



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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Speech by Dr. Tulia Ackson, IPU President

G20 Parliamentary Forum: Towards the implementation of the recommendations
from the 1st Meeting of P20 Women Parliamentarians

Brasilia, 6 November 2024

Madam President,
Distinguished Speakers of Parliament,
Esteemed parliamentarians and guests,
Dear friends,

It is my great honor to address you today. I stand here with deep conviction that the work we do today is not only vital for our parliaments but for the future of our societies.

Today's forum builds on the momentum created at the Meeting of P20 Women Parliamentarians earlier this year, where the Charter of Alagoas was adopted. It is our collective responsibility to transform these commitments into actionable steps that make a tangible difference in the lives of women and girls worldwide.

Colleagues,

In our discussions today, we must confront a stark reality: despite progress, gender inequality remains deeply entrenched, including in **political decision-making**. Currently, women make up just 27% of parliamentarians globally. And only 23% of Speakers. And we are still lagging behind in ensuring our laws and policies fully incorporate the perspectives of women, and guarantee equality in law and in practice.

To bring about change we need to be bold. To do so we must first ensure **50/50 parity between men and women in parliament**, making it the norm rather than the exception.

Why is parity so critical? Parity ensures our policies are more legitimate and effective, better reflecting the diversity of the people we serve. Many parliaments today have achieved parity thanks to strong gender quotas and political will. They span different regions, cultures and political systems.

But aiming for parity in numbers isn't enough. It is the starting point. We need to amplify women's voices and leadership in parliament. And we need to address the **persistent barriers** preventing women from fully participating in political life – starting with discrimination, harassment and gender-based violence, both online and offline.

IPU studies revealed that one in four women MPs globally has faced physical violence, and one in three has endured economic violence. Over 80% of them have experienced psychological violence during their term in parliament.

An **intersectional approach** shows us that violence disproportionately affects young women, women with disabilities, unmarried women, and women from minority groups. This situation is unacceptable, especially in institutions that are meant to set an example.

The IPU Kigali Declaration, adopted in 2022, reaffirms our commitment to creating gender-sensitive parliaments where women are safe, valued, and empowered. Beyond parity, the Declaration urges our parliaments to ensure gender-responsive law-making and budgeting, place vulnerable populations at

the center of parliamentary action, and address the care-giving gap that hinders women's career advancement.

In line with this, the recent launch of the **CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation No. 40** on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems reaffirms our collective responsibility to continue advancing women's rights.

We have our roadmap. So what are we waiting for?

Colleagues,

The urgency of **climate action** cannot be overstated, and women's leadership is critical in shaping just, inclusive, and sustainable climate policies. Women, especially those in vulnerable communities, are often the first to face the devastating impacts of climate change, and their perspectives are essential for crafting solutions that are not only effective but also equitable.

I urge all our parliaments to push for gender-responsive climate policies that meaningfully integrate women's experiences and leadership. This is not just a moral imperative, but a practical one.

Similarly, in the rapidly evolving fields of **AI and emerging technologies**, parliaments must ensure innovation benefits everyone. As AI transforms economies and societies, we must foster gender-responsive policies that regulate AI to prevent the reinforcement of existing biases and inequalities. Women's voices must be central to these discussions if we are to harness technology in service of equality and progress for all.

Economic empowerment is another key pillar of gender equality. Discriminatory laws, limited financial access, and unequal pay and care responsibilities continue to hold women back. We must prioritize women's financial inclusion and empowerment, revisit our social protection, care and labour policies, lift legal barriers and implement gender-responsive budgeting.

These priorities were underscored in the Charter of Alagoas, and today we must recommit to turning them into reality. Parliaments must champion these efforts in collaboration with civil society and international organizations.

Colleagues,

The road ahead is challenging, but the path is clear. To achieve gender equality, we must transform our parliaments into institutions that truly reflect the diverse societies we serve. **Women's leadership** across all aspects of public life is no longer a matter of debate; it is a necessity for a sustainable future. As leaders and lawmakers, we have the power—and the responsibility—to create the conditions that allow women and girls to thrive.

As we look ahead, next year marks **30 years since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action**—a landmark commitment for gender equality. Let us build on this momentum to ensure that gender equality remains at the forefront of our national and global undertakings.

Thank you.