



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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## Parliamentary Engagement in CEDAW implementation, reporting and follow-up

*IPU Webinar Series for parliaments of States scheduled for review in  
2022*

### **Concept note**

Ensuring gender equality and full respect for women's human rights is a key commitment of the international community. It is recognized as essential to making democracies strong, as well as to achieving sustainable development and peace.

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)<sup>1</sup> is at the core of the human rights architecture for the promotion of women's rights and provides valuable guidance on the achievement of gender equality in all areas, ranging from within the family and education to economic and political life.

189<sup>2</sup> countries are parties to the Convention, making it one of the most ratified treaties in the world. However, CEDAW remains one of the conventions most subject to reservations and facing major challenges in terms of implementation, in particular in a post-COVID context.

The UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (the CEDAW Committee), which monitors the implementation of the Convention and investigates alleged breaches, has recently expressed its concern at major setbacks in women's rights and called for renewed political commitment in this regard.

All States Parties have the obligation to present a report on the implementation of CEDAW every four years to the CEDAW Committee. This is a key opportunity to take stock of advances made and priorities that need to be addressed to implement CEDAW.

For more than 20 years now the IPU has repeatedly emphasized the need for stronger involvement of parliaments in the implementation of CEDAW, in particular in the reporting process to the Committee. This engagement is a key success factor in leading the required legal reforms, providing resources, and changing mentalities and culture – all necessary elements for the realization of women's rights.

The IPU and the CEDAW Committee have built a long-standing cooperation designed to promote the implementation of the Convention through the action of parliaments around the world. In 2008, the Committee adopted a statement, encouraging parliaments to participate actively in their State's reporting to the Committee, and in the implementation of the Convention. During Committee sessions, States Parties are systematically asked about the level of parliamentary involvement in the reporting process. The Committee also requests that its concluding observations be presented to the parliaments of the States concerned, and calls on those parliaments to follow up concretely on implementation of the

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women](http://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-elimination-all-forms-discrimination-against-women)

<sup>2</sup> [https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtsg\\_no=IV-8&chapter=4&clang=en](https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=TREATY&mtsg_no=IV-8&chapter=4&clang=en)

Convention. During its most recent session (February 2022), the CEDAW Committee decided to work jointly with the IPU to draft updated guidance on women's equal participation in political and public decision-making.

**To support members of parliament in their efforts to implement the CEDAW Convention, the IPU will hold a series of webinars for MPs from States that are scheduled for review at upcoming CEDAW sessions in 2022.**

**The webinars are aimed at accompanying parliaments through the reporting process and supporting them in taking action for enhanced implementation of CEDAW. They will provide information on the Convention, the Committee's work and the reporting process; facilitate exchange of good practices between MPs going through the CEDAW reporting process; and support discussions between MPs and CEDAW Committee members on enhanced parliamentary involvement.**

**At least two webinars will be held:**

- **The first will take place before the reporting sessions of the CEDAW Committee (19 May 2022);**
- **The second will take place just after the reporting sessions and will be aimed at discussing parliament's role in following up concluding observations, including on specific priority areas (TBD).**

An interactive session may also be organized in-between the two webinars if required.

## **Objectives and expected results**

### **General objective:**

Members of parliament build their knowledge of CEDAW and enhance their commitment and action for the implementation of CEDAW.

### **Expected results:**

- Male and female members of parliament have an overview of the rights entrenched in CEDAW, of the Convention's Optional Protocol, and of the mandate and procedures of the CEDAW Committee;
- Men and women participants understand how to take part in a CEDAW session, and are aware of the expected outcomes of a country review.
- Male and female members of parliament have a concrete understanding of the type of concluding observations the CEDAW Committee has recently issued in areas of current policymaking;
- Male and female members of parliament are equipped to contribute to the implementation of the Convention through their work;
- Male and female members of parliament follow up and present insights on the realization of activities ensuring CEDAW implementation through parliamentary work.

## **Participation**

The IPU is inviting two groups of parliaments to the workshop: those of the States that are scheduled for review at the 82nd CEDAW session in June 2022 and those tentatively scheduled for review in October 2022 at the 83rd CEDAW session.

Invited parliaments are asked to register **delegations of a maximum of 4 MPs, two men and two women** whose work and responsibilities in parliament link to CEDAW and who are ready to share their experience and commit to taking part in the two to three webinars. These may include chairpersons and members of gender and/or human rights committees, and chairpersons and members of gender equality caucuses and/or caucuses of women parliamentarians. The invitation is also extended to parliamentary staff working on women's rights and the status of women, as observers.

Upcoming reviews by the CEDAW Committee include (as of 26 April 2022<sup>3</sup>): *Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrein, Belgium, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Finland, Gambia, Honduras, Jamaica, Mongolia, Morocco, Namibia, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Switzerland, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Ukraine.*

Additional parliaments that may be invited are those that currently benefit from technical cooperation with IPU.

## **Date and format**

During the series, two webinars are planned as follows:

Webinar 1: CEDAW, the CEDAW Committee and avenues for parliamentary engagement (May 2022)

Webinar 2: Reporting and exchange on recent or planned engagement on CEDAW, both with the CEDAW Committee and in national-level efforts (November 2022)

The first webinar will be held on **19 May 2022 from 14:00 to 17:00 CEST (Geneva time) on the Interprefy platform.**

Simultaneous interpretation will be available in English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

The **registration form** for the first webinar can be found [here](#).

The precise date of webinar 2 will be communicated in due course. The precise content and format of webinar 2 will be developed in consultation with participating MPs.

An interactive session may also be organized in-between the two webinars if required.

## **Follow-up**

The IPU will prepare and disseminate a report on each webinar. It will also disseminate the concluding observations to the parliaments concerned as soon as they are adopted by the CEDAW Committee. In addition, targeted support may also be provided for the realization of activities ensuring CEDAW implementation through parliamentary work, including in the form of capacity-building activities and/or counselling in legal review or legal drafting. This series of webinars will allow for following up on and sharing insights with other Parliaments on the implementation of

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<sup>3</sup> States to be reviewed at upcoming CEDAW sessions are listed here: [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/SessionsList.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW)  
The list is subject to change.

such activities through peer-to-peer exchange, as well as with members of the CEDAW Committee.

**Provisional programme of Webinar 1: CEDAW, the CEDAW Committee and avenues for parliamentary engagement (19 May 2022, 14:00-17:00)<sup>4</sup>**

**Opening session (14:00–14:10)**

Welcoming remarks by:

- Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General
- Ms. Nahla Haidar, Vice-Chair of the CEDAW Committee

**Session 1: Briefing on CEDAW and the CEDAW Committee (14:10–14:50)**

This session will give participants an overview of the rights entrenched in the Convention, of the CEDAW Optional Protocol, and of the mandate of the CEDAW Committee.

State reporting obligations and the corresponding process will also be outlined. We will focus in particular on the upcoming 82<sup>nd</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> sessions of the CEDAW Committee (June and October 2022), including the format of the dialogue between State delegations and Committee members, participation modalities, and the expected dates on which country-specific concluding observations are to be published.

*Presentations by CEDAW Committee members will be followed by a Q&A session.*

**Panellists:**

- Ms. Ameline Nicole, CEDAW Committee member and former member of the Parliament of France
- Ms. Nahla Haidar, Vice-Chair of the CEDAW Committee

**Session 2: CEDAW as a tool for parliaments and their members to advance gender equality and women's rights and empowerment (14:50–15:50)**

The CEDAW Committee's mandate includes the interpretation of the Convention through country-specific concluding observations and general recommendations, taking into account the national and current context of different States, as well as emerging topics.

This session will provide participants with an overview of key areas of observations and selected general recommendations adopted by the CEDAW Committee to help States address the main inequalities and areas of discrimination against women, including recent or new areas. We will focus on topics relevant to current policymaking, such as climate change, conflict prevention, violence against women and girls, harmful practices and family law.

*Presentations by CEDAW Committee members and members of parliament will be followed by a Q&A session.*

**Panellists:**

- Ms. Nahla Haidar, Vice-Chair of the CEDAW Committee
- Ms. Ameline Nicole, CEDAW Committee member and former member of the Parliament of France

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<sup>4</sup> All timings are CEST (Geneva time)

### **Session 3: Preparing for parliamentary engagement in CEDAW implementation, reporting and follow-up (15:50–16:55)**

This session will focus on the role of parliaments in: ratifying CEDAW and its Optional Protocol; withdrawing reservations; and implementing the Convention.

Particular emphasis will be placed on sharing experiences about the role of parliaments in: the process of reporting to the CEDAW Committee; and national-level implementation of both the Convention and the Committee's observations and recommendations.

*Presentations by members of parliament will be followed by discussions among participants.*

#### **Panellists:**

- Mr. Akmal Saidov, First Deputy Speaker of the Legislative Chamber and IPU Vice-President, Uzbekistan
- Ms. Jeehan Mahmood, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Human Rights and Gender of People's Majilis, Maldives
- Ms. Martha Lucia Micher, Chairperson of the Senate Committee on Gender Equality, Mexico
- Mr. Philippus Katamelo, Member of the National Assembly, Namibia (*to be confirmed*)

#### **Input from participants**

During this session, participants will be asked to share insights on the following:

- To what extent does your parliament participate in CEDAW reporting? What are the challenges in this regard?
- What avenues exist for parliament to start its engagement in CEDAW reporting or to enhance such engagement in the run up to the 82<sup>nd</sup> and 83<sup>rd</sup> CEDAW Committee sessions?
- More generally, how is CEDAW integrated into the work of your parliament?
- How can the IPU help support your parliament's CEDAW engagement?

#### **Closing (16:55–17:00)**

***N.B.: A subsequent webinar will provide the opportunity for participants to follow up and share insights on their parliamentary activities aimed at ensuring CEDAW implementation.***