



Parliamentary strategies for tackling violence against women and girls

A parliamentary event organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women on the occasion of the 57th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women
5 March 2013, UN Headquarters, New York



AGENDA

5 March 2013

10 - 10.30 a.m.

Welcome remarks

- *Mr. A. Radi, President of the IPU*
- *Ms. M. Bachelet, UN Under-Secretary General and Executive Director of UN Women*

Chair: Ms. Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of Parliament of Uganda, Vice-President of IPU

10.30 - 11.30 a.m.

Testimonials

Behind a strong political will: parliamentarians' motivation and responsibilities

This introductory session will be dedicated to hearing two or three parliamentarians from different regions of the world who champion the cause of ending violence against women. These parliamentarians will explain what motivated them to press their country to address violence against women and girls, what forms of violence they focused on, and the challenges and difficulties they encountered in this process.

- *Mr. Aliou Aya, Member of the National Assembly (Mali), Member of the Committee on Education and of the Committee on Finance, President of the Parliamentary Network on Violence against Women and Children*
- *Mr. J. Mendes Bota, Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (Portugal), First Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination*
- *Ms. Sarah Sayifwanda, Member of Parliament (Zambia), Member of the Committee on Agriculture, of the Committee on Education, Science and Technology and of the Committee on National Security and Foreign Affairs*

Moderator: Ms. Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, Journalist and Deputy Director of the Council on Foreign Relations' Women and Foreign Policy Program

11.30 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Theme 1

When parliaments commit to ending violence against women and girls

Strong legislative frameworks, supported by implementation, as well as protection and prevention services, are vital for guaranteeing women and girls a life free of violence. Parliaments and parliamentarians can make a critical difference by using their legislative power to press for change in legislation and insist on adopting legally binding standards to prevent, protect against and prosecute all forms of violence against women and girls. Through their oversight function, parliamentarians can also play a crucial role in reviewing and refining policy, in monitoring implementation processes to ensure improvement of laws, and in scrutinizing budget proposals to ensure adequate funding and long-term sustainability of programmes to tackle violence against women.

Drawing on promising parliamentary practices, this session will discuss parliamentary strategies for a strong legislative framework and an effective implementation of laws and policies to end violence against women and girls.

- *Ms. Gisèle Guigma, Member of the National Assembly (Burkina Faso), Rapporteur of the Network of Women Parliamentarians of the Assemblée parlementaire de la francophonie (APF)*
- *Ms. Lucero Saldaña, Senator (Mexico), President of the Committee on External Relations and Non-Governmental Organizations, Secretary of the Ad Hoc Committee on Child and Youth Rights, Member of the Committee on Gender Equality*

Presentations will be followed by an open debate.

1 – 2:30 p.m. **Lunch break**

Chair: Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams, Vice-Chairperson of the National Council (Namibia), Member of the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders and of the Women's Caucus

2:30 – 4 p.m.

Theme 2

Violence against women in the political arena

Entrenched in unequal power relations between men and women in the public sphere, violence against women in the political arena is intrinsically linked to violence against women in general. It can be defined as any act of violence against women for political reasons, for their link to political activities or for their involvement in politics. It is a significant impediment to women's political participation as voters and candidates in an election, as well as elected or incumbent politicians in the exercise of a public or political function. The session will examine different manifestations of this form of violence and propose effective measures that can be put in place to prevent and eliminate it.

- *Ms. Gabriela Montaña, President of the Senate (Bolivia)*
- *Ms. Gabrielle Bardall, Elections and Gender Consultant*
- *Ms. Roberta Blackman-Woods, Member of the House of Commons (United Kingdom), Member of the APPG on Universities, Member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Member of the APPG on Afghanistan*

Presentations will be followed by an open debate.

4 – 5 p.m.

What next? Future strategies for parliaments to end violence against women

The session is aimed at identifying priorities for parliaments to support progress. It will discuss new avenues for cooperation with the IPU through its campaign to support parliaments in taking action on violence against women, and with other international organizations and partners in this field. Participants will also discuss the parliamentary recommendations for the concluding comments of the CSW.

- *Ms. Margaret Mensah-Williams, Vice-Chairperson of the National Council (Namibia), Member of the Committee on Standing Rules and Orders and of the Women's Caucus*

Presentations will be followed by an open debate.

5 – 5:30 p.m.

Closing session