



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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Opening remarks by Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

CSW68 Local and Regional Governments' Day
“Empowering Women to Empower Communities: Local Economies of Equality and Care”

New York, 14 March 2024

Madam President,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank UCLG for the invitation and all organizers for this important and very timely meeting.

We stand at a pivotal moment in history. The need to address gender disparities, economic inequality, and social injustice is more pressing than ever. The empowerment of women is not just a moral imperative; it is an economic, a social, and a political imperative. It is about unlocking the full potential of half of humanity and harnessing it for the benefit of all.

As we delve into discussions surrounding care, poverty eradication, and women's empowerment, we must underscore the significance of cooperation across sectors. To translate our commitments into concrete actions, we need to ensure effective coordination and synergy among diverse stakeholders. Local and regional governments, with their intimate knowledge of community needs and dynamics, are uniquely positioned to drive change on the ground.

Dear colleagues, by engaging with local and regional authorities, we can ensure that policies and initiatives are not only relevant but also responsive to the actual realities faced by women and girls in different contexts. Such collaboration fosters ownership and accountability, as local actors become active participants in the decision-making process.

The IPU has been engaging with national parliaments in making sure that political leaders are willing to support and drive change, and that parliamentary institutions themselves are equipped to do so. We have been working on the concept of gender-sensitive parliaments for more than a decade, guided by the premise that no inclusive policy can be formed in legislative institutions of exclusion. Gender-sensitive parliaments, is for us a precondition for building trust and enhancing the efficiency, effectiveness, and ultimately, legitimacy of parliaments.

Dear friends, but what do we mean by this? Gender-sensitive parliaments are parliaments that have equality in numbers and power, that have a dedicated mandate, structures and expertise to advance gender equality, and the willingness to do so. These are spaces where the voices and interests of everyone are taken into account in the decision-making processes.

But Parliaments cannot achieve transformative change alone. They are bound to work together with local and regional governments in the pursuit of progress and prosperity for all, leaving no-one behind. Just as homocentric circles converge towards a single focal point, so too do the efforts of parliamentary bodies and local governments converge towards the well-being and advancement of their constituents. Together we form a powerful force for positive change. Working together is the expected and necessary thing to do.

Ladies and Gentlemen, let us remember that solutions to the complex challenges we face cannot be siloed. We must mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment across all sectors and levels of society, ensure that no one is left behind.

We must also acknowledge that the most valuable lessons often stem from the practical experiences and grassroots initiatives implemented on the ground. We have much to learn from the communities and individuals who are actively engaged in the daily struggle for equality and dignity.

I strongly believe that by empowering women we empower the communities we serve, and in doing so, we pave the way for a brighter, more equitable future for all.

Thank you.