



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
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Canada

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), UN Women and the Permanent Mission of Canada are pleased to invite you to take part in a side event that will be held on the occasion of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women on:

## **Making it safe for women in politics: Seeking institutional solutions**

Wednesday, 14 March 2018, from 10 to 11.15 a.m.  
Conference Room D,<sup>1</sup> Conference Building, United Nations Headquarters, New York

The movement set off by the #MeToo campaign exemplifies the global magnitude of the culture of sexual harassment and assault. Political institutions are among the workplaces where behaviour hostile to women run rampant, and pressure is mounting for these institutions to do something about it. They are being shaken by the testimonies of women parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, candidates in elections, political party activists and journalists who are speaking out about their experiences of gender-based violence in the political sphere.

In 2016, the IPU published the first-available global statistics on violence against women members of parliament (MPs). Based on interviews with women MPs from around the world, the study drew attention to the fact that [sexism, harassment and violence against women MPs](#) were universal issues that impeded gender equality and undermined the foundations of democracy.

If parliaments, political parties and other places in the political arena are expected to lead by example, why are sexism and violence against women, especially sexual harassment, in these institutions so often viewed as "politics as usual", rather than a violation of women's human rights? How can parliaments, political parties and other political institutions promote a respectful, safe and secure institutional culture and working environment for both women and men? To what extent does social media exacerbate the problem? How can social media campaigns such as #MeToo help political institutions act against sexism, sexual harassment and violence against women in politics?

This event will provide an opportunity to debate what political institutions can do more to change the culture of silence and impunity around sexism, sexual harassment and other forms of violence against women in politics, by highlighting new initiatives and proposed solutions from global, regional and national perspectives.

**Welcome remarks:** **Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams**  
President of the IPU Bureau of Women Parliamentarians  
Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia  
**Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron**  
President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union  
**Mr. Geoff Regan**  
Speaker of the House of Commons of Canada

**Remarks by:** **Dr. Dubravka Šimonović**, UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women, its causes and consequences  
**Ms. Purna Sen**, Director of the Policy Division, UN Women  
**Dr. Mary Anne Franks**, Professor of Law, University of Miami School of Law and Legislative & Tech Policy Director, Cyber Civil Rights Initiative

The presentations will be followed by an open discussion among participants.

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<sup>1</sup> The room does not have interpretation facilities and the side event will be held in English only.