



Inter-Parliamentary Union
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What is the daily reality of women in politics? What lies beneath the idealized image of strong and determined women who have made it in a man's world?

The Permanent Mission of Ireland to the United Nations and the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) invite you to debate on these questions in a side event during the 58th Session on the Commission on the Status of Women on:

The challenging world of women in politics

Equality in decision-making has been recognized as a prerequisite of development and democracy. Efforts over the past years have focused on increasing the number of women in decision-making positions and addressing the challenges faced in making it to the corridors of power. But what happens to women once they get there?

Recent studies, including IPU's *Gender-Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice*, have drawn attention to the specific challenges faced by women once elected to office. Women in decision-making positions still face numerous obstacles to being treated as equals in politics. They often struggle with preconceived notions of how women should look, speak and behave. In fact, by engaging in politics, women challenge traditional roles and prompt a redistribution of power, calling into question a historically male power structure. The increase in the number of women in parliament exposes them to various forms of violence and harassment in their private and public life. Furthermore, the media often perpetuates this violence by stereotyping women in politics, especially by objectifying and sexualizing women politicians and over-emotionalizing their comments and behaviour. With the development of social media, such behaviour often provokes a ripple effect with an exponential impact.

So, what needs to be done? How can women parliamentarians serve their constituents in full freedom and security, without being harassed, threatened or the subject of sexist or degrading remarks? How can traditional and social media be used to strengthen the image and protection of women in politics?

The event will provide an opportunity to open a debate on an issue that is common to all nations and one that constitutes a serious threat to women's rights and their ability to contribute to the development of their country. It will include testimonials from women in politics and will aim to identify strategies to address this challenge.

The event will be chaired by Joan Burton, T.D, Minister of Social Protection of Ireland

Date and time: 12 March 2014, from 10 a.m. to 11.15 a.m.

Location: Meeting Room D, UN Conference Building

To register contact: mairead.glynn@dfa.ie