



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.



11th IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians

Uniting generations for gender equality
11–13 September 2025, Lima, Peru

Concept note

The struggle for equality between men and women is intertwined with the pursuit of democracy as a whole. For decision-making to be representative and truly effective, it cannot exclude half the world's population. This was affirmed in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, where States agreed on a global blueprint to advance women's rights. It has also been enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where all countries committed to achieving *Gender equality* (SDG 5) and ensuring *Peace, justice and strong institutions* (SDG 16).

As we mark the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action this year, and with only five years left until the end of the SDG agenda in 2030, the global community finds itself at a critical juncture: while significant strides have been made in advancing women's rights and political participation since 1995, progress has been uneven, and in some contexts, troubling signs of backlash have emerged. Today's young people are coming of age at a time when there is greater equality and awareness than previous generations. Yet, paradoxically, some segments of society are expressing decreased support for feminist causes and there is a risk of stalling or even regression. Generational progress toward gender equality needs to be supported.

As institutions that represent the population in all its diversity, parliaments are on the front lines of the advancement of gender equality and youth empowerment. Inclusion is not only a political right, but a key enabler for effective public policy. For women in general, decades of advocacy, international commitments and reforms since 1995 have made a positive difference: globally, the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women has risen from 11.3% in 1995 to 27.2% in 2025. Despite this unequivocal progress, the objective of equality is still far from reach. In 2024, despite a high number of elections, women's parliamentary representation increased by only 0.3 percentage points, marking the slowest rate of progress since 2017.

Youth, and young women in particular, are even more underrepresented. At the intersection of ageism and sexism, young women aged 30 and under make up only 1.4% of the world's MPs, despite making up about 25% of the world's population. This underrepresentation is not merely a matter of numbers; it represents a democratic deficit that can undermine the legitimacy and effectiveness of parliaments.

In addition to structural barriers, such as discrimination and harmful social norms, women – and especially young women – parliamentarians are disproportionately subject to violence, harassment and intimidation. Between 80% and 85% of women MPs surveyed by the IPU worldwide have experienced psychological violence during their parliamentary terms. [IPU research shows](#) that this is even more common among young MPs under 40 years of age, as well as among women who are unmarried and women from minority groups. With the public arena increasingly shifting to online spaces, much of this violence now comes from social media, further impacting the younger generation of women politicians or aspiring politicians.

Although there has been notable progress in recent decades in enacting equal opportunity laws for women, today women enjoy less than two-thirds of the legal rights available to men¹. Thirty-seven countries grant women less than half of the legal rights of men, to the detriment of half a billion women. Gaps and challenges worsen amid a backdrop of overlapping global crises, with disproportionate effects on women and girls from unrest, conflict and war. Women are suffering a range of harms, from sexual and gender-based violence, to losses of their spouses, families, livelihoods and personal autonomy. Pushbacks are also multiplying on women and girls' rights, freedoms and empowerment. The rollback on reproductive health, rights and justice is intensifying in several countries, including bans or limitations on abortion and reduced penalties for marital rape. Attempts to reinstate banned harmful practices such as female genital mutilation or early marriages are mushrooming in several countries. In different parts of the world, proposals to narrow down the strength of laws protecting women and girls from gender-based violence are popping up.

¹ Women, business, and the law 2024, World Bank

Recognizing the urgency of these challenges, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) has designated gender equality as its priority theme for 2025. It has also launched a new campaign called [Achieving gender equality, action by action](#) to mobilize the parliamentary community to accelerate progress on achieving equality through the promotion of parity in parliament and politics, the advancement of gender-sensitive institutions, and the elimination of gender-based violence and discrimination.

If parliaments are on the front lines of advancing gender equality, young MPs are at the vanguard. They have been among the strongest drivers of gender equality: gender balance² is a reality among young MPs 30 years of age and under, where women make up 40% of the total. Yet at the same time, younger generations have shown signs of pushback, with some [signs suggesting](#) that Millennials and Gen Z are less in favour of gender equality than older generations. Being closest to their country's young people, young MPs have an essential role in championing equality so that it is adapted to the aspirations of younger generations. The baton of gender equality must pass via them to ensure it can be achieved sustainably.

But young MPs are not alone: there is a wealth of wisdom and experience available from more senior political leaders, who have been working for gender equality for years. This, coupled with the energy, innovation and fresh perspectives of young political leaders, can make for an unstoppable force for transformative change. Uniting behind a renewed and intergenerational push for equality, the Eleventh IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians will bring together both younger and older MPs. It will also emphasize the role of civil society organizations, particularly those representing diverse groups, to forge broader partnerships. Under this theme, the following topics will be highlighted:

1. **Assessing the advancement of the global agenda for gender equality and recent trends.** Participants will learn about the current state of play of the global agenda for gender equality and its intersection with youth, as well as recent data and trends shaping the current landscape. Persistent obstacles and emerging challenges to progress will be shared and key priorities for action will be identified.
2. **Intergenerational alliances for gender equality.** Young and more senior parliamentarians will engage in a structured conversation to compare the differences and similarities in the advancement of gender equality today and in previous decades. Young and senior MPs will also work in groups to share perspectives and co-develop new collective actions in key areas, such as: parity in political participation, equality in the law, gender-sensitive institutions, and combatting violence against women and girls.
3. **Uniting stakeholders across the parliamentary ecosystem for gender equality.** Participants will discuss the power of partnerships with stakeholders across the parliamentary ecosystem, including international organizations, civil society and grassroots groups, in pursuit of gender equality. MPs and stakeholders will then work in groups and identify actions they can take individually and collectively for transformative change on gender equality.

The Conference will be a platform for interaction, capacity-building and networking. It will include a combination of panel discussions, where presentations from experts, young parliamentarians and civil society representatives will inform the debates, as well as intergenerational working group discussions, where young parliamentarians will be invited to share thoughts and brainstorm together with their more senior colleagues.

Young parliamentarians are encouraged to come prepared with experiences and examples of good practices from their home countries to share with colleagues, as well as to engage in more spontaneous and unscripted exchanges where their own thoughts, reflections and personal experiences will be welcome.

Young parliamentarians are also invited to take the lead of an "Unconference" session, a free space in the Conference agenda where topics will not be determined in advance, but proposed and chosen by the participants. More information can be found in the Annex.

The third day of the Conference will be reserved for a visit programme organized by the Host Parliament to further facilitate networking among the participants and offer them a shared cultural experience.

² Gender balance is understood as being as close to 50:50 as possible, including a 40:60 ratio, as per the IPU Statutes and Rules