



111^{ème} ASSEMBLEE DE L'UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE
111th ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Genève / Geneva, 28.09 – 01.10.2004

Third Standing Committee
Democracy and Human Rights

C-III/111/2004/Pre-DR
28 June 2004

BEIJING + 10: AN EVALUATION FROM A PARLIAMENTARY PERSPECTIVE

Preliminary Draft Resolution prepared by the co-Rapporteurs
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The 111th Inter-Parliamentary Assembly,

(1) *Mindful* of the Declaration and Platform of Action adopted on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing in September 1995, and the Outcome Document of the Beijing + 5 Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000,

-(2) *Recognising* the comprehensive nature of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the 12 critical objectives highlighted, relating to the social, cultural, economic and political status of women worldwide,

-(3) *Cognisant* of the National Action Plans developed by 118 Member States, outlining Governments' progress in implementing the commitments announced at the Beijing Conference,

-(4) *Reaffirming* the UN Millennium Declaration and its stated Development Goals and, in particular, the goal of gender equality and the empowerment of women, without which development cannot be sustained,

-(5) *Recalling* article 4 of the IPU Universal Declaration on Democracy (1997), stating "*The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences*",

-(6) *Recalling* the IPU's *Plan of Action to correct present imbalances in the participation of men and women in political life*, adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Council, (Paris, March 1994) and the *Beijing Parliamentary Declaration*, adopted by participants to Parliamentarians' Day on the occasion of the Fourth World Conference on Women,

(7) *Reaffirming* relevant IPU resolutions, particularly,

- "Education and culture as essential factors in promoting the participation of men and women in political life and as prerequisites for the development of peoples" (Havana, April 2001)
- "Promoting greater respect and protection of human rights in general and in particular for women and children" (Beijing, September 1996)
- "Parliamentary action for women's access to and participation in decision-making structures aimed at achieving true equality for women" (Madrid, April, 1995); and
- "Policies to put an end to violence against children and women" (Pyongyang, May 1991),

-(8) *Underscoring* the fundamental role played by women in all sectors of society,

(9) *Noting* that ten years after Beijing, women continue to be underrepresented in decision-making positions in government, public administration, justice systems and the economy, and that an equal participation of both genders in positions of power is urgently needed, for reasons of fairness and democratic legitimacy,

(10) *Dismayed* that ten years after Beijing, effective equality is still far from being a reality: women continue to be paid less for work of equal value, find themselves victims of poverty and unemployment more often than men, and are more frequently subjected to violence, *further dismayed* by discrimination faced by the girl-child in the fields of education, health and personal development,

(11) *Stressing* the key role of Parliaments in promoting gender equality, through their legislative, budgetary and oversight functions, and by mobilising public opinion and support,

Strengthen Parliamentary Action in these fields

1. *Calls for* a commitment of both men and women parliamentarians to strengthen parliamentary action to achieve gender equality both internationally and nationally, and monitor progress on the commitments made at the Beijing Conference;
2. *Recommends* that parliamentarians be adequately represented at the 49th Commission on the Status of Women, to be held from 28 February to 11 March 2005 in New York, which will review the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Outcome Documents of the Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 2000;
3. *Urges* parliaments to hold a debate on the status of national implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action either before or after this event, allowing for adequate input from women's organisations and non-governmental organisations;

4. *Encourages* parliaments to become more gender-sensitive, by establishing parliamentary committees on gender issues composed of both men and women, implementing the tools of gender budgeting analysis, and allocating sufficient resources to these activities;
5. *Recommends* that the number of women in committees dealing with foreign affairs, the budget, security, and justice increase, aiming for a target of 30 per cent, so that women can bring about changes in the approach to the subject and the legislation prepared, and also, but not solely, incorporate the specific perspectives and concerns of women;
6. *Highlights* the need to strengthen gender expertise to support and provide advice to parliamentarians and parliamentary bodies in ensuring development of effective and sustainable gender equality initiatives;
7. *Calls upon* men to play a more active role in the process of gender-mainstreaming in every area of life;
8. *Further encourages* national parliaments as well as governments, in the framework of systematic gender mainstreaming efforts, to ensure that all government policies and programmes are analysed from a gender perspective. Legislatures should adopt the practice of reviewing all legislation, including the budget, from a gender perspective, and to this end, ensure that sex-disaggregated data is collected and analysed;
9. *Calls upon* parliamentarians, as overseers of their governments, to ensure international commitments are upheld and implemented, particularly under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW);
10. *Invites* all parliamentarians, men and women, to establish strong links with existing institutional women's machinery and women's organisations in finding innovative solutions to the problems of gender inequality;

Addressing specific areas of concern

Political sphere

11. *Calls upon* heads of state and government as well as leading figures in political parties to make strong, public commitments to gender equality and to make gender issues a permanent priority. Having more women in all positions of decision-making will draw attention to the impact of public policies on women's diverse situations in life;
12. *Calls upon* parliamentarians to address the question of gender-specific roles with a view to improving policies for women and men. This includes the need to address the question of the social construction of gender-specific roles for women and men;

13. *Calls upon* parliamentarians to promote a stronger presence of women in political parties and at all levels of decision-making, through the adoption of quota systems and affirmative action. Parliamentary committees should hold public inquiries to determine why women are under-represented in electoral politics and devise recommendations to government;
14. *Requests* governments to set specific annual objectives for ministers and administrators and to report annually on how these objectives have been met. Objectives should concern the advancement and training of women in government as well as gender implications in policies and programmes. Both objectives and reports should be made public;
15. *Emphasises* the need for a more supportive environment for women in Parliament, a revision of standing orders and rules of debate, and the establishment of gender-sensitive codes of conduct, and *encourages* the development of more family-friendly sitting hours;
16. *Requests* parliaments to take into account the question of both women and men's political responsibilities and family obligations and provide them with the necessary facilities and support to reconcile both roles;
17. *Encourages* the development of training programmes for journalists and other media actors on the importance of the non-stereotypical portrayal of women and men, and boys and girls;

Economic sphere

18. *Calls upon* national parliaments to amend national laws so as to enable women to participate in the economy, for example, by freely purchasing and selling property, owning and managing business enterprises, and freely accessing loans;
19. *Endorses* the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of halving poverty by 2015, and *recommends* that governments do all in their power to ensure that women's particular needs are taken into account in formulating poverty reduction strategies;
20. *Encourages* governments and intergovernmental organisations, in particular the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, to promote the independence of women in small-sized enterprises by providing them with micro-credit;
21. *Calls upon* parliaments to take appropriate legislative measures to improve work and family balance and to ensure that sufficient child-care facilities are available;
22. *Urges* parliaments and governments to promote the equality of women on the basis of the following supplementary measures:

- linking public contract awards to compliance with gender equality criteria;
- taking legislative measures that apply to the private sector;
- passing comprehensive anti-discrimination laws;
- broadening the spectrum of training opportunities available to women and girls;
- supporting business start-ups for women;
- guaranteeing equal pay for equal work, as well as promoting gender partnership on the basis of relevant public information efforts at schools and in the media;

Human security

23. *Underscores* the need for parliaments and governments to ensure the protection of all, especially women and children, from any threats to their survival, dignity, and livelihood, particularly in the form of poverty, hunger, infectious diseases including the HIV/AIDS epidemic, and a lack of education;
24. *Strongly endorses* and encourages further implementation of national reforms to broaden women and girl's access to education and literacy programmes, improve reproductive health services, reduce poverty, and combat domestic violence, including programmes emphasising the critical role of men;
25. *Encourages* the media to enhance public knowledge and information about women's human rights and sustainable development, to support a culture of gender equality, and combat discrimination and violence;

War and the role of women in reconstruction

26. *Strongly endorses* the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on "Women and Peace and Security", and encourages all parties involved to fully implement its recommendations;
27. *Recognises* the key role played by women in conflict resolution and reconciliation, and calls for their active involvement in the development of democratic institutions once the conflict ceases, so that sustainable peace can be built, based on mutual respect, cultural diversity and gender equality;

The girl-child

28. *Urges* all parliamentarians to ensure that where these do not yet apply, stringent laws protecting children and their rights are enacted;
29. *Calls for* a special focus on, and a more sensitive framework for dealing with the problems of the girl-child in reviewing the impact of programmes, laws and proposed bills; more gender-disaggregated and gender-sensitive data, methods, research; and monitoring of the girl-child's education, health, employment and on cultural communities and migration; and further awareness of, and concern for, the girl-child in all advocacy efforts for children;

General

30. *Reiterates* the importance of becoming a party to the Optional Protocol of the CEDAW, and encourages the IPU to continue promoting the role of parliament in the CEDAW process through its awareness campaigns and seminars;
31. *Calls upon* governments as well as international organisations, including the IPU, to collect and distribute sufficient statistical data to be able to analyse the gender-specific distribution of power – both in quantitative and qualitative terms – and to disaggregate all statistical data by gender (that is, provide gender breakdowns);
32. *Calls upon* parliamentarians who advocate for gender equality to encourage the development of leadership skills and strengthen strategic partnerships for gender equality at local/national, regional and international levels to mainstream gender perspectives in the legislature;
33. *Invites* the IPU, through its Meeting of Women Parliamentarians, to monitor on a regular basis, progress made by parliaments, on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action.