Equality in politics
Enhancing youth representation and participation
Youth participation in national parliaments
Why youth participation?

Democracy, demography, efficiency

• The need to respond to a reality: young people have an impact on/for democracy
• Restoring young people’s trust, engagement and belonging
• Changing the political landscape/ rejuvenating democracy
• Young people, like women, are a politically “excluded majority” (Joshi, 2014).
• 1.2 billion people are aged 15 to 24 on the planet, about one fifth of the world’s population. The global median age is 29.6 years.
• 57% of potential voters are between the ages of 20 and 44 (esa.un.org)
• Improving inclusivity in policy-making and legislation
• Have a say as the first impacted by development challenges (economic crisis, unemployment, migration, global warming…)
Most attention had focused on young people as voters and as social movement activists as well as on mechanisms of policy consultation like youth councils and youth parliaments.

IPU brought in youth participation in terms of the need to elect and appoint more young people to political positions.
IPU’s survey

- 128 parliaments surveyed in 2014 and 2015
- Monitor youth participation in parliament
- Gather data for MPs under 30, 40 and 45
- Gather sex disaggregated data
- Produce ranking and highlight regional trends
- Collect legal regulations to vote/run for office
- Analyze impact of electoral systems and quotas
- Follow youth in the legislative process
- Check out the engagement of youth with parliament
Youth participation in national parliaments
2016
Key findings

Youth participation in national parliaments 2016

**Gender**
- Young people under 30 make up only 1.9 per cent of the world’s 45,000 MPs.
- Nearly one-third of the world’s single and lower houses of parliament have no MPs aged under 30.
- More than 80 per cent of the world’s upper houses of parliament have no MPs aged under 30.

**Age**
- 1.9% of the world’s MPs are aged under 30 – up from 1.6% per cent in 2014.
- 14.2% of the world’s MPs are aged under 40 – up from 12.9% per cent in 2014.
- 26% of the world’s MPs are aged under 45 – up from 23.9% per cent in 2014.

**Quotas**
- In countries where youth quotas exist, the proportion of parliamentarians under 30 is without exception much smaller than that of the under-40 age group.

**System**
- 25% Young parliamentarians chair fewer than 25 per cent of youth-related committees and form a majority in less than one-third.
- 50% Youth parliaments exist in half of the countries surveyed, some with formal ties to the national parliament but most coordinated by non-governmental organisations, government ministries, schools or other local authorities.

Countries with PR systems elect around twice as many young MPs as those with mixed systems and 15-20 times as many as those with majoritarian systems.
Rankings

- Top IPU global rankings for **lower/single houses**
  - Sweden (12.3%), Ecuador (10.9%), Finland (10.5%), and Norway (10.1%) for MPs under 30
  - Denmark (41.3%), Andorra (39.3%) and Ecuador (38%) for MPs below 40
  - Oman (65.9%), Ethiopia (63.6%) and Andorra (60.7%) for MPs below 45

- Top IPU global rankings for **upper houses**
  - Bhutan for MPs under 30, 40 and 45 followed by Kenya for MPs under 30 and 40 and by Afghanistan for MPs under 45
• **Regional trends:** Americas, Europe and Africa have the highest number of MPs under 30

• **Gender breakdown:** Male MPs outnumber women MPs in all age groups. 60:40 ratio among youngest MPs

• **Recent elections:** In nice countries, more than 50% of MPs elected were under 45

• **Population:** Inverse relationship between the size of a country’s youth population and the number of its young MPs
Enhancing Youth Participation
What needs to be done

• **Appropriate policies**: quotas (reserved seats, legislated quotas) and PR system
• Rethinking **age restrictions** on running for office and aligning candidacy age with minimum voting age
• Political party to field more **young candidates**
• Particular strategies for **young candidates in their 20s and 30s** and for **young women candidates**
IPU’s action

• Three Es:
  – **Electing** more young MPs: encouraging parliaments and political parties to adopt measures which clear the way for young candidates and young MPs into office, from changing mindsets to introducing quotas
  – **Empowering** young MPs to their fullest potential through capacity-building, international and national networking and exposure to the global stage on major issues
  – **Engaging** the wider youth population by reaching out beyond the walls of parliaments
What about the political process itself?

IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians held in Geneva in 2014:

• Democracy is in need of renewal: imbalance between the way that politics is being done today and the way young people are living.

• Political processes need more connectivity, dynamism, transparency, effectiveness and openness.

• Politics have to deliver at last on promises of development, equity and equality.
Innovations

• E-Democracy and E-Participation to promote citizens’ participation in public decision-making, “which impacts the well-being of society, in general, and the individual, in particular.”

Ex: The Citizens Foundation, Iceland
– to enable citizens to launch a regular dialogue with their elected representatives on an ongoing basis citywide through merging electronic democracy with machine learning algorithms and 3D gaming elements
I Innovations

• Liquid democracy: a mixture of direct and indirect democracy for a decision-making process that allows every participant to choose how involved in this process s/he wants to be:
  – At every election, voters can either vote themselves or delegate their voting rights to a representative (or expert)
  – Citizens are not limited to taking just one decision for an entire legislative period, but can continuously take part in the decision-making process

• Youth-led political parties: new impact on socio-economic policies and principles
Thank You

Zeina Hilal
Youth Participation Programme
IPU
zh@ipu.org