



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

Beijing +30 – Parliaments leading the way

Parliamentary event at the UNGA High-Level Week 2025

24 September 2025, 09:00–12:30

Church Center for the United Nations
777 United Nations Plaza (entrance on 44th Street, near 1st Avenue)
New York, United States

Background

Thirty years ago, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action set out a bold vision of gender equality that inspired a generation of leadership and action towards the empowerment of women and girls. Since then, women's share of parliamentary seats had more than doubled – from just 11.3% in 1995 to 27.2% in 2025.¹ Nevertheless, progress in recent years has slowed to its lowest rate in nearly a decade, with just a 0.3 percentage point increase in 2024, the slowest since 2017.² Speakers of Parliament remain overwhelmingly male – women occupy fewer than one in four such positions.³ Young women remain on the outskirts of decision-making, making up only a tiny fraction of members of parliament (MPs). Beyond representation, structural inequalities persist: women remain more prone to poverty and climate related risks, have lower access to resources, and continue to face legal, institutional and social barriers that impede equality.⁴ These are not abstract statistics, they are warnings.

As the world marks this anniversary, coordinated pushbacks are rolling back protections, curbing rights, and shrinking civic space for women's movements and leaders. Violence against women in politics in all its manifestations – from online abuse to physical assaults – is silencing voices and obstructing future leadership.⁵

2025 also marks 25 years of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, established by UN Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), which recognizes that peace is sustainable only when women are equally leading the process, and are fully empowered in society and in decision-making. Yet a quarter century on and a spiral of armed conflicts currently stretching from protracted wars to newly ignited crises is reshaping the global security landscape. The gap between principle and practice remains stark and women and girls bear a disproportionate share of the harm. In 2023, approximately 612 million women and girls lived within 50 km of active conflict – nearly 150% more than a decade earlier⁶ – and conflict-related sexual violence is on the rise, with data showing a 25% increase in 2024 alone.⁷

In the meantime women's participation in peace processes remains the exception rather than the norm: in 2022, eight in ten formal peace talks (84%) included no women negotiators, despite strong evidence that women's participation increases the probability of a peace agreement lasting 15 years by 35%; and only 6.5% of the military and 15.8% of the police in peacekeeping missions are women.⁸

Diplomacy and multilateral organizations also reflect disparities. In 2024, only 21% of permanent representatives to the United Nations in New York were women, and women's share in the leadership of international organizations only surpassed 30% by 2020.⁹

¹ IPU, [Women in parliament: 1995-2025](#) (2025).

² Ibid.

³ IPU–UN Women, [Women in Politics: 2025](#) (2025).

⁴ UN Women, [Progress on the Sustainable Development Goals: The Gender Snapshot 2024](#) (2024).

⁵ IPU, [Sexism, harassment and violence against women in parliaments in the Asia-Pacific region](#) (2025).

⁶ United Nations Security Council, [Women and peace and security: Report of the Secretary-General](#) (2024).

⁷ UN Web TV, [5 facts: Conflict-related sexual violence](#) (2025).

⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, [Women's Participation in Peace Processes](#) (accessed on 22 August 2025).

⁹ GWL Voices, [Women in Multilateralism 2025](#) (accessed on 22 August 2025).

In response to this, at the 147th IPU Assembly in Luanda, Angola, the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs passed a motion entitled [Bringing gender equality to the UN General Assembly](#) hoping more parliaments would work to address the stark imbalance of representation in the UN General Assembly and in foreign service senior ranks around the world. The IPU itself has been taking steps to enhance women's participation and leadership and has been driving the gender-responsive assemblies agenda as part of the International Gender Champions, a global network.¹⁰ But much more remains to be done.

Against this backdrop, the IPU's milestone [Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Mexico](#) and its latest [World Conference of Speakers of Parliament](#) and [Summit of Women Speakers](#) in Geneva held this year have issued bold political commitments: making parity a universal political standard, ensuring gender-balanced delegations to multilateral forums and peace negotiations, adopting zero-tolerance for violence against women in politics, and advancing women's leadership in climate action, diplomacy, and artificial intelligence (AI) governance, all of which are crucial to achieving sustainable development and peace.¹¹

The UN General Assembly High-level Week offers a crucial opportunity to channel these parliamentary commitments, and the momentum of IPU's [Achieving gender equality, action by action](#) campaign, into the multilateral arena, to reinforce those commitments, influence budgetary and oversight processes, and counter the backlash against gender equality through coordinated, rights-based parliamentary action.

Objectives

- To strengthen parliamentary leadership in fulfilling the vision of Beijing+30 and advancing the WPS agenda.
- To promote gender parity in leadership positions, decision-making bodies and multilateral forums, with a particular focus on peacebuilding and diplomacy.
- Forge partnerships between parliaments, civil society and men as allies to sustain and protect gains in women's rights.
- Respond to backlash against gender equality with proactive, rights-based parliamentary action.

Agenda

- **Opening Segment**
- **Panel 1: Women in political and multilateral spaces: Making parity the norm**
Guiding questions:
 - How can parliaments advance gender parity in politics and in diplomacy?
 - What measures can help ensure women's equal presence and influence in multilateral and peace processes?
 - How can parliamentary diplomacy accelerate WPS implementation?
- **Panel 2: Partnerships for equality: Creating new momentum for Beijing**
Guiding questions:
 - How can gains in women's rights be sustained in the long run?
 - What role can male parliamentarians play to dismantle harmful gender norms that hamper full equality in the law, in leadership and in society?
 - How to leverage partnerships to create sustained momentum for Beijing's vision in times of pushback?
- **Closing Segment**

¹⁰ International Gender Champions, [Gender-Responsive Assemblies Toolkit](#) (2018).

¹¹ IPU, [15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament: Final Declaration](#) (2025).