



# INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY  
New York, 16 October 2013

## **Third Committee Session of the 68th General Assembly**

### **Item 28: Advancement of Women**

#### **Statement presented by Alessandro Motter Senior Advisor**

Chairperson,

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) is pleased to contribute to this debate on the Advancement of Women.

Let me first take this opportunity to commend the UN Secretary-General on his report on the promotion of women and political participation. The IPU joins in the call made by the report on the importance of research and sex disaggregated data.

The IPU's strategy on women's political participation has four entry points: first, informing effective policy-making through research; second, empowering women parliamentarians; third, reforming parliaments so that they become gender-sensitive institutions; and fourth, advancing women's rights by eliminating discrimination and violence against women.

Research is at the core of policy-making. It is essential for taking stock of the situation and for shaping a policy response. It is at the core of the IPU's work.

Using information on women's participation in parliament, good practices at the country level and innovative analyses, we provide:

- support to parliaments around the world in enhancing women's participation in politics.
- guidance on the adoption of positive measures as part of constitutional and electoral reform.
- capacity-building for women parliamentarians, thus enhancing their contribution to shaping policies and laws, and promoting women as role models in their societies.

- Assistance to parliaments in transforming the way they function, their structures and norms, as well as in establishing family-friendly services to become more open and attractive for women.

In 1975, the IPU took part in the First World Conference on Women. Back then, the world was already deploring the lack of information and data on women's political participation. In fact, back then, there was no data at all.

Since then, and for the past three decades, the IPU has been the principal source of data and information on women in parliament.

- We gather data on the number of women elected to or appointed in parliament. Our statistics are updated every month. As you know, our data informs one of the key indicators in the achievement of MDG 3: promote gender equality and empower women.
- Every month, we make available data on women presiding officers of parliament.
- Every two years, we produce data on women's participation at the executive level with statistics on women ministers and women heads of State in every country.
- We track information on parliamentary committees dealing with gender equality as well as on women's and gender caucuses.
- We also monitor the adoption and implementation of temporary special measures.
- Beyond tracking the figures, each year, we carry out an analysis of progress and setbacks in women's participation in parliament that highlights global, regional and national development. We also produce comparative reports on women's participation in parliament.

Chairperson,

We join in the Secretary-General's call to have sex-disaggregated data also available on women's political participation at the *local* level and in appointed decision-making positions in public administration. Rest assured that the IPU will continue to monitor closely women's participation in parliament so as to ensure that there is no gap in data at this level. Moreover, we have begun collecting data on women *candidates* in parliamentary elections.

We all know that figures are important; but they are not sufficient. We were all pleased with recent progress achieved in Saudi Arabia, where 20 per cent of seats in parliament are held by women for the first time in the Kingdom's history. We were also delighted by the electoral results in Rwanda, where women now account for 64 per cent of the House of Deputies. Many may wonder what that means and what concrete changes having women in parliament actually brings about.

We are pleased to inform you that beginning in 2014, we will add new fields to our research in a bid to respond to these questions. We will soon start a research project

on the impact of women's participation in parliament. In addition, we will also investigate violence against women in parliament.

We believe that IPU research will continue to further inform our collective action and support for women's participation in politics. The IPU will be tireless in its efforts to advance the cause of women until gender equality – our ultimate goal – becomes a reality in politics and in society in general.

Thank you for your attention.