



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

135th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 23 – 27.10.2016

24th SESSION OF THE FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS

DOCUMENTS

AGENDA

FEM/24/A.1-Rev.1

ITEM 2 - Gender activities at IPU Assemblies

- (c) IPU cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) - FEM/24/2(c)-Inf.1

ITEM 3 - Contributing to the work of the 135th Assembly from a gender perspective

Information note - FEM/24/3-Inf.

ITEM 4 - Panel discussion

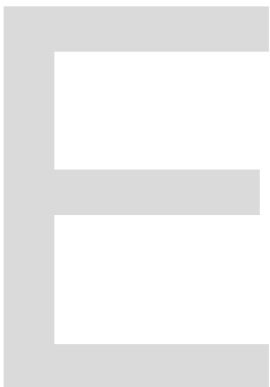
Securing the rights and future of women and girls during war and conflict

Information note

PARITY DEBATE

Harassment and violence against parliamentarians: Issues and solutions

Information note



#IPU135



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135th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 23 – 27.10.2016

FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS 24th SESSION

Geneva, 23 October 2016
(11 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.)

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Agenda

FEM/24/A.1-Rev.1
23 September 2016

I. SCHEDULE OF MEETING AND DEBATING ARRANGEMENTS

The 24th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will be held at the Centre International de Conférences de Genève (CICG) in Geneva (Switzerland). The Forum will meet on Sunday 23 October from 11:00 a.m. to 1 p.m. and 2:30 to 5:30 p.m.

The Forum should provide an opportunity for active and spontaneous dialogue. Interventions should therefore be brief and not exceed three minutes. No list of speakers will be drawn up in advance. In plenary, participants will be able to request the floor by completing the form on their desks.

II. ANNOTATED PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Adoption of the agenda

2. Gender activities at IPU Assemblies (FEM/24/2(c)-Inf.1)

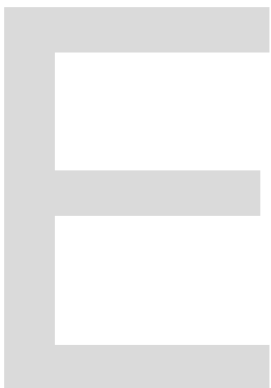
- (a) Reports of previous work: Bureau of Women Parliamentarians
Participants will be informed of the deliberations of the Bureau at its sessions of 23 March 2016 in Lusaka and 23 October 2016 in Geneva.
- (b) Gender Partnership Group
Participants will be informed of the work and recommendations of the Group.
- (c) Briefing: recent IPU activities on gender equality

The discussion will conclude by 11:30 a.m.

3. Contributing to the work of the 135th Assembly from a gender perspective (FEM/24/3-Inf.1)

Participants will be invited to discuss the following item on the agenda of the 135th Assembly:

- The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective. (*Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights*)



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Participants will split into two groups to discuss the following sub-themes:

Theme 1: Successful strategies to engage men on gender equality

Theme 2: Stopping political violence against women

On the recommendation of its Bureau, the Forum will elect a moderator and a rapporteur for each group. They will agree on recommendations to be submitted to the Forum of Women Parliamentarians at its afternoon sitting.

Each group will meet from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

4. Panel discussion:

Securing the rights and future of women and girls during war and conflict

The participants will discuss what parliamentary action can be taken to ensure that women and girls living under or fleeing from war and conflict can access health and education, and be protected from violence, harmful practices, trafficking and exploitation.

The panel discussion will conclude by 4:30 p.m.

5. Reports of the discussion group rapporteurs

The rapporteurs will present their reports. The Forum will then ask them to prepare, in consultation with the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians, amendments to be presented during the debate of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights (scheduled for Monday 24 October 2016 from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m.).

6. Elections to the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians

The Forum will be called upon to fill the seats on the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians that remain vacant: one regional representative for the Asia-Pacific Group, one regional representative for the Eurasia Group and one regional representative for the Group of Latin America and the Caribbean. Elections will be held on the basis of candidatures submitted by the corresponding geopolitical groups.

7. Venue and date of the 25th session of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians and other future meetings related to gender equality

**PARITY DEBATE
on**

Harassment and violence against parliamentarians: issues and solutions

**26 October 2016
11 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Room 2, level 0, CICG**

During the 135th Assembly, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will hold a parity debate on the theme *Harassment and violence against parliamentarians: issues and solutions*. The parity debate will be held on 26 October 2016, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. This initiative is part of the Forum's effort to enhance dialogue between women and men within the IPU, and encouraging male parliamentarians' participation in gender-related debates. Delegations are invited to be represented at this important debate by both male and female participants.

**COMPOSITION AND OFFICERS OF THE BUREAU
OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS
(As at 1 JUNE 2016)**

OFFICERS (March 2016–2018)

President	Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)
First Vice-President	Ms. M. André (France)
Second Vice-President	Ms. N. Al Kharoosi (Oman)

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES**Expiry of term****African Group:**

Ms. M. Mensah-Williams (Namibia)	Ms. J. Nze Mouenidiambou (Gabon)	March 2018
Ms. F. Adedoyin (Nigeria)	Ms. A. E. Woldesemeyat (Ethiopia)	March 2020

Arab Group:

Ms. N. Al Kharoosi (Oman)	Ms. S. Kousantini (Tunisia)	March 2018
Ms. H. Alhelaissi (Saudi Arabia)	Ms. M. Azer Abdelmalak (Egypt)	March 2020

Asia-Pacific Group:

Ms. W. A. Khan (Bangladesh)	Ms. A. Khalid Parvez (Pakistan)	March 2018
Ms. S. Sirivejchapun (Thailand)	<i>Vacancy</i>	March 2020

Eurasia Group:

Ms. V. Petrenko (Russian Federation)	Ms. E. Shamal (Belarus)	March 2018
Ms. L. Gumerova (Russian Federation)	<i>Vacancy</i>	March 2020

Group of Latin American and the Caribbean:

Ms. A. Ocles Padilla (Ecuador)	Ms. L. Arias Medrano (Dominican Rep.)	March 2018
Ms. E. Mendoza Fernández (Bolivia)	<i>Vacancy</i>	March 2020

Twelve Plus Group:

Ms. M. André (France)	Ms. P. Ernstberger (Germany)	March 2018
Ms. S. Ataulajhan (Canada)	Ms. P.E. Locatelli (Italy)	March 2020

MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE*(ex officio, for the duration of their term on the Executive Committee)***Expiry of term**

Ms. F. Benbadis (Algeria)	October 2018
Ms. A. Habibou (Niger)	October 2019
Ms. G. Eldegard (Norway)	October 2019

PRESIDENTS OF THE FORUM OF WOMEN PARLIAMENTARIANS*(ex officio for two years)***Expiry of term**

Ms. Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan (Viet Nam)	March 2017
Ms. N. Luo (Zambia)	March 2018



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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135th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 23 – 27.10.2016

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 2

FEM/24/2(c)-Inf.1
17 October 2016

Gender activities at IPU Assemblies

(c) Briefing on recent IPU activities in the area of gender equality

IPU cooperation with the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

I. The IPU and the CEDAW Committee

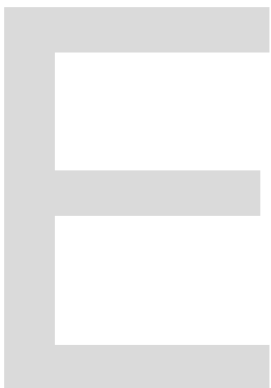
1. The IPU plays an active role in promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol within the parliamentary community.

2. As part of its cooperation with the CEDAW Committee, the IPU Secretariat urges parliamentarians to keep track of whether their countries have ratified the CEDAW Convention and Optional Protocol as well whether their countries may have issued any reservations. (This information is available at <http://indicators.ohchr.org/>; it is broken down by country and includes entries for any declarations or reservations made).

II. IPU involvement in the CEDAW reporting process

3. The Convention is an important benchmark for gender equality and comprehensive in scope. The IPU therefore endeavours to ensure that parliaments and their members provide effective oversight of the Convention and contribute to its full implementation. The IPU has consistently argued for more parliamentary involvement in the Convention's reporting obligations, particularly in the work required to follow up on the concluding comments of the Committee.

4. At each Committee session, the IPU presents a report on what it has done to promote respect for and implementation of the CEDAW Convention, including disseminating information about the role played by parliaments in the reporting process. This is partly done by inviting parliaments from the countries whose periodic reports are to be reviewed at the next CEDAW session to fill in a questionnaire. The questions cover parliamentary involvement in the reporting process and in the follow-up to the Committee's concluding observations.



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5. The following is the list of State parties reporting to the CEDAW Committee in 2017 and reporting or having reported in 2016:

68th Session (23 October – 17 November 2017)

- Burkina Faso, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Guatemala, Israel, Kenya, Kuwait, Monaco, Nauru, Norway, Oman, Paraguay, Singapore

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1079&Lang=en

67th Session (3-21 July 2017)

- Barbados, Costa Rica, Italy, Montenegro, Niger, Nigeria, Romania, Thailand

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1078&Lang=en

66th Session (13 February 3 March 2017)

- El Salvador, Germany, Ireland, Jordan, Micronesia (Federated States of), Rwanda, Sri Lanka, Ukraine

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1071&Lang=en

65th Session (24 October - 18 November 2016)

- Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Burundi, Canada, Estonia, Honduras, Netherlands, Switzerland

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1027&Lang=en

64th Session (4 – 22 July 2016)

- Albania, France, Mali, Myanmar, Philippines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uruguay

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1019&Lang=en

63rd Session (15 February - 4 March 2016)

- Czech Republic, Haiti, Iceland, Japan, Mongolia, Sweden, United Republic of Tanzania, Vanuatu

Detailed information is available at
http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=1007&Lang=en

III. The CEDAW Convention and parliaments

6. At its 41st session (June-July 2008), the Committee adopted a standard paragraph on parliaments. It was to be added into its concluding observations in order to draw the attention of State parties to the importance of involving parliaments not only in the reporting process under article 18 of the Convention but also in the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. At its 45th session (January—February 2010), the Committee issued a statement on its relationship with parliamentarians that aimed to clarify and strengthen the role of national parliaments vis-à-vis the Convention. The note is also aimed at clarifying the relationship between the Committee and the IPU. (See the annex for the text of the note).

ANNEX

Statement adopted by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

National parliaments and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

1. At its forty-first session, the Committee adopted a standard paragraph on “Parliament” in its concluding observations in order to draw to the attention of State parties, the importance of involving its parliament in the reporting process under article 18 of the Convention and the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention.

2. The aim of the present note is to clarify and strengthen the role of national parliaments vis-à-vis the Convention. The note is also aimed at clarifying the relationship between the Committee and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU).

I. Role of Parliaments in the process of ratification of the Convention and its Optional Protocol and withdrawal of reservations

3. The procedure for ratification/accession to international instruments as well as the withdrawal of reservations varies from State to State. In most States, approval by Parliament is necessary before the deposit of the instrument of ratification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Similarly, decisions concerning reservations as well as their withdrawals are also taken in Parliament. This Parliamentary procedure also applies to the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Consequently, Parliaments have a strategic role to play with respect to the ratification/accession of the Convention and its Optional Protocol. As the Convention and its Protocol have not attained universal ratification, Parliament can play a significant role in encouraging their State in becoming a party to the Convention and its Protocol. Similarly, as the Convention is the treaty body with the largest number of reservations, Parliament can also play a significant role in their withdrawal.

II. Parliaments and the implementation of the Convention

4. Parliaments and their members have a vital role to play in ensuring respect for the principles enunciated in the Convention and they have a wide range of tools at their disposal to do so. In discharging their traditional duty of overseeing the work of Government, Parliament can ensure that States parties comply fully with the provisions of the Convention. Parliaments and their members have a fundamental responsibility in their role of “constituency”, which is the basis of the legal system. The functions of Parliaments — notably legislative and budgetary functions and oversight of the executive branch of the Government — are at the heart of the implementation of the principles and rights enshrined in the Convention. The implementation of the Convention includes the incorporation of the principle of non-discrimination against women in national legislation, including in the Constitution of the State party. It also imposes an obligation on the State Party to condemn discrimination against women, to abolish all discriminatory laws and to adopt, whenever appropriate, temporary special measures to accelerate de facto equality between women and men. It also obligates States Parties to adopt appropriate policies and establish mechanisms aimed at promoting equality between sexes. As such, Parliamentarians can take active measures to ensure that national laws, policies, actions, programmes and budget reflect the principles and obligations in the Convention.

The budgetary functions and the monitoring of governmental action are vital for a better implementation of laws relating to equality between sexes, through the approval of adequate budgets and a regular oversight of the impact of governmental measures with respect to the condition of women.

Parliament, as an organ representing the population as a whole, reflects the diversity of opinion and interests in the country by reason of its privileged access to the whole population. As such, Parliamentarians can be key players in raising awareness of the Convention and its Protocol to the population at large and to women in particular.

III. Role of Parliaments in the drafting of reports and follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee

5. States are not legally obliged to involve Parliaments in the drafting of reports under article 18, as it is the State which has the primary responsibility of doing so. However, as the Convention is binding on all branches of Government, it is desirable that States parties involve Parliament in the reporting process under Article 18 of the Convention, the implementation of the Convention and the follow up to the concluding observations of the Committee. States parties are strongly encouraged to establish an appropriate mechanism to facilitate collaboration between Parliament and Government with regard to the input of its Parliament in the elaboration of reports, and its role in following up on the concluding observations of the Committee. The monitoring role of Parliament with respect to the compliance by the State of its international obligations, could considerably enhance the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee.

6. Consequently, it is necessary for States parties to urge Parliament, many of which now have some structures in place, such as Parliamentary Committees focusing on human rights including gender equality, to take an active part in the work of the Committee in general, as well as in the implementation of its provisions in their own country.

IV. Action of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and its relationship with the Committee

7. IPU has always strived to bring a parliamentary dimension to international cooperation and the work of the Committee. It is playing a key role in disseminating the Convention and its Optional Protocol among parliamentarians. During its conferences and the sessions of its Assembly, the organization regularly invites States that have not ratified the Convention and its Optional Protocol to do so. It also encourages States parties that have made reservations to the Convention to withdraw them and to fulfil their obligations. The Secretary- General of IPU writes to the presidents of the legislative assemblies to inform them about the upcoming consideration of the report of their country by the Committee. Once the Committee's concluding observations are available, a letter is sent to the parliament concerned to bring to its attention the recommendations adopted. In 2003 IPU, with the assistance of the Division for the Advancement of Women, published a practical guide for the use of parliamentarians on the Convention and its Optional Protocol. Every year, IPU organizes briefings on the Convention, addressed to women parliamentarians in particular. IPU also provides, in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, technical assistance programmes in order to build the capacities of parliaments and help them fulfil their role regarding the implementation of Convention and its Optional Protocol. Since 2006, IPU also provides Committee with country specific information including data on the political participation of women in Parliament and in Government as well as at the local level with regard to States whose reports are under consideration by the Committee.

V. Recommendations

8. The Committee recommends that States parties ensure the full participation of Parliament and its members in the reporting process and the full implementation of the Convention and its Protocol.

9. Given the key role of Parliament, the Committee recommends that States parties ensure that Parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, be made aware and informed of the Committee's work so that they may take it into account in their legislative functions and relay it to their constituencies and to the public at large.

10. The Committee recommends that State parties ensure that all relevant information is made available to Parliamentarians on a regular basis through appropriate Parliamentary support services.

11. The Committee further recommends that information received by Government on its obligations as a State party and other matters of concern are brought to the attention of Parliamentarians.

12. The Committee recommends that whenever members of the Committee are invited to visit a State party, it is desirable that the State party organize meetings with Parliamentarians.

13. The Committee encourages States parties to include in their reports, information on all parliamentary initiatives in the elaboration of laws in order to ensure full incorporation of CEDAW provisions into domestic legislation.
14. The Committee reiterates the importance of strengthening the national machinery dedicated to equality at the level of Parliament, such as Commissions on gender equality, missions and information on inquiries relating to violence against women, and improvement of legislation on equality between women and men.
15. The Committee draws the attention of States parties to the fact that institutional linkages and informal relations with civil society and women's organizations are fundamental to the promotion of women's rights by the Parliament.
16. The Committee encourages States parties to include in their delegation before the Committee for the examination of their report, members of Parliament as well as a special advisor in charge of relations between the Government and the Parliament in order to improve the visibility of parliamentary responsibilities.
17. The Committee calls on State parties to evaluate its collaboration with its national Parliament and other Parliaments and to take appropriate measures to enhance cooperation between Parliaments in order to exchange best practices on the implementation of the Convention.



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135th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 23 – 27.10.2016

Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Item 3

FEM/24/3-Inf.1
10 October 2016

3. Contributing to the work of the 135th Assembly from a gender perspective

Information note

I. Arrangements for the debate

1. In order to contribute to item 4 of the agenda of the 135th Assembly from a gender perspective, women parliamentarians will divide into two working groups from 11:45 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. They will debate the following sub-themes of the draft resolution *The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective* (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights):

Theme 1 Successful strategies to engage men on gender equality <i>Chair: Ms. Ataullahjan (Canada); Rapporteur: Ms. Alhelaissi (Saudi Arabia)</i>	<i>Room 2, level 0, CICG</i>
Theme 2 Stopping political violence against women <i>Chair: Ms. Al Kharoosi (Oman); Rapporteur: Ms. Locatelli (Italy)</i>	<i>Room 18, level -1, CICG</i>

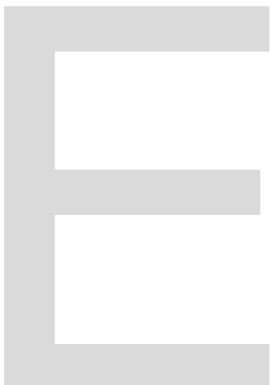
2. At the end of the discussion, each working group will agree on the key ideas that the rapporteur will present to the afternoon plenary sitting of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians.

3. Before the Forum splits into groups, two presentations will be made. First, the co-rapporteurs of the resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights will present the resolution to the Forum. Second, the Secretariat will present a new IPU study on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians.

4. The rapporteurs of the working groups will be in charge of drafting gender-related amendments to the draft resolution of the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights. The amendments will be drafted in consultation with the President of the Bureau of Women Parliamentarians and the Chairs of the working groups. Amendments will be submitted on behalf of the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights at its first sitting on 24 October 2016.

II. Concept of the debate

5. Gender equality in parliament stems from the right of women to participate in politics, as enshrined in core human rights instruments. Women's political participation is also a precondition for genuine democracy, sustainable development and peace. This was recognized in the 1997 IPU Declaration on Democracy and in UN Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security. The same concept was recently restated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in SDG 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.



6. While the percentage of women in parliaments across the globe has nearly doubled since 1995, and currently stands at 22.8 per cent, that figure still falls short of the objective of equal representation. Positive measures have proven effective in many countries as a method of increasing women's participation in parliament. In 2015, States that applied gender electoral quotas reached on average 28.6 per cent women in parliament, whereas women only gained 13.5 per cent of contested parliamentary seats in countries that did not apply such quotas. Beyond these measures, there is also a need to challenge mindsets and traditional gender norms, so as to give women and men the same level playing field in politics. Challenging mindsets and norms requires strong political will and commitment from leaders, political parties and, very importantly, from men.

7. Parliaments as institutions also have a key role to play. The *Plan of Action for Gender-sensitive Parliaments*, adopted at the 127th IPU Assembly (Quebec City, October 2012), encourages parliaments to embody and promote gender equality in their processes, work, culture and infrastructure. That enables parliaments to promote gender partnerships and to fully take into account the interests and needs of both men and women. This includes ensuring that parliament and politics in general do not discriminate against women, and that institutions and leaders do not tolerate any form of sexism, harassment or violence against women parliamentarians. In short, embodying gender equality implies that the institution of parliament is genuinely open to and attractive for women MPs.

Group 1 – Successful strategies to engage men on gender equality

Gender equality can only be achieved if both men and women feel concerned, are empowered by and work together towards this objective. It is important that parliaments and political parties provide much-needed space for women to discuss and strategize among themselves. But at the same time, progress can only be achieved if men are also committed to gender equality goals. Important initiatives, such as the UN-Women *HeforShe* campaign, have brought momentum to the issue and shed light on the importance of engaging men. The IPU campaign *My Power for Women's Power* has led to specific commitments in that regard.

Participants in Group 1 are invited to discuss best practices in engaging men – in political parties, in parliament and with constituents – on the following issues:

- *Promoting women's participation in politics;*
- *Challenging gender stereotypes on the roles of men and women in society.*

Group 2 – Stopping political violence against women

For women who have entered parliament, the exercise of the mandate for which they have been chosen may be hindered by sexist attitudes and gender-based attacks – in parliament, in online and offline social and traditional media, in their constituencies and in public meetings. IPU research has found that such behaviour and acts are widespread, although their form may vary between countries. For women to be able to participate fully, parliament must be a safe place. Parliament must not tolerate any form of sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians.

Participants in Group 2 are invited to address the following:

- *Effective parliamentary strategies and policies to address sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians;*
- *Best practices by individual parliamentarians in sending a strong message of no-tolerance to sexism and gender-based violence in politics.*



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135th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 23 – 27.10.2016

Forum of Women Parliamentarians

Panel debate on *Securing the rights and future of women and girls during war and conflict*

Sunday, 23 October 2016
2.30 – 4.30 p.m., Room 2, level 0, CICG

Background: The rights inherent to all humans have long been affirmed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These rights are universal, interdependent and indivisible. War and conflict cannot be used as a reason to diminish or suspend the application of those rights: they must be applied at all times, everywhere and to everyone. Women and girls in particular cannot continue to be left behind and considered as casualties of war. In times of conflict and war, they must be able to continue to enjoy their rights and to be agents of change. Fulfilling that imperative remains a major challenge, as the gender-based discrimination and violence that often prevail in peacetime are exacerbated during conflict. Girls, and young women in particular, are too often prevented from accessing basic services and education due to societal, economic and security challenges. This hampers their future and further exposes them to sexual violence, trafficking and child marriage.* Nearly 250 million children currently live in countries affected by conflict and an additional 10 million are refugees, mainly in neighbouring countries. A refugee child is five times more likely to be out of school than a non-refugee child. Girls are particularly disadvantaged, being 2.5 times more likely to be out of school in countries affected by conflict, as compared to boys. The time has come to take all necessary steps to change the situation and prevent an entire generation from being lost to conflict and war.

Participants in the debate will address the following questions:

- How can women's and girls' basic rights to education and health be ensured during conflict, including in displacement and refugee settings?
- What measures have proved effective in protecting women and girls from violence, harmful practices, trafficking and exploitation in conflict-affected areas?
- Have educational programmes in conflict, displacement and post-conflict settings proved effective in building more gender-equal and peaceful societies?
- How can post-conflict reconstruction efforts best be designed to empower women and girls and to facilitate their social, educational and economic reintegration?

Expected outcome: The discussion will allow parliamentarians to draw on best practices used to ensure that women and girls affected by conflict have access to health, education and empowerment, and are protected from violence, harmful practices, trafficking and exploitation.

Format: During the interactive debate, panellists will make introductory remarks. Participants will then exchange views, questions and answers.

Panellists:

- Dr Flavia Bustreo, Assistant Director-General for Family, Women's and Children's Health, World Health Organization (WHO)
- Mr Mohammad Naciri, UN-Women regional director, Arab States
- Ms Maria Pawlak, Advisor on Gender, Age, Disabilities and Diversities, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- Mr Amadou Cissé, Member of Parliament (Mali)

*Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), General Recommendation n°30 (2013) on women in conflict prevention, conflict and post-conflict situations:

http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/GC/30&Lang=en





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135th IPU ASSEMBLY AND RELATED MEETINGS

Geneva, 23 – 27.10.2016

Parity debate

Harassment and violence against parliamentarians: Issues and solutions

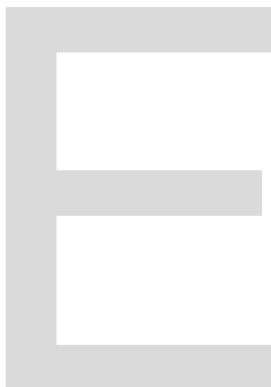
Organized by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Wednesday, 26 October 2016
11 a.m. – 1 p.m., Room 2, level 0, CICC

During the 135th Assembly, the Forum of Women Parliamentarians will organize its second parity debate entitled "Harassment and violence against parliamentarians: Issues and solutions".

The overall aim of a parity debate is to promote dialogue between women and men at the IPU, and encourage them to debate issues of common interest together. That can be achieved by keeping in mind the gender dimensions of the subjects debated; by constantly asking if there is a difference for men and women in terms of their circumstances, roles and impacts; and by reflecting on approaches that contribute to advancing gender equality. As equal numbers of men and women will speak in the debate, the different but complementary views and experiences of both genders will emerge clearly, ensuring that gender equality concerns are mainstreamed into the discussion. Delegations are therefore invited to be represented in this debate by male and female participants.

The protection of parliamentarians' rights is one of the essential conditions for democracy. It allows them to perform their duties and, in particular, to protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms in their respective countries. Parliaments contribute to protecting parliamentarians' rights because they are a forum in which society can be fully represented and where a wide range of ideas can be peacefully contested. As places where conflicts are resolved through dialogue rather than violence, they provide their members with the necessary framework to play their part in complete freedom and safety. Thus, parliaments guarantee freedom of expression, which is an essential aspect of the work of parliamentarians, while banning all insulting language, hate speech and violence. The parliamentary institution must also ensure respect for the human rights and freedoms of all persons, including parliamentarians, in other places where political discourse and debate take place, and in society in general. Nevertheless, it is a balance that remains fragile and can sometimes be upset. How can we therefore speak about democracy when violence in politics is rife, and when individual rights and freedoms are flouted, including the right to participate fully, freely and entirely safely in political processes?

The debate will focus on aggressive behaviour, intimidation and acts of violence that both men and women parliamentarians may have to face during their time in office. Those behaviours and acts may occur in parliament, in other public or political spaces, in MPs' private lives, and in new areas such as the Internet and social networks. As part of the debate, participants will be encouraged to analyse the violence that they have experienced as men and women politicians. The aim will be to determine how their experiences differ in terms of circumstances and motives, as well as in terms of the ways that violence can be tackled and prevented.



#IPU135

The debate will build on the work of the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians, which celebrates its fortieth anniversary this year. In 2015, the Committee considered the cases of 320 parliamentarians who had been subject to violations of their fundamental rights and to arbitrary measures that hindered their ability to carry out their duties. Of the 320 cases, 37 involved women parliamentarians.

The debate will begin with a presentation of general observations and lessons learned from the cases of parliamentarians that the Committee is currently considering. The results of a recent IPU study will also be covered at the beginning of the debate. The study highlights examples of barriers that could adversely affect women's ability to enter politics. Those barriers include unacceptable behaviour such as sexist insults and comments, threats or harassment. To varying degrees, those types of behaviour towards women parliamentarians exist in countries throughout the world and affect a significant number of women in elected office.

The discussion will then move on to highlight the different types of harassment and violence against parliamentarians and how they are interrelated. These include violence motivated by ideas, opinions or political affiliation; sexist attitudes and violence, whose effect is to discourage women who are or wish to be in politics; and violence from aggressive and discontented individuals.

Parliamentarians will be invited to discuss the following key questions:

- Would you say that the work of parliamentarians is unsafe – on the premises of parliament? In other political and public spaces? In their private lives?
- Have you seen a change in the way MPs are treated? Have you noticed new forms of harassment or violence emerging?
- Do you think that the way in which men and women MPs are challenged by harassment or violence is similar in terms of:
 - How people challenge them?
 - Who challenges them?
 - Where they are challenged?
- Do you feel that some types of “misbehaviour” are felt to be part of the way politics is done?
- What are the impacts of harassment and violence on the role and work of parliamentarians, on the functioning of parliament, and on democracy?
- What solutions and good practices might there be – already in place or to be developed – that could address harassment and violence against parliamentarians?

The debate will be moderated by a member of parliament who will ask panellists a series of key questions before seeking the participants' views. There will be no formal list of speakers; participants will be asked to request the floor simply by raising their hand. In the spirit of interactive debate, prepared speeches are strongly discouraged. In line with the principle of a parity debate, the composition of the panel will be gender balanced, as will the order of speakers invited to intervene from the floor.

Moderator: Mr. Mutula Kilonzo Junior, Member of the Senate (Kenya)

Opening statements:

- A view from the IPU Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians.
Presented by Mr. Rogier Huizenga, head of the human rights programme
- Results of the IPU survey on sexism, harassment and violence against women parliamentarians
Presented by Ms. Kareen Jabre, Director, Division of Programmes

Panellists:

- Ms. Fawzia Koofi, Member of Parliament (Afghanistan)
- Mr. Sven Spengemann, Member of the House of Commons (Canada)
- Ms. Edith Mendoza Fernández, Member of the Chamber of Deputies (Bolivia)