitments to accelerate progress in the Decade of Action to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

There is no doubt that achieving the SDGs requires bridging gender gaps in all areas of life. The Generation Equality Forum focuses in particular on the following areas:

1. Gender-based violence
2. Economic justice and rights
3. Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)
4. Feminist action for climate justice
5. Technology and innovation for gender equality
6. Feminist movements and leadership

In March 2021, the IPU, in collaboration with other entities, unveiled draft priority areas of action under the six items above, each corresponding to an Action Coalition. These [Action Coalition draft priority areas](#) were thoroughly discussed with other interested stakeholders during the Generation Equality Forum hosted by Mexico, and are now being finalized.

As the [commitment-making phase](#) just began and will culminate at the Paris Forum in June 2021, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will provide a space for such commitments to be discussed and formulated, both in terms of what MPs can pledge to do individually, and of what their institutions could commit to doing.

Participants at the panel discussion will be invited to share insights on the following:

- Is your parliament currently engaged in repealing discriminatory laws or considering new **legislation to guarantee women's rights and gender equality**, especially as regards gender-based violence, economic justice, and sexual and reproductive health and rights? What efforts could be made to accelerate such legal reforms?
- What would it take to **reach gender parity and ensure the presence of diverse groups of young women leaders** at all levels of decision-making and across all areas, including the economy, climate action and technology?
- Does your parliament have an **institutional mandate, a dedicated body and/or internal expertise to advance gender equality** in all areas of its work? Please give examples of what impact such gender mainstreaming mechanisms have had and outline what more they could do.



Inter-Parliamentary Union

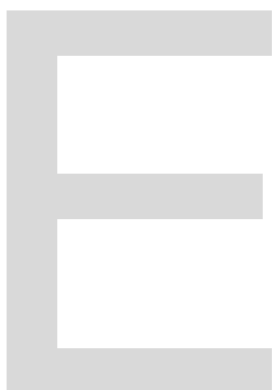
For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

- Is your parliament equipped for designing, adopting and monitoring **public finance and budget** through a gender lens? If not, what measures are envisaged to achieve this objective?
- How can parliaments and individual MPs lead by example in **tackling gender-based violence and sexism in parliament**?
- What measures would you take to engage **civil society groups and adolescent girls** so that they can voice their concerns and influence parliamentary decision-making processes?

During the panel discussion, focus will be placed on youth and adolescent girls' leadership, in line with the IPU's role as co-leader of Generation Equality's Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership. Participants will be briefed on the [call to action on young women's participation and leadership](#) issued by the IPU and the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth in March 2021. In addition, the discussion will provide an opportunity for MPs to hear from adolescent girls and young women on what it would take for them to feel empowered to participate in public life and contribute to decisions that can build a better future for them.



#IPU142



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

142nd IPU ASSEMBLY

Virtual session, 24-28 May 2021

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 7

FEM/31/7-Inf.1
7 May 2021

Note on the election of the presiding officers of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The 31st Forum of Women Parliamentarians is called upon to renew half the membership of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, to replace those regional representatives whose terms expired in April 2020.

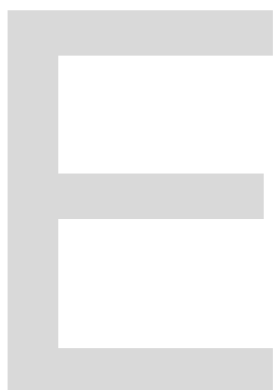
Two regional representatives are to be elected from each geopolitical group, for a four-year term.

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians will also replace five members, from the African Group, Arab Group, Asia-Pacific Group, Group of Latin America and the Caribbean, and Twelve Plus Group respectively, who are no longer members of parliament and whose terms of office on the Bureau end in April 2022.

Following these elections, which will take place at the first sitting of the Forum on 10 May 2021, pursuant to Rule 33 of the Rules of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians, *the Forum of Women Parliamentarians shall, on the proposal of the Bureau, elect the President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Bureau from among parliamentarians of different regions.* This election will take place at the second sitting of the Forum on 12 May 2021.

The Bureau of Women Parliamentarians elected on 10 May will meet on 11 May from 14:00 to 15:30 CEST (Geneva time) online, in an *in camera* meeting on the Zoom platform, to select three of its members to propose to the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to hold office as President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President of the Bureau.

The Forum will resume its work on 12 May and elect, on the proposal of the Bureau, the President, First Vice-President and Second Vice-President. The new Presiding Officers of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians will be elected for a two-year term.



#IPU142