

# IPU E-BULLETIN

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**Israeli and Palestinian MPs to Attend Latest IPU Middle East Committee Meeting –** Members of the Israeli Knesset and the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) will meet in Geneva next week under the auspices of IPU's Committee on Middle East Questions. The gathering on 2-3 July takes place as reports emerge of a meeting in the coming days between Palestinian leader Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mofaz in Ramallah on ways to kick-start peace talks that have been frozen for the last four years. Items for discussion during the IPU Middle East Committee meeting will be agreed upon on the opening day of the event.

The last time the Committee met in January this year, the discussion focused on issues such as settlements, the detention of more than 20 per cent of PLC members in Israeli jails and questions of security. Palestinian lawmakers in January expressed concern over the continuing settlement building; Israeli control over basic life such as movement of people, goods, taxes and money transfers; the status of Jerusalem; economic and water issues and the detention of PLC members. At the same time, the Israeli delegation reiterated Israel's main concern over its security and on the Palestinian Authority's refusal to enter into negotiations.

The IPU Committee on Middle East Questions was first established in 1987 and aims to follow the peace process in the Middle East and to promote a dialogue between the Arab and Israeli delegations to IPU conferences.

*To see list of Committee Members, please go to: <http://www.ipu.org/struct-comtees.htm#meast>*

**Milestone in Women's Political Participation Highlighted as CEDAW Committee Marks 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary –** As the Committee that monitors the compliance of the UN's Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) marks its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary at an event in New York on 9<sup>th</sup> July, a milestone will have been reached in women's political participation. According to IPU data, 32 countries now have more than 30 per cent women MPs in their lower house of parliament, nine of which have 40 per cent or more women MPs. Attaining the 30 per cent critical mass figure means women are more able to influence the political agenda in those countries.

While acknowledging this success, largely as a result of the introduction of special measures such as quotas to ensure more women are elected to parliament, the Committee will look to see what needs to be done to quicken the pace of progress on the issue. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary event, which IPU Executive Committee Member and Speaker of the Ugandan parliament Rebecca Kadaga will attend as a panellist on women's political participation and leadership, also aims to frame the Committee's future work on the application of special temporary measures.

IPU has long supported the work of the CEDAW Committee, especially in raising awareness and implementing the Convention among MPs and parliaments across the world. The Organization reports at each Committee session on women's political participation in specific countries, IPU's own activities in support of the elimination of gender discrimination and on national parliaments' involvement in reporting back to the Committee on the implementation progress of the Convention. The important role played by parliaments and IPU on the issue has been acknowledged by the Committee in recent years (<http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/statements/Parliamentarians.pdf>).

*For full list of IPU rankings please go to: <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>*

**Chile Takes First Steps in Establishing Gender Sensitive Parliament** – A joint IPU-Chilean parliament assessment will take place on 10<sup>th</sup> July to determine whether the parliament is able to integrate gender equality in its structure and functioning and to identify actions needed to make it so. The assessment follows a request by Chilean women MPs wanting to know how to integrate gender issues into the work of their parliament, including new legislation. Chile currently ranks 89<sup>th</sup> in the IPU world rankings of women's political participation with only 17 women out of 120 MPs in the Chamber of Deputies and only 5 out of 38 in the Senate.

The assessment, partly funded by Irish Aid, will be carried out by Chilean women MPs from both houses of parliament as well as representatives from parliamentary committees and IPU experts. It will be followed by a two-day regional seminar organized by IPU and the Chamber of Deputies in Valparaiso as a follow up to the launch of the *IPU's Gender Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice* (<http://www.ipu.org/pdf/publications/gsp11-e.pdf>). MPs from Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Mexico and Peru who participated in the national case studies used in the publication, will gather together with Chilean counterparts to share experiences and lessons learned on adapting parliamentary structures and working methods to gender needs.