



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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138th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 24 – 28.03.2018

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 4

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Panel Discussion

Why are women still underrepresented in politics? The root causes and how to address them

Saturday, 24 March 2018
2.30 – 4.30 p.m.

While there is no more questioning as to why there should be equal participation of men and women in decision-making, gender parity is still a distant goal. This is due, inter alia, to persisting inequalities in all areas of life and a male-dominated political culture.

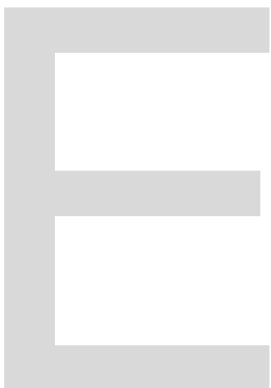
The question of women's underrepresentation is a recurrent one and the object of much debate. However, focus has been placed on political processes rather than on the transformative change that is required to address the underlying causes of the low representation of women in political leadership.

Looking beyond statistics, the panel discussion will explore the root causes of women's underrepresentation. Participants will be invited to share best practices and innovative ways to address these challenges through a holistic and cross-sectoral approach.

The panel will discuss root causes and solutions both from a national and international perspective. It will shed light on creative and new initiatives such as the International Gender Champions initiative launched in Geneva. It will also place focus on inter-sectoral approaches at national and international levels, making the links between education, culture, financial autonomy and women's political participation.

Participants will be invited in particular to respond to the following questions:

- What are the main root causes of women's underrepresentation in politics? In particular, what are the main social and economic barriers to women's political participation?
- What is the impact of education, including gender-sensitive civic education, on the ability of girls and women to engage in politics?
- How important are role models in promoting women's leadership?
- What is the role of men in addressing the root causes of women's underrepresentation?
- What best practices are there in challenging stereotypes regarding women in politics, including through media engagement?
- What is the interplay between women's participation in decision-making at local, national and international levels? Can these levels be mutually reinforcing? Where disparities between these levels exist, how can they be addressed?



#IPU138

Panellists will include members of parliament and representatives of the International Gender Champions initiative,¹ who will look at the intersections between different levels of women's political participation.

¹ The International Gender Champions initiative, set up in Geneva in 2015, is based on the idea that women's underrepresentation in multilateral forums requires strong leadership commitment, peer-to-peer pressure and accountability to trigger change. See www.genderchampions.org.