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For democracy. For everyone.

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Reports on recent IPU specialized meetings

(e) Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament

Abu Dhabi, 12-13 December 2016

The IPU and the Federal National Council (FNC) of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) organized the Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament. The Summit was the 11th edition of the Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament. It was attended by 34 female Speakers of Parliament and parliamentarians from 50 countries. Global leaders across government, business, industry and civil society were also in attendance.

At the conclusion of the two-day Summit, the women Speakers unanimously adopted the Abu Dhabi Declaration (see [Annex](#)).

The Declaration defines concrete actions that parliaments can take to address geopolitical, socioeconomic, environmental and technological challenges. It identifies the means to better integrate horizon-scanning in parliamentary work to anticipate the impact of policies and legislation on future generations.

The debates focused on setting up structures that examine future megatrends, and how they will affect nations individually and the world as a whole. Women Speakers encouraged more widespread use of digital technology to make parliaments more transparent and accessible. They also proposed that parliaments develop or modify existing future-oriented strategic plans, which include steps to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. They also stressed the imperative of associating youth with parliamentary work through representation and participation in policymaking.

In their debates on peace and security, women Speakers agreed to promote and uphold human rights and the principle of tolerance in efforts to combat terrorism and violent extremism and advance peace and security. They also stressed that action to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and the promotion of women's economic empowerment are central to resolving problems and challenges to society as a whole. They reiterated their commitment to achieving gender equality in politics and in parliament by 2030. They advocated that each parliament assess institutional gender sensitivity.

The women Speakers agreed to work in partnership to realize the Abu Dhabi Declaration. They urged the IPU to follow-up on the proposals and commitments included in the Declaration and accommodate them in its work programme in such a way as to promote continued and strategic partnerships with government authorities, scientists, academia, youth and representatives from the private sector and civil society.



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FEDERAL NATIONAL COUNCIL
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Abu Dhabi DECLARATION

Abu Dhabi – 12-13 December 2016

United for Shaping the Future, for a better world

We, women Speakers of Parliament from more than 30 countries, met on 12 and 13 December 2016 in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, for the Global Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the UAE Federal National Council for the purpose of shaping the future of parliaments for a better world.

(i) *Affirming* the 38 provisions of the Declaration of the Fourth World Conference of Speakers of Parliament entitled *Placing democracy at the service of peace and sustainable development: Building the world the people want*; and *reiterating* the principles and recommended actions of the summary report of the Tenth Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament entitled *Innovating for Gender Equality: Making development, peace and democracy a reality for women and men*,

(ii) *Cognizant* of the challenges our world is facing today, and of the geopolitical, socio-economic, environmental and technological megatrends, which are accelerating the pace of change, and which are likely to affect quality of life for generations to come,

(iii) *Committed* to contributing to the realization of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Agreement, the results of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Marrakesh and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction,

(iv) *Also committed* to contributing to the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as to addressing all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls,

(v) *Emphasizing* that today's megatrends are intertwined and interdependent, and that tackling them requires a holistic approach, which encompasses geopolitical, socioeconomic, environmental, demographic and technological responses,

(vi) *Stressing* our willingness and duty to work together to address the challenges we face, as well as our conviction that parliamentarians must form a united front and work towards a better future with the other branches of power, the private sector, civil society and the community at large,

(vii) *Asserting* that solutions to the challenges that our world faces cannot be realized without democratic governance, respect for human rights and the achievement of gender equality at all levels throughout the world; and *recalling* that the attainment of gender equality is not only a question of human rights but also a matter of efficiency that would harness all the potential and talent required for innovation and transformation,

(viii) *Recognizing* that young people should be included as active participants in the decisions we make,

(ix) *Convinced* of the need to take account of the interests and aspirations of future generations in our parliamentary work, and *committed to* working for change through collective action,

We stand:

(1) **“United for Shaping the Future”** by committing to work together and forge partnerships across government, the private sector and society at large in order to address the challenges that our world faces;

We agree that:

(2) Peace and security. Our parliaments are crucial in the promotion and maintenance of peace and security. As representative institutions, through their legislative and oversight functions, they can take effective measures to prevent violence and conflict as well as to promote conflict resolution through peaceful means, including dialogue and reconciliation, with full respect for international law. Inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation can advance peace across nations. Winning the war on terrorism will require parliaments to come together and work with governments, civil society - including youth -, religious groups and leaders. Promoting peace and security is underpinned by democratic governance and institutions, the protection and promotion of human rights and the values of tolerance, inclusiveness, diversity, equality and dialogue.

(3) Inclusive society. Regardless of gender, age, race, class, geography or religion, inclusive societies should empower their members. Marginalization can lead to violent extremism and even terrorism. While the world has made progress, much work remains to be done on every front, especially in the critical area of gender equality. To achieve a more inclusive society, parliaments must be more proactive in addressing discrimination and eliminating violence against women and girls. They should ensure that every woman, child and adolescent across the world survives, thrives and reaches their full potential. They should promote girls' education. Parliaments must also advance tolerance, economic equity, equal access to education and employment, women's economic empowerment, and equal participation in the political process, including decision-making institutions.

(4) Economic prosperity and well-being. Megatrends across many sectors affect economic prosperity and well-being. Such trends include transformative innovation in science and technology, changing geopolitical landscapes, resource scarcity, insecurity, hyper-urbanization and aging populations. Major challenges for the global economy continue to include: high and persistent unemployment rates, especially among young people; high indebtedness in developed and developing countries; slow growth; and rising inequality. As such, parliaments need to develop holistic frameworks and action plans that tackle these challenges, address inequalities, take advantage of the opportunities created by the megatrends mentioned above and promote equitable and sustainable economic growth across and within nations.

(5) Climate change and resource scarcity. Our parliaments can and should promote the ratification of the Paris Agreement and take all necessary action to implement it. They should implement the IPU Parliamentary Action Plan on Climate Change. Parliaments must enact practical and appropriate legislation and establish regulatory frameworks to progressively reduce their nations' carbon footprints, while continuing to grow their economies and to create opportunities for all, including the most marginalized. Through their legislative and oversight work, parliaments must promote the innovation needed to provide clean energy on a massive scale. They must contribute to protecting and ensuring the rational use of water resources. Parliaments must also consider legislation that will protect natural habitats, biodiversity and the overall ecosystem. Internationally, parliaments need to ensure funding that will preserve and rehabilitate the carbon sinks of the world.

(6) Citizen participation. Parliaments now have tremendous opportunities to dramatically increase citizen participation through mobile communication platforms and social media; but they also need to enact appropriate legislation and work with governments and the judiciary to limit the abuse of mobile communications for criminal purposes or by terrorist organizations for political gain.

(7) Advancing tolerance. Intolerance leads to violence, discrimination and terrorism. Parliaments can and should contribute to promoting tolerance through: legislation, policy-making and parliamentary debates; and by working with governments, the judiciary, civil society and religious leaders. Parliaments should lead by example, by acting with propriety as representative and inclusive institutions in their composition, processes and procedures.

(8) Innovations in science and technology. Our quality of life could improve significantly as a result of scientific and technological innovation. However, this could come at a significant cost, unless parliaments begin to find ways of addressing the ethical and moral implications of technological advances, including: human rights such as privacy; global issues such as security; economic issues such as the digital divide leading to a larger knowledge divide; and employment such as humanoid robots replacing humans.

We commit to:

(9) *Placing* the well-being of our people, peace, prosperity, and the integrity of both our planet and humanity at the core of our parliamentary strategic objectives, and making them central to our development efforts;

(10) Through parliamentary action, *making a contribution* that responds to the needs of all people, including those on the economic and social margins, and improves the health and socio-economic well-being of all, particularly women and girls.

(11) *Using* the opportunities offered by the digital era to open up parliaments, *engaging* citizens in parliamentary processes and *increasing* international cooperation so as to narrow the digital divide between developed and developing countries.

(12) *Proposing* to the IPU to consider an international parliamentary declaration on tolerance aiming at promoting and upholding human values and the principle of tolerance to advance peace and security and combat terrorism and violent extremism;

(13) *Working* with all stakeholders, executive bodies, private sector and civil society representatives, especially young people, in order to implement the Sustainable Development Goals, which is our agenda for the future;

(14) *Sharing* knowledge and experiences so as to promote democratic standards, tolerance and mutual respect, and to prepare for the future;

Action imperatives:

(15) Focusing on the future. (a) Encourage the IPU to consider establishing a structure on the future which would assess future changes and global trends as well as their impact on people's lives, and which would mobilize efforts of parliaments and stakeholders in responding to these challenges; (b) Consider establishing in every parliament an appropriately resourced structure for horizon-scanning, such as a committee on the future and/or administrative unit on the future, which would inform parliament's legislative and oversight work regarding the implications of megatrends that affect our world, and which would act as a means to ensuring a better quality of life for future generations.

(16) Strategic planning. (a) Develop new or modify existing strategic plans to better meet the challenges of the future, in light of the megatrends and challenges that we face today and are likely to face in the future. Strategic planning efforts should include measures to ensure that parliaments are fit for purpose and able to contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals; (b) Encourage parliaments to review existing strategic plans to reflect the conclusions of our Summit; (c) Encourage the IPU to consider developing a global Code of ethics for parliaments in order to address the ethical implications of technological advances.

(17) Promoting youth empowerment. (a) Develop regulations, mechanisms and processes within every parliament to increase youth representation and facilitate youth contribution to legislation and policymaking; (b) Promote youth economic empowerment through legislation, policies and action plans that create opportunities for education and employment; (c) Promote youth cultural empowerment through relevant policies and strategies including education; (d) Contribute to bridging the technology gap among young people.

(18) Advancing gender equality and women's empowerment. (a) Increase and accelerate women's participation in every aspect of legislative and oversight work with a view to attaining gender equality in politics and in parliaments by 2030, including by using electoral gender quotas where applicable; (b) Review the functioning of our parliaments to ensure that they are gender-sensitive institutions and that they provide family friendly facilities; (c) Take action to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls; (d) Address pay gaps, inequality of access to economic opportunities and harassment in the work place; (e) Ensure that women and girls have access to health and education in all instances, including in times of war and conflict; and (f) Work in partnership with women and men to those ends.

(19) Following-up to the Abu Dhabi Declaration. Urge the IPU to follow-up on the proposals and commitments included in the Abu Dhabi Declaration and accommodate them in its work programme in such a manner as to promote continued and strategic partnerships with government authorities, scientists, academia, youth and representatives from the private sector and civil society.

(20) Institutionalizing our united efforts. (a) Within three months of this Declaration submit proposals for establishing a coordination mechanism within the IPU for discussion at the IPU Executive Committee meeting and at the Forum of Women Parliamentarians during the 136th IPU Assembly (Dhaka, Bangladesh, April 2017), in order to set timelines for the action imperatives listed above; (b) Mobilize financial resources to implement this Declaration; (c) Use IPU Assemblies to further the goals and actions of this Declaration.

We are profoundly grateful to the IPU, and the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates as the gracious host of this Summit, for bringing together leaders from across parliaments, governments, international organizations, the private sector and civil society in order to participate in our debates.

United we stand in shaping the future, for a better world.