



Gender Equality: Making a Difference through Parliament



New York, 1 March 2006

A parliamentary event organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
on the occasion of the 50th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

INFORMATION NOTE

During the 50th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which will consider the "equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels", the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) are organising a parliamentary event entitled *Gender Equality: Making a Difference through Parliament*.

The meeting will take place on **1 March 2006**, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
in the **ECOSOC** chamber at UN Headquarters in New York.

Objectives

In keeping with its policy of contributing to major international forums by seeking to introduce a parliamentary dimension into the proceedings of intergovernmental organisations, the IPU is organising with UNDAW this one-day event in order to provide a forum for debate between parliamentarians from all over the world, and to contribute to the deliberations of the 50th CSW Session regarding the equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes.

With its well-developed programme on gender issues, the IPU will also be able to provide substantive input into the discussion of the progress and setbacks of women parliamentarians world wide over several years. A particular emphasis will be placed on the institution of parliament, and how parliamentarians are contributing to the goal of reaching gender equality. Parliamentarians will therefore be invited to share experiences and reflections on the role of women in politics and consider mechanisms to strengthen parliaments' capacity to address gender equality. As detailed in the attached provisional agenda, the meeting will address two main topics: *The Contribution of Parliamentarians* and *The Role of Parliamentary Mechanisms*. Each topic will be introduced by panellists, and will give rise to a general discussion.

Expected outcome

At the close of the meeting, a brief message to the CSW will be issued, stressing areas for future priority action, with particular emphasis on how parliaments can promote the equal participation of women and men in decision-making.

The President of IPU's Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians will take the floor at a plenary meeting of the 50th Session of the CSW on behalf of the world parliamentary community, and will transmit the message from the meeting.

Relevant documents

Background documents to be used throughout the meeting include:

- Written contributions of the panellists;
- Documents of the 50th Session of the CSW;
- IPU's annual analysis of progress and setbacks of women in the elections of the previous year (2005);
- Directory of parliamentary bodies dealing with the status of women and gender equality;
- Report on the UN Expert Group Meeting on the Equal Participation of Women and Men in Decision-Making, held in Addis Ababa in October 2005.

Participants

The participants in the Parliamentary Event will include:

- Parliamentarians present in New York for the 50th Session of the CSW as members of their respective national delegations; a letter of invitation will be sent by the IPU Secretary General to all Member and non-member parliaments of the IPU. Efforts will be made to encourage the participation of chairpersons and members of gender equality parliamentary committees.
- Representatives of governments, relevant organisations and funds of the UN system, and civil society will also be invited.

Programme

Gender Equality: Making a Difference through Parliament

9 – 10 a.m.	Registration of participants and distribution of documents
10 – 10.30 a.m.	Inaugural session
10.30 a.m.- 1 p.m.	Session 1: Gender Equality: The Contribution of Parliamentarians <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Women in Parliament: Making a difference to decision-making• Partnership in Parliament: Women and men working for change• How women Speakers of Parliament are affecting change General discussion
1 - 3 p.m.	Lunch break
3 - 5.30 p.m.	Session 2: Making a Difference: The Role of Parliamentary Mechanisms <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parliamentary Committees for Gender Equality• Women's Parliamentary Caucuses and civil society contributions• Gender Sensitive Parliaments General discussion
5.30 – 6 p.m.	Closing session

Languages

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the four languages customarily used at IPU Assemblies, namely English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

Access badges for United Nations Headquarters

As is customary during General Assembly sessions, security arrangements are very strict and no one may enter the United Nations premises without a special badge (for delegates and visitors). In keeping with normal practice, national delegations and diplomatic missions in New York will be invited to attend to all matters relating to visas, UN Badges, hotel reservations and transportation. Participants must therefore request their badge from their country's permanent mission to the United Nations.

Registration

Persons wishing to participate in this meeting are urged to register as soon as possible using the attached form. Once this form has been filled out, it should be sent directly to IPU Headquarters (Fax: +41 22 919 41 60 or e-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org), copy to the Office of the Permanent Observer (Fax: + 1 212 557 39 54 or e-mail: ny-office@mail.ipu.org) by Monday, 30 January 2006 at the latest.