



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

The Empowerment Series

Seventh briefing: *Human Rights of Youth*

11 August 2023

Draft concept note

Context and rationale

Just over ten years ago, IPU Member Parliaments adopted a landmark [resolution](#) on youth participation in the democratic process, calling for the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on age, in accordance with the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The resolution also called on the IPU, parliaments, youth organizations and other relevant stakeholders to support and increase the representation and participation of youth, young women and young men alike, in parliament and political decision-making.

Despite tentative progress, the level of youth representation in parliament, as measured regularly by the IPU, remains low. Half the world's population is under 30, while only 2.8% of MPs globally are under 30¹. Young people continue to face age-based discrimination and obstacles to the enjoyment of their rights, limiting their potential.

The age of eligibility to stand for public office is a key impediment to youth representation in parliament. In 69% of countries in 2020, the voting age was lower than the legal age to hold parliamentary office. The electoral system impacts the election of younger MPs and also affects the relationship between parties and candidate selection. Younger candidates tend to be lower down party lists and are sometimes selected for “unwinnable” constituency seats where the party stands little to no chance of victory².

Youth and gender intersect, resulting in young women facing double discrimination. Only 2.8% of parliamentarians are under 30 and less than half of them are young women. Moreover, they face specific social-economic barriers, cultural stereotypes and discrimination. To address this, in 2020, the IPU and the Office of the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth issued a joint [Call to Action](#) on young women's political participation and leadership. It appeals for a strengthening of gender-responsive youth policies and programmes through legislation, budget allocation and parliamentary oversight. However, intersectional discrimination is not only limited to youth and gender; membership of marginalized and vulnerable groups may further compound participation in public life.

2023 marks the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The right to participation is one of the most important principles of the Declaration. This milestone could be an opportunity to rejuvenate the centrality of human rights globally and advance the promise of freedom, equality, participation and justice for all. It could also be an opportunity to help address age-based discrimination and barriers that are stopping young people from fully enjoying their rights.

To shed light on these issues of concern and mobilize young MPs to find solutions from a policy-making perspective, the IPU is organizing the seventh online briefing of its Empowerment Series for young parliamentarians on *Human Rights of Youth*, on the occasion of International Youth Day 2023 and in conjunction with the Human Rights 75 Initiative leading up to the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December 2023.

Objectives: The aims of the online briefing on *Human Rights of Youth* are to:

- Increase awareness among young parliamentarians about the human rights of youth, with a particular focus on eliminating age-based discrimination limiting political participation;
- Take stock of advances and challenges in the implementation of the joint call to action by the IPU and the Office of the United Nations Envoy on Youth (OSGEY) for young women's political participation and leadership and identify means to further and accelerate progress;
- Discuss the usefulness and feasibility of collecting data on youth and marginalized and vulnerable groups;
- Offer a platform for the exchange of experiences and good practices in advancing youth political rights and identifying legislative and policy-related solutions.

Methodology: Experts on human rights of youth and youth political participation will brief young parliamentarians on the subject matter. The briefing will be followed by a discussion among young MPs to share good practices from their respective countries on youth rights. Simultaneous interpretation will be available in English, French, Arabic and Spanish.

Date, virtual venue and time:

The online briefing will take place on Zoom, on 11 August 2023, from 13:00 to 15:00 CEST (Geneva time).

Registration link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUvceigpz0qG9MriYzXRWJ0MwEArSon1gkY>

¹ Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2023

² *Youth participation in national parliaments*, IPU, 2021