



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

## Empowerment Series for Young MPs

### Eleventh briefing: *Young women's political participation*

*Online briefing for young parliamentarians on the occasion of International Youth Day*

**13 August 2024**

**Concept note**

#### Context and rationale

Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. However, data shows the underrepresentation of women at all levels of decision-making worldwide. As of 1 June 2024, only 26.9% of members of parliament globally are women, showing minimal progress from recent years. According to UN Women, as of 1 June 2024, only 18 countries have a woman as Head of State, and 15 countries have a woman as Head of Government. Similarly, while young people form a significant portion of the global population, their representation in parliaments remains disproportionately low; globally only 2.8% of members of parliament are under 30, and 18.8% are under 40. Even more worryingly, 39% of parliaments have no MPs under 30 at all, and 70% of chambers of parliament impose a "waiting time" of several years between voting age and age of eligibility for office. Of all women members of parliament and young members of parliament, the least represented group is the group formed by young women. Just 1.4% of MPs are women under 30 and just 7.9% are women under 40.

IPU data shows that global progress on gender equality slowed in 2023, and in some cases went into reverse, with reactionary agendas in some countries reducing the rights of women. Violence, lack of educational opportunities and income inequality already affect women and girls disproportionately. Online violence is being an additional hurdle for women involved in politics in 2024, especially young women who are particularly exposed to social media. The 2023 update of the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Social Norms Index (GSNI) underscores the obstacles women and girls confront in realizing their potential, spanning from politics to corporate boardrooms. These are largely attributable to deeply entrenched social norms and stereotypes which create barriers for women to participate equally in government institutions. All such socioeconomic barriers, societal gender-bias, discrimination, violence, sexual harassment and cyberbullying are major challenges being faced disproportionately by women in politics, and remain strong barriers and sources of political disengagement for too many young women.

However, without young women's political participation and leadership, addressing the existing gaps and fostering more inclusive and representative political systems will always be challenged, and ensuring that the perspectives and needs of younger generations of both men and women and boys and girls alike, leaving no one behind, will not be adequately reflected in policymaking.

Cognizant of the risks associated with young women's under-representation and political marginalization, in 2021 the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth called all stakeholders to [action](#) on young women's participation and leadership focusing on nurturing young women's political aspirations, supporting young women candidates for political office, and empowering young women in office by investing in their leadership.

Three years later and marking International Youth Day 2024, it is time to take stock of the implementation of the Call to Action and discuss further measures required to accelerate progress on young women's political participation and leadership.

Such a discussion will take place in the framework of an online briefing of the Empowerment Series for Young MPs.

## **Objectives:**

The aims of the online briefing are to:

- Take stock of the implementation of the key areas of the Call to Action on young women's political participation and leadership, namely nurturing young women's political aspirations, supporting young women candidates for political office, and empowering young women in office by investing in their leadership.
- Discuss how young MPs can advocate and promote increased participation and leadership by young women in parliament and politics.
- Help shape the next course of action to enhance young women's participation and leadership.
- Offer a platform for the exchange of experiences and good practices in advancing young women's political participation, and identifying legislative and policy-related solutions.

## **Methodology:**

Experts will brief young parliamentarians on the subject matter. The briefing will be followed by a discussion among young MPs, the sharing of practices from their respective countries and views on recommended global and local courses of action. 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 13 August 2024, from 13:00 to 15:00 CEST (Geneva time).

## **Registration link:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZlftuuvqTgjEtfUYSQZvKmOf8smqbG5XoPD>