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The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective

Draft resolution submitted by the co-Rapporteurs Ms. S. Lines (Australia) and Mr. M. Kilonzo Junior (Kenya)

The 135th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union,

- (1) *Noting* that equal participation of men and women in public affairs and decision-making has long been recognized as a human right, as enshrined in the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women,
- (2) *Recalling* that the 1997 Universal Declaration on Democracy adopted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union states that “the achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society”,
- (3) *Noting* that gender equality is a precondition for development, as set out in Goal 5 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in target 5.5, which aims to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”,
- (4) *Recognizing* that the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action call for equal representation in decision-making, and that already in 1990 the United Nations Economic and Social Council had set a 30-per cent target for women in leadership positions by 1995, and a target of parity by 2000,
- (5) *Concerned* that as at 1 January 2016 the global average of parliamentary seats held by women is still only 22.7 per cent, and *deeply concerned* that there are still seven parliamentary chambers with no women members at all,
- (6) *Noting* that various impediments continue to hinder women’s ability to participate in political processes and their access to parliament, including an unequal share of household responsibilities, negative cultural attitudes and stereotypes regarding the role of women in society, persistent discrimination against women in law and in practice, lack of finances, lack of support from political parties, a male-dominated political culture and security concerns,
- (7) *Also noting* the need to change mindsets and culture within institutions and society, in particular with respect to traditional gender norms, by addressing gender stereotyping in the media and by promoting the values associated with gender equality among young people of both sexes,

- (8) *Underscoring* that the economic empowerment of women is a precondition for their ability to take part in political processes and to raise funds for campaigning,
- (9) *Recognizing* that young women face specific challenges based on their age and sex, and that they are the least represented in parliament among both youth and women,
- (10) *Noting* that electoral gender quotas have proved to be useful and successful measures that facilitate women's access to elected office and to leadership positions, in particular when such quotas set ambitious goals, are promoted by political leaders, are understood by the general public and are supported with strong implementation mechanisms, such as sanctions for non-compliance,
- (11) *Bearing in mind* that quota systems alone are not sufficient to change or challenge societal views whereby women are not perceived as equals,
- (12) *Underlining* that the increasing inclusion of women in political processes around the world has been accompanied by forms of resistance such as harassment, intimidation and violence, including online and in social media,
- (13) *Acknowledging* that violence targeting women in politics is a serious impediment to women's ability to carry out the mandate for which they have been elected,
- (14) *Recognizing* that a gender-sensitive parliament is one that responds to the needs and interests of both men and women in its structures, operations, methods and work,
- (15) *Also recognizing* the need for parliaments to adopt a strategy of gender mainstreaming, namely, the process of assessing and taking into account the impact on women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes at all levels and in all spheres,
- (16) *Underscoring* that gender equality is in the interest of both men and women and should be promoted jointly by both sexes at the local, national, regional and international levels,
1. *Urges* parliaments to ensure that national laws and the practices of government agencies and educational authorities comply with international law and human rights obligations, particularly in relation to women's and young women's empowerment;
 2. *Also urges* parliaments to amend or repeal existing legislation that directly or indirectly discriminates against women and impedes their full participation in political processes;
 3. *Calls on* men and women parliamentarians to work together and to take joint initiatives in parliament to promote gender equality;
 4. *Also calls on* parliaments to promote media, educational and community-level campaigns that aim to combat gender stereotypes; and *further calls on* men and women parliamentarians to play a prominent role in those efforts, and to act as champions and role models in challenging gender stereotypes and negative attitudes towards women;
 5. *Urges* parliaments to facilitate the reconciliation of family, professional and political life for both women and men, including by promoting shared parental leave, as well as economic support and infrastructure-building for child care;
 6. *Strongly urges* parliaments to set a deadline by which at least 30 per cent of parliamentarians should be women and to set a further deadline by which that proportion should reach 50 per cent;
 7. *Calls on* parliaments to consider the adoption and implementation of quota systems that set ambitious goals and enable women to be pre-selected into winnable seats or winnable positions on lists, including through zipper systems and placing them at the top of electoral lists, as well as through the adoption of strong sanctions systems such as the power for the electoral commission or body to reject non-compliant lists;

8. *Also calls on* parliaments to create a fairer environment for men and women candidates, including by tying part of public funding to the number of women candidates that political parties field, establishing special funds or interest-free loans for women candidates, capping expenses, and limiting the duration of campaigns;
9. *Further calls on* political parties to ensure that their candidate-selection processes favour gender-balanced representation and to consider the implementation of quota systems for that purpose;
10. *Urges* parliaments and political parties to ensure there is an equal number of women and men in leadership positions in all policy areas and all governance bodies, through transparent and fair processes, such as dual leadership and gender rotation in leadership positions;
11. *Calls on* parliaments and political parties to support young women's political participation, including by implementing empowerment programmes that target young women, and by enabling young women both to access leadership positions and to act as role models for other young women;
12. *Urges* parliaments to adopt gender-sensitive strategies at all levels and in all spheres, including in legislation, policies and programmes, in order to achieve gender equality;
13. *Calls on* parliaments to promote mechanisms to advance gender equality in the work of parliament, including women's caucuses that are open to supportive men parliamentarians, parliamentary committees on gender equality that include men, and gender expertise among parliamentary staff of both sexes;
14. *Also calls on* political leaders and individual men and women parliamentarians to condemn acts of harassment, intimidation and violence against women candidates and parliamentarians, including online and in social media; and *further calls on* parliaments to adopt legal and practical measures to prevent and punish such acts;
15. *Invites* men and women parliamentarians to work together on the development and effective implementation of legislation and policies on harassment and violence against women, including in politics, and to collaborate in this endeavour with the relevant government agencies, civil society and other stakeholders, including technology companies when it comes to tackling online abuse;
16. *Urges* parliaments and political parties to promote an institutional culture that offers a safe and secure working environment for both men and women, including strong and well-implemented internal policies against sexist language and attitudes, and sexual harassment policies with effective complaints mechanisms;
17. *Calls on* parliaments to review the gender sensitivity of their institutions, with a view to making them places that are amenable to both men and women, that promote gender partnerships and that fully advance equality in society;
18. *Requests* the IPU to support national parliaments wishing to conduct an assessment of their gender sensitivity, in line with the 2012 IPU Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments and its self-assessment methodology.