



Inter-Parliamentary Union

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Panel discussion *Towards gender equality: Celebrating and understanding the accomplishments of women's parliamentary caucuses*

Friday 14 October, 11:30 – 13:00
Room: MH1

Concept note

Context

To mark the tenth anniversary of the *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*, this panel discussion will explore the progress made towards gender equality through the work of women's parliamentary caucuses.

Women's parliamentary caucuses offer women parliamentarians an opportunity to bridge political divides and work together on common objectives. Logically, they feature prominently in the *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*, among other bodies working to strengthen women's rights and gender equality in parliament and wider society.

Women parliamentarians around the world have therefore created their own spaces to ensure that their voices are heard and that they can participate actively in the work of parliament. According to the IPU's *Guidelines for Women's Caucuses*¹, the diversity of women's parliamentary caucuses, in terms of structure, composition, functioning and areas of activity, is a function of the specific needs and objectives pursued by women parliamentarians in various countries, as well as to the political context in which they evolve.

Today, a decade on, how have women's parliamentary caucuses evolved? What successes have they had in recent years in terms of legislative and political programmes in favour of gender equality? What elements have led to the successful creation of new caucuses where they did not exist before, and to their sustainable integration into the work of parliament? How have these caucuses contributed to transforming parliaments into more gender-sensitive institutions? What partnerships have facilitated their work and success?

Objectives of the panel discussion

By showcasing examples of the accomplishments but also the challenges encountered in this field, the panel discussion will offer an opportunity to better understand the determining factors of the influence that women parliamentarians can have in a given political context.

¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union (2013). *Guidelines for Women's Caucuses*. Available here: <https://www.ipu.org/file/1062/download>

By sharing experiences, the discussion will aim to highlight the internal success factors of a women's parliamentary caucus, in terms of its creation, functioning and unity on the issues on which it focuses. The discussion will also allow participants to identify external success factors relating to the political environment in which a caucus evolves, as well as the role of the strategic alliances that it might build with men, with parliament as an institution, and with women's associations and other civil society groups.

The discussion will also allow the sharing of best practices, which will allow both men and women participants to learn from each other and help each other to strengthen the influence of women's parliamentary caucuses in order to transform parliaments into more gender-sensitive institutions and to achieve gender equality through parliament's work.

Organization of the panel discussion

Participants in the panel discussion are invited to share their experiences based on the following questions:

1. What are the obstacles to introducing women's parliamentary caucuses and what factors contribute to their successful integration into the work of parliament?
2. What influence do women's parliamentary caucuses have on the transformation of parliaments into more gender-sensitive institutions in terms of their work, bodies, functioning and working methods?
3. What successes have women's parliamentary caucuses had and what challenges have they faced in advancing a legislative and political programme in favour of gender equality?
4. What role can partnerships play in the creation and success of women's parliamentary caucuses?

This meeting has the following objectives:

- To familiarize all parliamentarians with the importance of the work of women's parliamentary caucuses.
- To study the links between the work of women's parliamentary caucuses and the transformation of parliaments into more gender-sensitive institutions.
- To share best parliamentary practices as inspiration to improve the creation, functioning and role of women's parliamentary caucuses.

The meeting will be Chaired by **Ms. Hala Ramzy Fayez, Member of the Shura Council of Bahrain and First Vice-President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians**. It will include the following panellists, who will share best parliamentary practices as inspiration to improve the creation, functioning and role of women's parliamentary caucuses:

- Ms. Zeina Hilal, Manager of the IPU Gender Partnership Programme and Youth Participation Programme
- Ms. Fatouma Hamadou, Parliamentarian from Djibouti
- Ms. Irine Yusiana Roba Putri, Parliamentarian from Indonesia
- Ms. Lorraine Clifford-Lee, Senator from the Republic of Ireland
- Ms. Hadija Ndangiza Murangwa, Senator from Rwanda

This panel discussion will bring together parliamentarians and representatives of women's parliamentary caucuses. It will begin with interventions from a selected group of panellists representing women's parliamentary caucuses in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America, as a starting point for discussions open to all participants.

For more information, see Parline: Specialized bodies – Women's caucus:

https://data.ipu.org/specialized-bodies/?year=2022&month=5&structure=any&form_build_id=form-rszwCndqiFC6k5_vJierjgymimS1Jiy-pUXzDpGcGc&form_id=ipu_specialized_bodies_views_filter_form®ion=&sb_theme=4224&op=Afficher