



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Speaking Notes

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Peace, Diversity & our Common Humanity
UNOG High-level event
Panel 4: Equality within the Sustainable
Development Goals

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- I am pleased to be part of today's conversation.
- Gender equality is at the heart of our mandate of building peace, sustainable development and genuine democracy. There is plenty of evidence out there of the importance of gender equality in delivering good governance and resilient societies. And yet, we are still far from our goal.
- In our assessment, discriminatory laws still affect more than 2.5 billion women and girls around the world. So it should come as no surprise that the ongoing pandemic has exacerbated existing gender inequalities that President Grabar-Kitarović referred to. Also, despite growing awareness of the importance of women in leadership, it still remains the exception rather than the norm.
- As we build forward, we need to build equal. As leaders, we cannot shy away from our responsibility to deliver a gender transformative agenda. And we need to be held accountable for that.
- That is why I value so much multistakeholder efforts such as the International Gender Champions, which is an initiative I am pleased to chair. Today, this initiative spans 6 multilateral hubs and includes nearly 300 international leaders.
- Also, within Generation Equality, the IPU is co-leading the Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, alongside governments, civil society and girls-led groups.
- Because for us, genuine democracy requires the voices of women and girls in all their diversity, and making institutions accountable to them.
- So let me share with you what we are doing to achieve this vision.
- ***At the IPU we promote gender-sensitive institutions/parliaments that drive a feminist agenda and are sexism-free, family-friendly spaces.***
- Parliaments are key to promoting laws and budgets that are gender transformative. For that they must start by transforming themselves.
- They need a clear mandate, dedicated mechanisms, and the capacity to deliver a feminist agenda. This starts with review and reform processes. And grounding their action on international standards.

- This is why we have been working hand in hand with the CEDAW Committee in engaging parliaments on delivering on their duty to translate the CEDAW Convention into robust national laws and policies.
- Also, parliaments must be spaces where women and men can fully contribute. They must adapt their work modalities to the needs of MPs and staff with care responsibilities. And they must eliminate all forms of sexism within the institution. This is of utmost importance: 4 in 5 women MPs have faced some form of harassment. But we also know solutions exist.
- For several years now, we have been documenting the prevalence of sexism in parliament and we will continue to do so. We have also been collecting good practices to support parliaments in becoming ever more gender-sensitive, sexism-free and family-friendly.
- ***At the IPU we also promote measures to achieve gender parity in parliaments.***
- Gender parity in decision-making is key to removing all barriers to gender equality but it cannot be achieved without strong, positive measures. Yet, parity is still far off, with only 1 woman out of 4 MPs worldwide.
- We are doing our part through data, advocacy and technical support at national level to promote measures such as gender electoral quotas.
- ***It is equally important to empower women leaders, especially young women, and promote synergies with women and girls from civil society.***
- Women leaders are the drivers of a feminist agenda in parliament. They often work across party lines to achieve positive change. To amplify their impact, they must include young women and civil society in their work.
- We will continue to support the work of women MPs, the inclusion of young people and young women in particular, and synergies with women, girls and feminist groups from civil society.
- ***Finally, as institutions we must lead by example. And there are two powerful collective commitments the IPU has joined in that regard that I also encourage you all to join.***
- ***One of them is a collective commitment of the Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, pledging to apply and deepen feminist practices within our own organization.***
- Here, I want to stress the importance of having dedicated policies and structures tasked with advancing gender equality from within.
- At the IPU, we have also introduced quotas for delegations attending our governing bodies, as well as sanctions for single-sex delegations. Thanks to this, 40% of MPs attending our last Governing Council are women.
- Beyond that, no resolution at the IPU is adopted without careful scrutiny and amendments by our Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

- ***Likewise, through the International Gender Champions Gender Based Violence pledge, my fellow Champions and I have committed to applying zero tolerance and placing the elimination of gender-based violence and sexism at the heart of our work.***
- The time for equality is now, we owe this to today's and the next generations.