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The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) / CEDAW Committee and UN Women, in collaboration with Generation Equality's Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands and the Permanent Mission of Mexico to the United Nations are pleased to invite you to a side event at the 67th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women:

Achieving equality in decision-making by 2030: What will it take?

8 March 2023, 10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

Conference Room B, United Nations Headquarters

The side event will aim to inform the new General Recommendation of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Committee) on *Equal and Inclusive Representation of Women in Decision-Making Systems* (GR40). As an authoritative interpretation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention), GR40 will help build accountability and accelerate progress toward gender-equal and inclusive decision-making systems.

Women's equal participation in public affairs and decision-making has long been recognized as a human right. Ratified by 189 States, the CEDAW Convention stipulates in Articles 7 and 8 the principle of equal access for women to the public and political spheres – at all levels and all areas of decision-making. Women's equal political participation is a precondition to genuine democracy, sustainable development, and peace. It is essential for driving policies that work for all. But women's voices and leadership are still missing across sectors and decision-making at all levels. A broad spectrum of patriarchal norms, discrimination, and gender-based violence creates multiple barriers.

Clear progress has been achieved thanks to decades of advocacy and bold leadership. Gender parity has now become the goal set by parliaments,¹ governments,² and international bodies, as reflected in recent policy guidance and political statements.

National parliaments are the leading institutions elected to represent all people. However, more than a century after women were first elected to national parliaments, only six countries out of 187 with national parliaments have achieved or surpassed gender parity in their lower or single chambers: Rwanda, Cuba, Nicaragua, New Zealand, Mexico, and the United Arab Emirates.³

Moreover, IPU data and research on youth participation in national parliaments revealed that only 1% of parliamentarians are women under 30.⁴ Having more women, including young women in parliaments is only one aspect of inclusivity while many other groups of women remain underrepresented, such as women with disabilities, national minorities and others. Only when parliaments are representative and inclusive of the diversity in society will they be able to be entirely legitimate. Only when parliaments can embed the voices of women and girls into all their decision-making processes will they be able to deliver gender equality to all fully.

¹ IPU resolution, [The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective](#) (2016), p. 3.

² See CSW 65 agreed conclusions, [UN Doc. E/CN.6/2021/L.3](#), p. 14.

³ See IPU Parline, [Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, situation at 1 December 2022](#).

⁴ IPU, [Youth in Parliament infographic](#) (2021).

The side event builds on the longstanding cooperation between the IPU, the CEDAW Committee, and UN Women, as well as on the agenda and goals set as part of the Generation Equality Forum, especially its Action Coalition 6 on Feminist movements and leadership.⁵ Participants will hear from experts, gender equality advocates, and parliamentarians on the current state of women's global representation, lessons learned, and how to achieve and sustain gender parity in politics and other spheres.

The discussion will focus on priority action areas to be included in the GR40, so that gender parity contributes to gender-transformative outcomes.

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

- **What works:** *How parliaments have helped change the rules of the political game towards gender parity – from constitutional reform and gender quota laws to incentives for political parties. What alliances are needed to achieve and sustain such reforms?*
- **Numbers matter:** *How does women's increased representation in parliament impact the institutional and political environment to ensure their meaningful participation and decision-making processes that drive progress on gender equality?*
- **Institutions matter:** *Beyond the numbers, how can gender-sensitive parliaments help lift structural and security-related impediments to women's full and equal political participation and leadership – from formal and informal rules and working methods to institutional cultures and infrastructure?⁶*
- **All forms of participation matter:** *What can parliaments do to ensure more inclusive and participatory processes, and that feminist movements and women and girls in all their diversity can inform their decisions?*

Conference room B does not have interpretation facilities and, therefore, this side-event will be held in English only.

Introductory remarks

/Moderation: Ms. Nicole Ameline, Member of the CEDAW Committee

Opening remarks: Ms. Lia Quartapelle, Member of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

Presenters: Ms. Mariana Duarte, Programme Officer, Gender Partnership Programme, IPU

Ms. Ashrafun Nahar Misti, Executive Director of the Women with Disabilities Development Foundation (WDDF)

Representative from Mexico (TBC)

Interventions to be followed by an interactive discussion

⁵ See https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/FML_FINAL_VISUAL_EN.pdf.

⁶ See IPU, [Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments](#) (2012) and [Guidelines for the elimination of sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliament](#) (2019).