



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Mr. Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General

Parliamentary engagement in CEDAW implementation, reporting
and follow-up

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

19 May 2022

Dear Madam Chair,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am most pleased to open today's webinar.

I do not need to stress the special place the advancement of gender equality and respect for women's rights occupies at the core of the mission of the IPU. For it is essential to genuine democracy, sustainable peace, social justice and more generally the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals towards which we strive.

CEDAW provides a solid basis for the work of the IPU and its Member Parliaments to deliver on gender equality. It is a roadmap and an every-day endeavor. It is a benchmark against which to review laws, policies and practices.

I am myself an international gender champion and have, in this framework, undertaken a personal commitment to guarantee that the work of the IPU is gender-responsive.

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the IPU Plan of Action for Gender Sensitive Parliaments, which was unanimously adopted by our Members. At our next Assembly, which will be held in October in Kigali, Rwanda, we will review progress made by Parliaments around the world and define ways in which the GSP framework may lead Parliaments forward, especially in a context of crisis.

Gender-sensitive parliaments are those that strive for gender parity in their composition; make sure MPs and staff, whether they are men or women, are gender aware; have dedicated gender mainstreaming mechanisms; and promote a conducive work environment for men and women. In a nutshell, these are parliaments that are better equipped to advance CEDAW through their work.

For over 20 years, the IPU has engaged parliaments on the CEDAW Convention, simply because no real progress can be made in fulfilling the rights enshrined in the Convention if Parliaments are not onboard.

We know that all too often, Parliaments are called upon to ratify international treaties, but after ratification, they are left aside when it comes to implementation.

Through our work, we have been promoting a more proactive role by Parliaments in overseeing and ensuring implementation of the Convention.

We have raised awareness of the rights enshrined in the Convention and of the Optional Protocol. We have engaged members of the CEDAW Committee in our debates at Assemblies and in our regional and national activities. We have also communicated the outcomes of CEDAW reviews to the Parliaments concerned.

But sensitization is not enough. We need to turn words into deeds. We are happy to have supported many parliaments in promoting dialogue and action nationally.

For instance, in the Maldives, private members bills have been crafted to support CEDAW implementation in areas such as gender-based violence and sexual harassment. In Turkey, labor laws have been reviewed to ensure their compliance with the CEDAW Convention. In Sierra Leone, we are supporting efforts by Parliament to eliminate female genital mutilation.

And I am sure that there is much more that you are doing and planning to do. But there still is a long and winding road ahead of us.

No country has achieved full equality, so there is no place for complacency when it comes to CEDAW implementation. We must always strive for progress and remain vigilant, so that gains made towards gender equality are never lost.

I look forward to hearing from you on your experiences, challenges and aspirations and to seeing you engaged throughout the entire series of webinars to follow. I am sure that the results of this workshop and the next ones will make your work and IPU's work on gender equality ever more relevant and effective. To conclude, please remember that the IPU is at the service of its members, and available to provide support where needed to make CEDAW a reality everywhere.