



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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138th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 24 – 28.03.2018

Assembly
Item 2

A/138/2-P.5
24 March 2018

Consideration of requests for the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda

Request for the inclusion of an emergency item in the agenda of the 138th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union submitted by the delegation of Sweden

On 24 March 2018, the Secretary General received from the delegation of Sweden a request and accompanying documents for the inclusion in the agenda of the 138th Assembly of an emergency item entitled:

"Violence against women in the workplace, in particular in parliaments,
in the wake of the #MeToo movement".

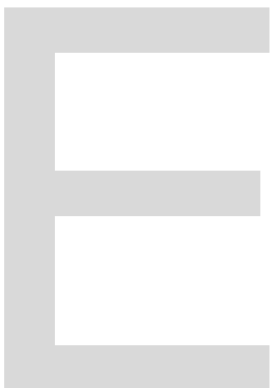
Delegates to the 138th Assembly will find attached the text of the communication submitting the request ([Annex I](#)), as well as an explanatory memorandum ([Annex II](#)) and a draft resolution ([Annex III](#)) in support thereof.

The 138th Assembly will be required to take a decision on the request of the delegation of Sweden on Sunday, 25 March 2018.

Under the terms of Assembly Rule 11.1, any Member of the IPU may request the inclusion of an emergency item in the Assembly agenda. Such a request must be accompanied by a brief explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution which clearly define the scope of the subject covered by the request. The IPU Secretariat shall communicate the request and any such documents immediately to all Members.

Furthermore, Assembly Rule 11.2 stipulates that:

- (a) A request for the inclusion of an emergency item must relate to a recent major situation of international concern on which urgent action by the international community is required and on which it is appropriate for the IPU to express its opinion and mobilize a parliamentary response. Such a request must receive a two-thirds majority of the votes cast in order to be accepted.
- (b) The Assembly may place only one emergency item on its agenda. Should several requests obtain the requisite majority, the one having received the largest number of positive votes shall be accepted.
- (c) The authors of two or more requests for the inclusion of an emergency item may combine their proposals to present a joint one, provided that each of the original proposals relates to the same subject.
- (d) The subject of a proposal that has been withdrawn by its authors or rejected by the Assembly cannot be included in the draft resolution submitted on the emergency item, unless it is clearly referred to in the request and title of the subject adopted by the Assembly.



#IPU138

**COMMUNICATION ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL
BY THE DELEGATION OF SWEDEN**

24 March 2018

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

In accordance with Article 14.2 of the Statutes of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and Rule 11.1 of the Assembly Rules, the delegation of Sweden hereby respectfully requests the inclusion of the following emergency item within the agenda for the 138th IPU Assembly, set to be held in Geneva (Switzerland) from 24 to 28 March 2018, entitled:

"Violence against women in the workplace, in particular in parliaments,
in the wake of the #MeToo movement".

An explanatory memorandum and a draft resolution are attached.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

Helena LUNDSTEDT (Ms.)
International Advisor
International Department of the
Swedish Parliament

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE, IN PARTICULAR
IN PARLIAMENTS, IN THE WAKE OF THE #MeToo MOVEMENT**

Explanatory memorandum submitted by the delegation of Sweden

The movement set off by the #MeToo social media campaign has brought to the fore the global magnitude of acts of sexual harassment and assault against women in society. It has empowered women to speak out about unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that violates their dignity, and are violent acts perpetrated against them without their consent. The movement exposed as never before the fact that sexual harassment and gender-based violence against women extend across cultural and national boundaries.

Violence against women, and especially sexual harassment in the workplace, is not new. This human rights violation deserves urgent attention and action all over the world. Not enough has been done to prevent such acts through education and training and the adoption, implementation and monitoring of legal provisions, administrative regulations and codes of conduct. Effective mechanisms to investigate, prosecute and apply appropriate legal or disciplinary sanctions, as well as to provide reparation, are urgently awaited. If ever there was a time to act and respond effectively to this planetary scandal it is now.

Moreover, in recent weeks, a series of sexual misconduct scandals affecting intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations has alarmed the international community as a whole and demonstrated once again that “time’s up”: that the time is now for robust measures and a cultural shift across the board. The International Gender Champions initiative, which is a platform of heads of agencies and diplomatic missions based in Geneva, New York, Vienna and Nairobi, serves as a platform for individual Gender Champions to call for a zero-tolerance culture, accountability and support to victims of sexual harassment and abuse, both within their own institutions and in the institutions they financially support, whether those abused are staff or beneficiaries of international assistance.

In the political sphere, the IPU study on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians (2016), the #MeToo movement and subsequent discussions held in parliaments have regrettably shown that parliaments are among the workplaces where hostile behavior to women is prevalent. Harassment and violence against women in parliament reinforces discrimination and negative stereotypes, creates obstacles for women MPs and parliamentary staff to carry out their work freely and securely, and generally sets a negative example to society at large. It also undermines the proper functioning of parliaments and their capacity to be inclusive and representative. This must no longer be viewed as the inevitable consequence of women’s political involvement. Pressure is mounting for parliaments, political parties and other political institutions to take appropriate measures. Reforms to ensure that parliamentarians and parliamentary staff can perform their jobs in a respectful, safe and secure institutional culture and working environment are long overdue.

Furthermore, in view of the upcoming standard-setting discussion on violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work that will be held by the International Labour Conference (28 May to 8 June 2018), parliaments must set the example to keep their institutions free from harassment and gender-based violence.

**VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE WORKPLACE, IN PARTICULAR
IN PARLIAMENTS, IN THE WAKE OF THE #MeToo MOVEMENT**

Draft resolution submitted by the delegation of SWEDEN

The 138th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Gravely concerned* by the global magnitude of acts of sexual harassment and assault against women in the workplace, in particular in political institutions, parliaments and political parties,
- (2) *Having regard* to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979) and its Optional Protocol (1999) as well as general recommendations No. 23 of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, on women in political and public life, and No. 35, on gender-based violence against women, updating general recommendation No. 19,
- (3) *Recalling* the resolution on “*The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective*”, adopted by the 135th IPU Assembly (2016),
- (4) *Considering* IPU’s work and engagement on promoting the participation of women in politics and supporting parliament to develop and enforce legislation and policies on all forms of violence against women,
- (5) *Recognizing* the important work of the International Gender Champions initiative, that serves as a platform to call for a zero-tolerance culture, accountability and support to victims of sexual harassment and abuse,
- (6) *Dismayed* that the increasing inclusion of women in political processes around the world has been accompanied by forms of resistance such as sexual harassment, intimidation and gender-based violence, including online and in social media,
- (7) *Acknowledging* that sexual harassment and violence against women in parliament reinforces discrimination and negative stereotypes and is not tolerable,
- (8) *Further acknowledging* that sexual harassment and violence against women in parliament also undermines the proper functioning of parliaments and their capacity to be inclusive and representative and creates obstacles for women MPs and parliamentary staff to carry out their work freely and securely,
- (9) *Aspiring* to create workplaces and parliaments free from sexist behaviour, sexual harassment and gender-based violence,
 1. *Invites* parliaments to adopt or improve and ensure the enforcement of national laws and policies on sexual harassment and gender-based violence at work with effective and confidential complaints mechanisms and penalties for offenders;
 2. *Firmly calls on* parliaments to set an example for all other workplaces by establishing an internal institutional response to sexist behaviour, sexual harassment and gender-based violence in parliament, including by clearly naming the problem, with proper definitions; assessing the situation and making it visible (through internal survey, etc.); adopting or improving internal policies and rules on sexist behaviour, sexual harassment and gender-based violence; communicating and raising awareness; providing compulsory training for all those working in parliament (MPs, officials, employees, assistants); addressing incidents of sexist behavior and violence when they occur through confidential counselling and advice, as well as with an internal complaints mechanism that is

confidential and complainant-driven, so victims feel safe in coming forward; and identifying and applying strictly disciplinary sanctions for offenders;

3. *Invites* IPU to pursue research at the global, regional and national levels on the issue of violence against women in parliaments, including to provide an overview of the impact that the #MeToo movement has in parliaments around the world;
4. *Calls on* the IPU to organize an international meeting of parliaments on sharing experiences and good practices in developing and implementing institutional reforms to counter sexist behaviour, sexual harassment and gender-based violence in parliament;
5. *Also calls on* parliaments to actively involve themselves in the international standard-setting discussion on violence and harassment against women and men in the world of work that will be held at the forthcoming session of the International Labour Conference;
6. *Further calls on* IPU to develop guidelines for parliaments to prevent and address sexism, sexual harassment and gender-based violence in parliament;
7. *Invites* the IPU to consider the establishment of a mechanism to receive information and complaints in cases of sexual harassment and gender-based violence in parliament.