



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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# 145th IPU Assembly

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145th IPU ASSEMBLY  
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Forum of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 5

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## ***Gender-sensitive parliaments: Parliaments free from sexism, harassment and violence against women***

34th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians

Tuesday, 11 October 2022  
16:15 to 17:45, MH4, ground floor, KCC

### **Background**

2022 marks the 10th anniversary of the IPU's *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*, adopted at the 127th Assembly in Quebec City, Canada. The Plan defines a gender-sensitive parliament as one that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its composition, structures, operations, methods and work. It is a parliament in which there are no barriers – substantive, structural or cultural – to women's full participation and to equality between its men and women members and staff. It is not only a place where women can work, but also a safe and respectful workplace where women want to work and contribute.

Ten years ago, sexual harassment policies for staff and MPs were the least common form of gender policy in parliament, with less than 20% of parliaments saying they had one<sup>1</sup>. Yet evidence has since shown that gender-based violence, including sexism, misogyny, intimidation, harassment and many forms of sexual, physical, psychological and economic violence are perpetrated in the premises of parliament against women MPs and staff. IPU studies on sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments have revealed that, globally, more than 80% of women MPs surveyed have experienced psychological violence, 25% physical violence, 22% sexual violence, and 33% economic violence<sup>2</sup>.

In 2019, the IPU published [Guidelines on eliminating violence against women in parliaments](#), developed with the active contribution of 19 parliaments which have provided information on action taken to counter such abuse in their institutions. Since then, new measures, to improve existing policies or fill a gap, have been adopted in an increasing number of parliaments around the world.

Parliaments where sexism, harassment and violence against women exist cannot be gender-sensitive institutions. Gender-sensitive parliaments are institutions that are founded on gender equality, where women and men have an equal right to participate without discrimination or recrimination. When gender-based violence pervades, parliaments will miss out on their responsibility to be representative, efficient and effective, and will fail in their duty to serve the population in all its diversity.

<sup>1</sup> IPU, [Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice](#), 2011.

<sup>2</sup> IPU, [Issues Brief: Sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians](#), 2016.

## Objectives

The panel will be a platform to analyse the linkages between gender-sensitive parliaments and the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliamentary institutions.

It will provide a space to investigate what needs to be done in parliament to create and apply a culture of equality and of zero tolerance to any form of violence against women parliamentarians and parliamentary staff.

In particular, based on recent experiences of policies and mechanisms adopted by some parliaments on preventing all forms of violence against women in parliamentary workplaces, the panel will review how far parliaments have come to ensure that everyone who works in their institutions feels respected and safe at all times.

In conjunction with this panel, an exhibition will showcase posters and other communication and awareness-raising materials put in place and used in different parliaments to prevent and address sexism, harassment and violence against women on parliamentary premises.

The panel discussion will be organized as follows:

10 minutes	<p><b>Introductory remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>What makes a parliament a gender-sensitive workplace and how is violence against women in parliament a major threat to this achievement?</li></ul> <p><b>Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU and Chair of the International Gender Champions Global Board</b></p>
80 minutes	<p><b>Parliament's efforts towards zero tolerance of sexism, harassment and violence against women</b></p> <p><i>Presentations by panellists (30 minutes) followed by sharing of good practices among participants (50 minutes)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Policies and codes of conduct:</b> Setting out standards to eliminate gender-based violence in parliament in appropriate parliamentary workplace policies.</li></ul> <p><b>Panellists:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Ms. Claudia Mix, Second Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies (Chile)</b></li><li><b>Ms. Jacqui Dean, Member of Parliament (New Zealand)</b></li><li><b>Ms. Esther Anyakun (Uganda), Member of the IPU Executive Committee</b></li></ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Culture:</b> What other measures and actions can be taken to support efforts towards zero tolerance of violence against women in parliament?</li></ul> <p><b>Ms. Sarah Childs, Professor of Politics and Gender, University of Edinburgh</b></p>

- Short introduction to the exhibition on communication materials and awareness-raising tools.

### **PowerPoint video presentation**

### **Sharing of good practices among participants**

Participants will be invited to reflect and share thoughts and concrete experiences on the following questions:

- How are sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament affecting your parliament's work?
- Is gender-based violence taboo in your parliament?
- What actions have been taken in your parliament so far to address sexism, harassment and violence against women MPs and staff? For example:
  - Has a policy or code of conduct on addressing harassment and gender-based violence in parliament been put in place?
  - Has a grievance mechanism for reporting and handling complaints been created?
  - Are there disciplinary sanctions against perpetrators?
- How is everyone in your parliament made aware of the measures in place on preventing harassment and gender-based violence?
- How has the culture changed in your parliament? And how does it impact on the fight against sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament?

### **Wrap up and conclusion**