

## Making a difference through Parliament

Møde arrangeret af IPU og FN i anledning af 50. Session of the Commission of the Status of Women den 1. marts 2006 i New York.

Invitationen til deltagelse i mødet var af IPU delegationen sendt til AMU og PØU. Fra PØU deltog Lone Dybkjær (RV) som i forvejen skulle med Forsvarsudvalget til USA. Fra sekretariatet deltog udvalgssekretær Mette Hansen.

I mødet deltog 160 deltagere der repræsenterede 60 parlamenter. Programmet kan ses som bilag 1. Som bilag 2 er vedlagt rapporten fra mødet.

I Beijing deklARATIONEN var målsætningen for kvinderepræsentation i parlamenter 30 pct., men denne målsætning er endnu kun opfyldt i 14 lande. Det blev betegnet som opløftende af Carolyn Hannan (direktør for DAW), at en række tidligere borgerkrigsramte lande lægger stor vægt på kvindedeltagelsen i opbygningsprocessen og i deltagelsen i landenes nye demokratiske institutioner. Lande som Rwanda, Syd Afrika, Uganda og Eritrea er nu i blandt de 30 lande hvor kvindeandelen i parlamenterne udgør mellem 25-30 pct. Hun fremhævede IPU's rolle bl.a. i forbindelse med indsamling af den vigtige statistik om kvinders repræsentation i de nationale parlamenter. I forbindelse med opfyldelsen af 2015 målsætningerne betragtes en øget kvindelig repræsentation i parlamenter som en indikator for opfyldelsen af målsætning 3 (ligestilling. m.v.)

Professor Pippa Norris fra Harvard understregede i sit indlæg om betydningen af større kvinderepræsentation i parlamenterne, at flere kvindelige parlamentsmedlemmer også kan være med til at mobilisere græsroddernes deltagelse. Hun beskæftigede sig med de 3 muligheder for at indføre særlige kvotesystemer for at øge kvindeandelen. (The fast track mechanisms) 1. Et vist antal reserverede pladser til kvinder- som i Afghanistan (25 pct). Dette princip er det mest vidtgående, kortsigtet betydning og hvis kvinderne ikke vælges, men udpeges er de ikke nødvendigvis uafhængige. 2. en vis fastsat procent kvindelige kandidater ( Frankrig/Latinamerika). Virkningen af dette princip afhænger meget af hvor på listerne kvinderne opstilles, og 3. frivillige partikvoter, som kan være af ret symbolsk betydning.

Pippa Norris henviste i øvrigt til projektet [www.quotaproject.org](http://www.quotaproject.org) som er et samarbejde mellem IDEA og Stocholms Universitet.

Anders Karlsson, formand for Riksdagens arbejdsmarkedsudvalg redegjorde for arbejdet med ligestillingsspørgsmål i Riksdagen. Sverige har som Danmark ikke et egentlig ligestillingsudvalg, men hvert fagudvalg har ansvaret for at ligestillingsspørgsmål indenfor deres fagområde. Det svenske arbejdsmarkedsudvalg har således ansvar for

ligestilling indenfor arbejdslivet og herudover har der udviklet sig en praksis der indebærer, at udvalget har ansvar for ligestillingsspørgsmål som ikke hører under et af de øvrige fagudvalg. [Svarende til praksis i Danmark, hvor det er PØU der beskæftiger sig med ligestilling, der ikke hører under andre udvalg]. Den svenske regerings ligestillingsredegørelser m.v. henvises til behandling i arbejdsmarkedsudvalget og der er forslag om, at Riksdagens forretningsorden skal ændres, således at den ovenfor beskrevne praksis indarbejdes som regel.

Marie C. Wilson, initiativtager til organisationen "White House Project" som er en uafhængig organisation hvis formål det er at støtte kvinders deltagelse i alle ledelsesniveauet på alle niveauer i samfundet – op til præsidentposten i USA, fortalte om organisationens målsætning. Hun understregede, at det er nødvendigt at opmuntre politiske ambitioner, at få kvinderne med på billedet når resultaterne skal præsenteres, og at mødre skal betragtes, ikke udelukkende som mødre, men som mødre der kan lede. [link: [www.thewhitehouseproject.org](http://www.thewhitehouseproject.org)].

Anne Marie Lizin, formand for det belgiske Senat fortalte, at hun var blevet valgt til formand umiddelbart efter, at man i 1996 havde nedsat et særligt udvalg hvis formål det var at komme med udtalelser de ligestillingsmæssige konsekvenser af alle forslag der blev henvist til Senatet. Hun understregede, at dette rådgivende udvalg havde medvirket i forbindelse med vedtagelsen af ikke diskriminerende lovgivning.

#### *Ligestillingsudvalg i parlamenter*

IPU spørgeskemaundersøgelse om hvorledes ligestillingsspørgsmål varetages. Hovedparten af de lande der havde besvaret spørgsmålene har permanente udvalg, der beskæftiger sig med ligestilling, og af disse er omkring halvdelen specialiserede udvalg der udelukkende tager sig af ligestillingsspørgsmål.

Repræsentanten fra Canada oplyste, at man i 2004 havde oprettet et særligt stående udvalg om kvinders status. På grundlag af en række rundbordssamtaler med kvindeorganisationer havde udvalget valgt 4 prioriterede emner. Udvalget havde indtil nu udarbejdet 5 rapporter.

Lone Dybkjær opfordrede alle til at overveje, om ikke alle parlamenter bør have et egentligt ligestillingsudvalg af to grunde. Dels for at sikre at ansvaret var klart placeret, dels for at sikre det internationale samarbejde vedrørende ligestilling. Monica Xavier fra Uruguay der havde indledt debatten konkluderede, at spørgsmålet om egentlige ligestillingsudvalg ctr. de specifikke fagudvalg ikke var et enten eller, og at der var meget at arbejde videre med.

#### *Kvindelige parlamentariske grupper og bidrag fra civilsamfundet.*

Der henvises til oplægget fra Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Indonesien som er vedlagt som bilag 3.

#### *Ligestilling i Den svenske Riksdag.*

Britt Bolin Ohlsson præsenterede en undersøgelse blandt Riksdagens medlemmer om deres holdning til ligestilling. Undersøgelsen mundede ud i 15 forslag vedrørende en ligestillet Riksdag, som arbejdsgruppen havde sendt til Riksdagens formand. Der henvises til resumeet af undersøgelsen som er vedlagt som bilag 4.



## 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 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

### ANNOTATED PROGRAMME

9 – 10 a.m.	Registration of participants and distribution of documents
10 – 10.30	<i>Inaugural session</i> Ms Margaret Mensah-Williams, Vice-President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Vice-Chairperson of the National Council of Namibia Ms Carolyn Hannan, Director, United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
Chairperson:	Senator Joan Fraser, (Canada), President of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians

#### 10.30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Session one: Gender Equality: Contribution of parliamentarians

*Key themes: progress and setbacks of women and men in political life; men and women working together in partnership for change; accountability to political parties; positively affecting decision-making; particular contributions of parliamentarians; legislative change and Presiding Officers of Parliaments.*

##### **Theme 1: Women in Parliament: Making a difference to decision-making**

*What has been the impact of the increased presence of women in parliaments on decision-making processes? Has parliamentary work been changed by women's presence, and if so how? What examples of 'best practices' can be found?*

Professor Pippa Norris, Harvard University

##### **Theme 2: Partnership in Parliament: Women and men working for change**

*How do men and women understand the nature of partnership in politics? How can men and women work in partnership to implement change in parliament and collectively strive for gender equality? What specific contributions can men make to affect changes in parliaments? How successful have men been in promoting gender equality and sensitizing parliaments on gender issues?*

Mr. Anders Karlsson, Member of the Swedish Riksdagen, Chairman of the Committee on the Labour Market

Ms. Marie C. Wilson, President, White House Project

##### **Theme 3: How Women Speakers of Parliament are affecting change**

*There are currently some 30 parliamentary chambers that are presided over by women. This session will present the experience of women speakers of parliaments, the challenges they face and their contribution to the process of changing male-dominated parliaments. It will also present some of the findings of the meeting of women speakers of parliament on Gender equality on the legislative agenda: the role of women presiding over parliaments, convened at UN Headquarters for 27 February 2006.*

Ms Anne Marie Lizin, Speaker of the Belgian Senate

Ms. Ntlhoi Motsamai, Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho, Rapporteur of the Meeting of Women Speakers of Parliament (27 February 2006)

*General discussion*

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**1 - 3 p.m.**      *Lunch break*

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**3 p.m.**

**Guest speakers**

Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the United Nations General Assembly

H.E. Mrs. Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernández, Chairperson of the UN Commission on the Status of Women

**3.30- 5.45 p.m. - Session two: Making a Difference: The Role of Parliamentary Mechanisms**

*Key themes: gender-sensitive parliaments, institutional change, institutional structures to support change, caucuses and committees, gender mainstreaming, women's issues, links with civil society, sensitization, working with men, and political parties.*

**Theme 4: Parliamentary Committees for Gender Equality**

*How many specialized committees on Gender Equality and the Status of Women exist in parliaments today? How effective have these committees been as a parliamentary structure to address gender equality issues? How effectively do they mainstream a gender perspective into the work of the parliament?*

Senator Monica Xavier, Uruguay

**Theme 5: Women's Parliamentary Caucuses and Civil Society Contributions**

*What has been the effect of intra- and inter-party parliamentary caucuses in parliaments? Are women able to work collectively for change across party lines in all-party caucuses? How can parliaments and parliamentarians work successfully with civil society organizations?*

Ms Khofifah Indar Parawansa, MP, Indonesia

**Theme 6: Gender Sensitive Parliaments**

*What rules, practices and institutions need to change in order to obtain a gender sensitive parliament? How can parliaments function in a way that is sensitive to gender equality issues? How do men and women work together to create a more gender-sensitive Parliament?*

Ms Britt Bohlin Ohlsson, MP, Sweden

*General discussion*

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**5.45- 6 p.m.**

**Closing Session**

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## Gender Equality: Making a Difference through Parliament



New York, 1 March 2006

### FINAL REPORT

This parliamentary event at United Nations Headquarters was organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) on the occasion of the 50th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

#### Inaugural session

**Senator Joan Fraser (Canada), President of the IPU Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians**, welcomed the participants. Noting that the meeting was being attended by 180 participants from 64 parliaments, including for the first time that of Iraq, she explained that its objective was to contribute to the deliberations of the United Nations (UN) on the theme of equal participation of men and women in decision-making at all levels. She expressed her pleasure in once again chairing the parliamentary event on the occasion of the CSW and welcomed the excellent partnership that the IPU maintains with UNDAW.

**Ms. Margareth Mensah-Williams (Namibia), Vice-President of the IPU Executive Committee**, reported that its President, Mr. Pier Ferdinando Casini, was unfortunately unable to attend owing to very heavy responsibilities in his own country, and had asked her to convey his very best wishes for a successful meeting.

It gave her great pleasure to see so many parliamentarians present, attesting to the commitment that members of parliament, men as well as women, had to the promotion of gender equality. Being a member of Parliament was no easy job, but was a calling that women are fully prepared to heed. Unfortunately, in much of the world, women wishing to assume leadership roles had to face obstacles that men seldom encountered, whether cultural, social or economic. However, the picture was beginning to show some positive signs. More than 16 per cent of parliamentarians worldwide in March 2006 were women, a level never reached before, although progress was still not fast enough. The challenge for women now was to find ways to continue increasing and supporting women's participation in politics, while at the same time finding ways to ensure that parliament as an institution and its members played their role in promoting gender quality. That required the involvement of both men and women, working in partnership.

Ms. Mensah-Williams also highlighted the importance of the collaboration that the IPU had enjoyed with UNDAW over several years and looked forward to continued and enhanced partnership in the future.

**Ms. Carolyn Hannan, Director of UNDAW**, welcoming the distinguished participants from all regions of the world, thanked them for their commitment to such an important topic. She expressed her appreciation for the excellent and long-standing collaboration between her Division and the IPU, and drew attention to the importance of the work of the IPU's Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians.

Since its establishment in 1946, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) had given priority to increasing women's political participation. It had been instrumental in the establishment of the Convention on the Political Rights of Women adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1952. At its 49th session, in 2005, the Commission carried out the ten-year review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Responses received from governments, and data collected by the IPU, indicated that despite political recognition of the fundamental right of women and men to participate in public life, the gap between *de jure* and *de facto* equality in decision-making spheres remained wide. The pace of change was still far too slow. Only 20 countries had reached 30 per cent representation of women in parliament, which had been established as a target for 2005.

It was encouraging that a number of post-conflict countries had recognized the importance of including women in reconstruction, writing their new constitutions in such a way as to ensure women's participation in new democratic institutions. As a result Burundi, Eritrea, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Timor-Leste and Uganda appeared in the top 30 countries with regard to women's representation in legislative bodies, averaging between 25 and 30 per cent, and Rwanda currently had the highest proportion of women parliamentarians in the world. It was important to ensure that those gains were maintained and improved upon.

The IPU already played a critical role in promoting women's participation in parliaments, collecting and disseminating statistics on their representation, and providing an excellent example of accountability for gender equality in its own procedures. At the national level, parliamentarians could significantly assist in promoting and monitoring implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the gender-sensitive implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. Increasing women's representation in parliaments had been identified as one of the indicators for achieving Goal Three: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women. Action by parliaments was critical to the removal of constraints on women's involvement in decision-making, such as illiteracy, poverty, stereotypical practices, and violence.

Parliaments could also make an important contribution to implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), including through reviewing the national reports to be submitted to the CEDAW Committee and monitoring the follow-up to the Committee's recommendations following its consideration of the report.

The day's parliamentary event provided an important opportunity to go beyond the issue of increasing women's numerical representation to address the ways in which parliaments could make a difference to gender equality, including through making their own work more gender-sensitive, strengthening the role of male parliamentarians in promoting gender equality and enhancing collaboration with women's groups and networks at all levels.

## **Session One**

### **Gender Equality: Contribution of parliamentarians**

*The aim of this session was to provide an overview of the progress and setbacks of women and men in political life and special measures that were being adopted to bolster women's representation. It sought to examine how men and women can work together in partnership for change to affect decision-making positively and the particular contributions that presiding officers of parliaments have made, and can make, in parliament.*

Ms. Pippa Norris, Harvard University; Mr. Anders Karlsson, MP, Sweden; Ms. Marie C. Wilson, President, White House Project, Ms. Anne Marie Lizin, President of the Belgian Senate; and Hon. Ntlhoi Motsamai, Speaker of the National Assembly of Lesotho, exchanged views with the parliamentarians.

### ***Women in parliament***

Three basic fast-track strategies could be considered to increase significantly the level of women's political participation and parliamentary representation.

The first option is that of reserved seats. Just as in many countries there are reserved positions for ethnic minorities that are underrepresented in parliament, so too can a case be made for having a guarantee, either constitutional or legal, that a certain percentage of seats be set aside in parliament for women. Many of the countries that had adopted that approach had been successful: Rwanda, for example, currently the world leader in terms of women's parliamentary representation, had 30 per cent of its parliamentary seats reserved for women. However, there may be some downsides to this approach, if women gaining their positions under reserved seats were viewed in a different light from those parliamentarians that were elected in open competition. In addition, consideration needed to be given to how the seats were filled, either by appointment or direct or indirect election.

The second option is to establish legislated quotas at the candidate nomination stage - when political parties select their candidates for election. Under this option, every political party is required by statutory law to field a certain percentage of women candidates. This option has been tried widely, although its effectiveness seems to vary from country to country. The desired effect cannot always be achieved simply by passing a law: there has to be good-faith compliance and political will, effective penalties and sanctions for non-compliance and a placement mandate system must be introduced so that women are not simply placed at the bottom of the party list with little chance of election.

The importance of these two strategies is that they make it possible to change the country's entire electoral landscape, and parliamentary composition, at a stroke. The third option differs in that the quota is implemented on a voluntary basis by political parties. These quotas allow political parties to make a voluntary choice to field a particular proportion of women candidates. This option is quite widespread in established or consolidating democracies, and can be effective provided that it is genuinely implemented in practice. It is important to guard against token gestures, with party leaders proclaiming quotas for women candidates that are never actually going to be filled.

### ***Partnership in parliament: Women and men working for change***

The panelists examined the situation of some specific countries with regard to women's parliamentary representation. Sweden, for example, has one of the most gender-equal parliaments in the world, with almost 45 per cent of its members being women, who are represented in all areas. Sweden does not have a specific parliamentary committee on gender equality, but instead uses the mainstreaming principle, with each of the committees being responsible for gender equality within its own particular field.

In the United States, while it was the goal of an organisation such as the White House Project to get women into positions of leadership, the intention was not to replace men, but for women to lead alongside men and change society's options in cooperation with them. If the world was to survive terrorism, wars, threats of nuclear attack, plagues and famines, it needs to make use of all of its resources, and that includes those of its women leaders.

Essentially, it is necessary to change people's perception of women as leaders. There needs to be large numbers of them so that it becomes a perfectly normal phenomenon that a country's leader is a woman. But numbers are not enough. Research has shown that women's political ambition has to be encouraged. When men enter politics, it has been found that a third of them already envisaged themselves in office, while the same number of women were waiting for encouragement. Men could provide that encouragement and urge them to take the next step and aim for leadership. Men need to recognize the skills that women bring to the political arena, rather than always insisting on being centre-stage themselves.

Having a large number of women in a parliamentary assembly is not enough to make it more receptive to the issue of equality between the sexes: the challenge lies in raising the awareness of the whole political elite. In the Scandinavian countries, for example, where the proportion of women in parliament is particularly high, one of the key factors responsible for their influence on decision-making is the role of the women's factions in the political parties and the organization of networks of women in politics outside of party affiliations.

Education and health are often priorities for women who are traditionally the instigators of social policies aimed at reconciling work and family. But the involvement of women in areas that are less 'soft' is also on the increase. Women should not be confined to specific areas but should approach all sectors with their own sensitivity. If a new political issue is given to elected women, men should understand that it is because of women's particular experience of life and approach to problems, which often differs from that of men.

### ***How women Speakers of parliament are affecting change***

The meeting also heard a report on the outcome of the meeting of women Speakers of parliament on *Gender Equality on the Legislative Agenda*, convened by the IPU at UN headquarters on 27 February 2006. The debates had centered around two main themes: mechanisms to promote the equal participation of women in parliaments, and the impact of women on politics, including the specific role of women Speakers. In addressing the first theme, the meeting had deliberated at length issues such as the impact of electoral systems, the effect of implementing temporary special measures such as quotas, and the responsibilities and critical role of political parties. Additionally, a key concern had been the challenge of reconciling the public and private lives of women and balancing family and political responsibilities.

Regarding the second theme, on whether or not women made an impact on politics, the meeting had pondered on the legitimacy of the question, given that it was never asked of men. It was therefore decided that perhaps a more pertinent question would be how women make an impact on politics. A thorough scrutiny of the subject revealed that women's participation had indeed gone a long way in changing the political landscape. The changes brought by women parliamentarians and in particular women Speakers operated on different levels. Firstly, and most superficially, women were instrumental in transforming the actual physical premises to make them more gender-friendly and better adapted to the needs of working women with families. Secondly, women were known to bring about changes in institutional culture, using their influence to instill practices and procedures that make parliaments better adapted to women members. Thirdly, women are able to change the institutional discourse to make it reflect the society that they want to create, bringing about changes in language that had originated in more patriarchal thinking. It was noted that women Speakers not only act as role models, but also help to raise the visibility of parliament in the public domain, and should use the opportunities accorded by their status to voice opinions in fora beyond parliament.

### ***General discussion***

In the ensuing debate, many delegates reported on what was happening in their countries with regard to women's parliamentary participation, giving accounts of progress made and achievements realized, but also of setbacks encountered. Several also described the progress made in areas such as criminalizing violence against women or sexual harassment, assigning shared responsibilities for the raising of families, the provision of education for girls, and so on.

The conclusions from the debate included the following:

- In some countries, even though there had been a large increase in the number of women parliamentarians, there is often a perception that women are still not ready for a representative role in society. It was a struggle for them to be accepted, and there needs to be more education and training in order for women to be accepted as legitimate political representatives and to be assertive of their rights.
- There was a parallel need identified to educate men in how to accept women parliamentarians as their equals. In countries where the culture is one of keeping women at home, without rights of their own, or where the quality traditionally most prized in women is modesty, the situation is very difficult to change. Fundamentally, the attitude of men must be changed, even in such simple aspects as learning to stop their conversations when a woman legislator rises to speak.



- Once women have been economically empowered, especially in village cultures, there has been a tremendous change in their situation. Economically empowered women are better able to compel respect from men. But in some countries it is difficult to bring about this situation.
- In some countries it is also apparent that while there have been increases in the participation rates of women in secondary and tertiary studies, with women often obtaining better results than men, and all careers are open to them, these countries continue to maintain low rates of female parliamentary participation, especially in Europe.
- In some countries, an obstacle to women's parliamentary participation is that the political parties themselves are not democratic, and women are impeded in their efforts to stand as candidates.
- Another way to increase women's participation is to waive the fees that are normally due for registering as a political candidate in countries where it is prohibitively high. In some countries political parties receive funds from the government in proportion to the number of women elected.
- One way to increase women's participation in politics is by enhancing their awareness of the benefits of forming networks. They can also be beneficial to women in traditionally male-dominated professions such as medicine and law. Also important is the provision of support and mentoring to young women who are considering a career in politics.
- When using fast-track measures such as quotas to increase women's representation in parliament, care has to be exercised to ensure that male parliamentarians do not become defensive. One possible remedy might be through electoral or institutional reform, such as increasing the number of seats in the legislature, so that those men already holding a seat would not feel threatened. The fight for greater representation for women is not a fight against men, but a struggle for gender equality.
- Some cautioned that women elected through quota systems may not end up gaining the respect that they deserve because they have not been elected in free and/or open seats. There is the risk of a double standard that works to the disadvantage of women elected via a quota mechanism.
- Where a country decides not to use quotas, there can be advantages in publicizing gender imbalances on candidates' lists submitted by political parties for election. It was reported that the parties with a serious gender imbalance tended to do badly in the elections once their unequal approach was made public.
- Even a simple measure such as a change in the working hours of parliamentarians, to enable women parliamentarians to combine work and family duties, would assist in the participation of women in political life and would also make men aware of the sacrifices that women are called upon to make in traditional scenarios.
- In Iceland, a new law on paternity leave had brought about surprisingly wide-ranging changes in the way that men and women regard each other.
- Even the countries that are in the vanguard of women's representation have room for improvement, and much can be learned through studying other countries, and examining what has worked there and what has not been successful.

### **Guest speakers**

**Mr. Jan Eliasson, President of the UN General Assembly**, said that he was very pleased to see so many familiar colleagues and so many active parliamentarians. It is absolutely crucial to reach better results in the area of women and political decision-making, and thus it is encouraging that the number of parliaments achieving the targeted 30 per cent level of women had grown fourfold in the past 10 years.

As the legendary Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme had said, what was referred to as the emancipation of women was, equally, the emancipation of men, through tapping the enormous resources and potential of women. One of the most important aspects was the need to educate girls, which would bring enormous multiplier effects.

Mr. Eliasson was pleased to see notable progress in several post-conflict countries, and in particular that Liberia had elected Africa's first woman Head of State - Ms. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf. Liberia had become stable enough to

hold elections thanks to the work of the United Nations peace-keepers. It was important to remember achievements like that at a time when the Organization was under attack.

Also important was spreading the word about what was being done in the area of United Nations reform. One important aspect of that has been the Peace-Building Commission. There were still issues to be resolved about its composition, but the political decision to create the Commission had been taken. The United Nations now had a process for dealing with post-conflict countries. It was important that UN missions stayed in a country to assist with reconciliation and reconstruction efforts. Of the conflicts that had ended over the past 20 years, fighting had resumed in 50 per cent of them. Good post-conflict work, known as peacebuilding, could in fact be preventive of future conflicts and the UN had a major role to play in that regard.

Another challenge was the Human Rights Council. Mr. Eliasson's proposal had received strong support from many countries, and reservations from some others. There was a need to preserve the human rights dimension in the United Nations. It should always be remembered that the first words of the United Nations Charter were "We the peoples...". The Organization existed to serve people: the victims, those in distress, conflict, disease or poverty. The human rights dimension represented that moral and ethical dimension, the soul of the United Nations.

With all of the endeavours ahead, he was grateful for the support of countries' representation in New York and their governments at home. Parliamentarians could be very helpful in fulfilling people's expectations of the United Nations. There was a need to keep a cool head, at a time of turmoil and mistrust, both global and national. With the distinction between international and domestic issues tending to disappear, it had to be realized that effective international cooperation was in the national interest, and in that cooperation, a decisive contribution could be made by the untapped potential of women.

**H. E. Carmen María Gallardo Hernández, Chairperson of the UN Commission on the Status of Women**, said that the meeting was an excellent opportunity to contribute to the thinking on the egalitarian participation of women and men in the decision-making process at all levels. It was clear that there was still a long way to go before efforts could be relaxed in this area, and it was thus essential to continue empowering women's leadership.

The debates taking place within the context of the 50th session of the Commission on the Status of Women had repeatedly stressed the importance of cooperative work between men and women as strategic allies for change. Parliamentary fora, both national and international, where laws were directed towards promoting the gender perspective, and equality between men and women, could be instituted and supported. It is also necessary to strengthen the dialogue between civil society organizations, in particular women's groups, and national parliaments, the IPU and the UN system.

Within the context of the process of UN reform, the Heads of State and Government have stressed the importance of strengthening the active participation of parliamentarians in the various topics of the UN agenda. Promotion of the gender perspective and the advancement of women are topics of common interest that can make an effective difference in people's collective wellbeing. Thus there needs to be reflection on the institutional changes required to adapt working methods to the ever more pressing challenges of the participation of women in the decision-making processes at all levels.

## **Session two**

### **Making a Difference: The Role of Parliamentary Mechanisms**

*This session sought to identify which parliamentary mechanisms can facilitate a different approach to decision-making in parliament in order to enhance a gender equality perspective. It focused on how parliaments are becoming more gender-sensitive, including by developing institutional structures to support change such as specialized bodies and committees on gender equality, women's caucuses and working with civil society and political parties.*

Senator Mónica Xavier, Uruguay; Ms. Khofifah Indar Parawansa, MP, Indonesia, and Ms. Britt Bohlin Ohlsson, MP, Sweden, exchanged views with the parliamentarians.

#### ***Parliamentary committees for gender equality***

One very effective mechanism for increasing women's political participation is the parliamentary committee for gender equality. In Uruguay, for example, such a committee has arisen out of the joint work that women politicians undertook following the re-establishment of democracy, regardless of party affiliation of the members. That has resulted in the establishment of a network of politicians who take a common position on matters of concern to them as women, while retaining their individual positions in all other areas of their political activity. Out of this background of trust, gender solidarity, and determination to mainstream a gender perspective in all areas of political activity has grown a parliamentary committee whose task is to analyse and monitor the movement towards gender equality in the country.

Of fundamental importance was defining a strategy and the thematic areas to be implemented during the legislative period. In tandem, the women legislators from both chambers, and from all political orientations, resolved to concentrate as a first step on the areas of domestic violence, sexual harassment and child abuse. Following passage of the Domestic Violence Act in 2002, they set up an observatory to monitor its implementation. It was their view that approval of laws was not the end of the job: legislators, both male and female, still had to take responsibility for seeing that laws were correctly applied and that the intention of those framing the legislation was respected. Consequently, they have promoted training workshops for legislators, the judiciary and members of various areas of the executive, so as to instill a shared vision of topics as complex as those of domestic violence, sexual harassment and child abuse. It was certain that much work was still needed, but they had succeeded in modifying certain provisions of the Penal Code regarding child abuse. Currently, the legislators are working on a law covering the creation of a national register of parents in default of child support.

Another area of work that the women legislators have taken on is that of education, culture and the media. They have succeeded in having sex-education introduced into schools from a very early stage and have ensured that the curriculum now incorporates a gender perspective. They are also working with the media to reduce or eliminate advertising that makes use of sexual stereotypes. In the labour market, they are working to remove some of the situations of really striking discrimination in the content and remuneration of women's work. They have also paid particular attention to the serious issues of poverty in female-headed households. In the most recent legislative session, they have worked to bring sexual and reproductive rights and health into the political agenda, and although they have not been successful with the draft law that has been submitted, at least a start had been made on discussion of the topic.

Naturally, achieving success in all of these areas requires wide-ranging support. The gender equality committee maintains an ongoing dialogue with women who have attained positions of importance in local government, thus building up their networks of women politicians that could sustain the promotion of equality of rights and opportunities.

In the preceding legislative session there has been discussion of the level of women's political participation, and in the current session a draft law on quotas will be submitted. A voluntary approach has been tried, but without success: it appears that the political parties are not prepared to voluntarily increase the proportion of women

candidates on their lists if that means that some men would lose their seats. Consequently, it seems that the quota approach is the only way forward, with the electoral authorities taking on responsibility for monitoring implementation, in order to guarantee to women the seats that the law assigned them.

One essential aspect of the strategy of any parliamentary commission dealing with gender equality is taking an inter-institutional and multidisciplinary approach. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs has assumed the responsibility of monitoring Uruguay's progress regarding commitments made under international conventions and treaties, calling on the expertise of civil society, international cooperation bodies, women parliamentarians and women from the executive branch. It is noteworthy that the composition of the gender equality committee has evolved from six women and one man to six women and three men. Since membership is voluntary, it seems that the efforts of the committee to bring about gender equality are attracting growing support from men.

### ***Women's parliamentary caucuses and civil society contributions***

Women's caucuses could be another effective way of increasing women's influence in parliament. In Indonesia, for example, the Women Parliamentarians' Caucus played an important role in bringing about reforms in the electoral law under which, since 2004, all parties are urged to have 30 per cent women among their nominated candidates.

In the late 1990s, Indonesia started its reform process. As part of the reform process, three women parliamentarians created the Women Parliamentarians' Caucus, while the Ministry of Women's Empowerment supported the development of the Caucus of Women in Politics. Both caucuses focused on enhancing the position of women in politics as an important area of the decision-making process. In the year 2000, civil society organizations collaborated with women legislators to bring about an improvement in women's role and status by ensuring that gender equality considerations were incorporated wherever possible in the amendments being made to the constitution. When the law on political parties had been enacted in 2002 the women's groups had not been successful in enforcing a stipulation of 30 per cent representation for women, but they had then worked to influence the drafting of the election law in 2003. In that process, the Women Parliamentarians' Caucus had represented the legislative branch in urging the drafting commission to adjust the text so as to accommodate such a provision.

At the same time, the Ministry of Women's Empowerment from the executive branch had facilitated the initiative of many civil society organizations and the Caucus of Women in Politics to join forces and become pressure groups. Moreover, some women leaders had persuaded their party executive boards to support the requirement for each political party to list a minimum of 30 per cent women among their nominated candidates. To ensure that the whole process could be monitored, the meeting schedule of the drafting commission had been distributed to all interested groups. As a result, the spectator area on the second floor of the parliament building was generally filled by women activists or representatives of women's organizations. Becoming known as the 'Balcony Group,' they had exerted effective pressure on the parliamentarians, and as a result the stipulation of 30 per cent representation for women became law. That has been an important first step, but further strengthening is needed before the next election, in 2009.

### ***Gender sensitive parliaments***

Gender equality is not measured only in quantitative terms, but is a process that calls for continued and qualitative evaluation. Countries that have made a good showing in terms of women's presence in parliament have often had to struggle to achieve it. Sweden, for example, is arguably at the forefront when it comes to gender equality, with the second-best female representation in the world, but it had not always been such a rosy picture. The Swedish parliament had approved equal suffrage for women and men in 1919, but female representation had increased very slowly over the years: by 1950, women still held only about 10 per cent of parliamentary seats. It was not until the 1970s that the representation of women in parliament had started to

increase. In the 1980s their position was further strengthened, but a dramatic setback was seen in the 1991 elections as the female representation in parliament had dropped.

This situation had provoked women to take action. The women's organization within the political parties had called for more female representatives, and as a result most parties had adopted either quotas or recommendations on female representation in their party lists. In 1994, the Swedish Government had stated that a gender equality perspective should permeate all areas of Government policy, since when the level of female representation in parliament had been steady at around 45 per cent.

The factors that have led to this high level of women's participation include the existence of powerful and assertive women's organizations, both party-related and independent; the early development of a welfare state with extensive child care that created greater opportunities for women to take paid employment; and various economic incentives for women to enter the labour market.

But even now, with a relatively good showing, Sweden still has work to do. In November 2003, representatives of the Social Democratic Party had listed a series of proposals on improving gender equality in parliament. Sweden has indeed reached a high numerical level of female MPs, but that did not automatically result in real equality. Consequently, a working group was established within the Swedish parliament with the mission of looking at "gender equality beyond figures" and presenting proposals on how to improve the situation.

The proposals presented in the report covered a wide range of areas and were intended to help gender mainstreaming. For example, the suggestion that parliament should launch a specific gender equality programme for every term of office in order to monitor and increase activities in this field; or the call for organization of seminars for the parliamentary standing committees where working methods, cultural aspects, the role of the committee chairpersons and other issues could be discussed. Another issue was the need for more research regarding parliamentary work from a gender perspective, and to that end cooperation with universities was to be intensified. More attention was also to be paid to the family situation of MPs when drawing up schedules or travel plans.

Promoting gender equality is not an exclusive responsibility on women to conform to male values. It is about building new relationships based on equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men. If gender equality is to become a reality in all areas and at all levels of society, including parliament, both men and women must be willing to change and be actively involved.

### ***General discussion***

In the ensuing debate, many delegates reported on the mechanisms being adopted in their countries to enhance the participation of women in decision-making processes. These included action plans; the mainstreaming approach; ministries for women's affairs; gender focal points or desks within all government ministries; and specific bodies or committees for gender equality. In some cases the latter were concurrent committees, in which each member of the standing committee on women's rights and gender equality also belonged to another topical committee such as finance, education, and so on. An alternative approach was for the standing committee to have the right and duty of monitoring all the other committees, to ascertain that they had taken gender mainstreaming into account. Opinions were divided on the benefits of having a specific commission to take care of women's rights. Several delegations thought that while that approach might be needed in young democracies, they should strive towards the position exemplified by Sweden, where gender mainstreaming is the responsibility of each committee in its own sphere.

The conclusions from the debate included the following:

- Whatever the particular mechanism selected, of overriding importance is finding the political will to make a change.

- The most 'woman-friendly' electoral systems can still be defeated by deep-seated stereotypes about male and female roles. Women's advancement can also be hindered by gender stereotypes in mass media and advertising, which can throw doubt on the perception of women's suitability for leadership roles.
- One useful function of women's caucuses is to recommend women for important political positions as they become vacant, regardless of party affiliation. It is advantageous to have as many women strategically placed as possible, because women's concerns about certain issues – health, education, children's wellbeing, prevention of trafficking and prostitution – transcends political differences.
- In a number of countries, women's caucuses and civil society organizations are running 50-50 campaigns, seeking complete parity between men and women representatives. The caucus can also have a mentoring function.
- International organizations have an important role to play. The IPU's Gender Partnership Group has a programme of dialogue with various countries where the status of women in public life is in need of enhancement and support.
- In order to achieve their goals, women have to work from a basis in their country's traditions, and it is highly undesirable for countries with a completely foreign culture to attempt to impose their own specific vision of what democracy is.
- Parliamentarians' work in enhancing women's representation does not end when the relevant laws are passed: there is a need for an ongoing process of monitoring implementation and of ensuring that achievements to date are maintained.

The Parliamentary session finished with closing remarks from Senator Fraser who thanked all the participants for their thoughtful and interesting interventions. Senator Fraser provided an oral report on the conclusions of the meeting in the general debate of the CSW on 3 March 2006.

**"Women's Parliamentary Caucuses and  
Civil Society Contributions: A Case of Indonesia"**

**By: Khofifah Indar Parawansa\***

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,  
God Bless you all,

Before presenting my paper "Women's Parliamentary Caucuses and Civil Society Contributions", I would like to express my gratitude to Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) which conduct a parliamentary event in collaboration with the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) in the 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) with the theme "equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes at all levels".

In this parliamentary session, I will describe Indonesian experience in catching the attention of Women's Caucuses, which are a parliamentarians and a politicians, and Civil Society Organizations, whose collaboration were managed well in the legislation process of election law in the House of Representatives which then, became the law No.12, year 2003, on election. In this election law, all parties have prerequisite to list 30 percent women in their nominated candidate since the year 2004 election.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To describe the power structure among women and men in the Parliament, I would like to explain the features of Indonesian structure of Parliament. In Indonesia, there are three houses in the parliament which are: (1) the House of Representatives (DPR) or Constituent Assembly whose members are elected in the election from the list of political party's nominated candidates (2) the Regional Representatives' Council (DPD/like Senate) whose elected independently, and (3) the Consultative People's Assembly (MPR/like Congress)

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\* Khofifah Indar Parawansa is a member of Parliament who is also chief of the Nation Awakening Party Fraction in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR) of the Republic of Indonesia.

whose members are member of both, the House of Representatives and the Regional Representatives' Council.

The first chamber, House of Representatives (DPR), consists of 10 fractions, which eight of them representative of political parties, and two of them are representative of joint two or more political parties. In the House, thirteen MPs can develop a fraction. From the ten fraction there is only one female that temporarily in charge as fraction leader, which is from the Nations Awakening Party (PKB); the other nine are male chair-persons. The House of Representatives itself chaired by a male speaker and three male vice-speakers.

Moreover, in the House of Representatives there are eleven commissions whose only one of them chaired by woman. She is from PDI-P (Indonesian Democratic Party for Struggle) and leads commission IX that deals with health and manpower and transmigration –previously it was commission VI that deals with Industry, Trade, State Enterprises, Cooperatives and SMEs chaired by woman from the Nations Awakening Party). In addition to Commissions there are also five institutions, including Ethic and Legislation, whose chairpersons are all men.

In the second chamber, the Regional Representatives' Council develop a group which chaired by a male chairperson and two male vice-chairpersons, no one is woman.

In the third chamber, the General People's Assembly it is chaired by a male chairperson, two male deputy-chairpersons and a female deputy-chairpersons. In this Assembly there are 678 members which formed ten fraction and one group whose one of the fractions is chaired by woman (from the Nations Awakening Party), the other nine fractions and the group are chaired by men.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the late 90s, Indonesia has started its reformation process as the New Order Government was forced by the university students, in addition to economic crises, to step down. Transition government led by BJ Habibie (1998 - 1999) who was pointed by the resigned president, Suharto, prepared for the election.



Following the reformation process, three women parliamentarians – Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Nursyahbani Kacasungkana and Marwah Daud Ibrahim— initiated to develop a Women Parliamentarians' Caucus, which was suggested to focus on the vulnerable groups, women and children. A few months later, one of them, Khofifah Indar Parawansa, pointed to be a Minister of Women Empowerment by President Abdurrahman Wahid (1999-2001), who replaced President Habibie.

Reformation has led legislative branch of the government, which previously tended to be passive relatively to the executive branch of the government, has started to exercise its leverage competing the executive which was relatively weakened. The Women Parliamentarians' Caucus established and decided to focus only on women. At the same time, the Ministry of Women Empowerment supported the development of Caucus of Women in Politics. Both Caucuses focus on enhancing women in political area, as important area of decision making process in public sphere. Their collaboration has been proved to be effective in providing the foundation for better women's role in political area later on.

In the year 2000, when legislators amended the Constitution, Civil Society Organizations collaborate with women legislators to have legal standing to improve women's role and status through addressing the terminology of 'women' to be put in the most possible articles in the amendment, especially human rights article. Such movement was a success.

In the political party's law of 2002 the women groups were not succeed in setting up the statement of thirty percent women representation in the Political Party Law. However, such movements had motivated various NGOs to pay attention on legislative action, and then, supported expansion of women's representation in politics by taking part in the election law process in 2003.

Since it is believed that political party is one of important instruments in decision-making in public sphere, the legislation process of election law had made many women organizations, women activists and interested parties paid attention to the draft and participated in directing the draft to open more access to women in politics through the requirement that each political party should list women nominated candidates minimum thirty percent, since the 2004 election.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In such patriarchy society like Indonesia, it is common to find that decision-making posts chaired by men, including the political party leaders. In urban area whose dwellers are heterogeneous, reside numbers of better-educated people, and gender issues have initially been well socialized, people may find some woman chaired the decision-making positions. Likewise in the national level political party structure that is always bigger, decision determined by group of elites including women. However, the closer to the grass-root, the organizational structure of any political party are relatively smaller and decision tends to be limitedly determined by some men.

Such condition is well understood by many women activists and leaders of women organizations, therefore legislation process of election law attracted many women organizations, women activists, many interested parties; they gathered, did approach and pressure the legislators working on the bill for the new election law.

In the legislation process of election law Women Parliamentarians' Caucus was the agent from the legislative branch to force the Commission to adjust the draft to accommodate such women's need. Although they were from different parties, they have common understanding in attempting to propose more women's role in decision-making through political parties. Moreover, they defended articles on enhancing women's role and status in politics to be still in the draft, especially the thirty percent portion of women from the nominated candidates from each political party.

At the same time, the Ministry of Women Empowerment from the executive branch facilitate initiative many Civil Society Organizations and Caucus of Women in Politics to join forces to become pressure groups outside the House of Representative. One of the Deputies of the Minister has been assigned to control the process and gave progress report regularly to the Minister. Moreover, some women leaders in political parties negotiate the executive board in their parties to support the article to require that each political party should list women nominated candidates minimum thirty percent.

Such initiatives came up from many civil society organizations, women activists and women leaders and Caucus of Women in Politics made the energy of such join forces so extraordinary that each of them direct themselves strengthen the women movement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In assuring that all the process watched by these groups, the meeting schedule of the Commission responsible for discussing the draft have been distributed to all interested parties, particularly women's organizations. As a response, the seat in the watching section in the second floor of the House building was used to be filled by women activist or representatives of women organizations.

These groups, which then called the 'Balcony Group" became an effective pressure to the parliamentarians on discussing articles related to women's interest. These pressure group has made the legislation process were more hospitable to women issues. Many articles were predicted to be ended in voting have been accepted. The Commission responsible for the law has been called "the Commission under pressure".

As a result, Article 65 point (1) of the election law (UU No.12 year 2003) was agreed by all parliamentarians. This new provision required each party to fulfill the requirement of thirty percent women in the nominated candidates for all level of government administration (national, provincial and district levels). Grace to the women movement that some of the women groups collaborate with female members of the national election commission (KPU); while other groups visited many political parties, especially the selection team, to ensure that their aspiration on the need to put thirty percent women candidates in the nomination was well understood and was expected to be fulfilled. As a result such 'maybe-quota' because this article was not imperative, however, followed by many parties. Such indication was proved to be true especially in the national level. It is an important first step, but still, it needs to be strengthened for the next election, the year 2009.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Last but not least, it is required strengthen women representation in the parliament. For this reason, some actions are suggested, which are:

1. Parliamentarians caucuses should increase their synergy –the Regional Representatives' Council has recently developed a caucus, in addition to the existence of the caucus of the House of Representatives.
2. It is required that civil society organization encourage the government, the Ministry of Women Empowerment, to influence the elite of political parties to more pro-women in decision making since they determine the person to fill all posts, including strategic posts, in the first and third houses.
3. Consolidation is required for women parliamentarians (of the first and second houses) to improve their capacity in articulating women's interests and to increase women representation in strategic position of decision making.
4. In the near future, the Ministry of Women Empowerment should collaborate with all women parliamentarians, women in politics and civil society organizations to develop plan of actions for the next year's program and a strategic planning for middle and long term period.

Finally, I thank you all. I wish the seminar will result useful outputs for all participants, at least, to give insight for better planning and actions to improve women's role and status appropriate with the condition of each country.

## Curriculum Vitae

Name: Khofifah Indar Parawansa

### Experiences :

- a. Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives (1999)
- b. MPs for four times (1992 – now)
- c. Minister of Women Empowerment & Chair of National Family Planning Board (1999-2001)
- d. Chair of Nations Awakening Party (PKB) Fraction in People's Consultative Assembly (2004- now)
- e. Chair of Commission VI accountable that deal with industry, trade, State Enterprises, Cooperatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (2004 – 2005)
- f. President of the Religious Women Organization with 12 millions members (2000-now)

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# 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 50<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

The Swedish Riksdag 2005/06:URF2

Gender equality?

A report based on interviews with Members of the Swedish Parliament in 2005

Submitted by Ms Britt Bohlin Ohlsson, Member of the Swedish Riksdagen

## Summary

This report is the result of in-depth interviews with a random selection of Members of the Swedish Parliament in 2005. The objective was to record the 30 members' points of view, thoughts and experiences in questions pertaining to gender equality in the Riksdag and on efforts to promote gender equality. This report and a seminar in November 2005 with the presiding members of the Committees make up part of the gender equality programme previously approved by the Riksdag Board.

In reply to the question which features and skills are important to gain power and influence, most said knowledge and competence, but political experience and social skills were also mentioned. Also the ability to adapt to one's party group politically, culturally and socially was given as a prominent factor. "Small-scale" contacts between party colleagues were thought to be more constructive and seemed therefore to be more appreciated. There was criticism of the fact that so much importance is attached to the number of years one has worked at the Riksdag.

In response to a direct question, many thought that men find it easier to reach positions of power and that there are both visible and invisible male structures supporting men, although this view was not spontaneously expressed. Conversely, the disadvantages for women were emphasised, such as being met with a lower level of tolerance, having greater demands placed on them both by others and themselves, having greater difficulty getting their ideas over and being noticed, finding that their age works against them to a greater extent and not having established networks to provide them with prestige and impact.

In one section a number of strategies are described that should enable women to adapt themselves to the conditions that are considered by many to prevail at the Riksdag. However, the building of networks as a method is often regarded with disapproval. In the interviews there were a number of thoughts on the difference between male and female leadership. The Riksdag was considered to be characterised by male leadership and a formalised system for the processing of business. There is a description of how formal and informal power structures can arise.

Most of those interviewed, both men and women, had difficulties combining their duties at the Riksdag with parenthood and family life. Many pointed out that support from their families is a necessity.

An attempt is made to obtain a picture of whether there is negative discrimination of women at the Riksdag. A large number of those interviewed were able to give examples of resistance to female leaders and people pursuing gender equality issues and of people being ignored or not taken seriously. We also heard of cases of sexual harassment and derogatory comments concerning women. Many looked for alternative explanations for what was understood to be special treatment on grounds of gender, such as cases in which the person in question has a limited political influence. There were also many who spoke in terms of invalidation techniques, and one quite common view was that these invalidation techniques are gender-neutral and are used by both men and women. It was pointed out that accusations of negative discrimination and invalidation techniques can be used for political purposes. When some well-known events were commented on, we found a tendency among both women and men to interpret the particular event in a way that was most positive for a fellow party member.

The committees have to a certain extent been the focus of attention when there have been discussions on the lack of gender equality in the Riksdag. The problems that were raised in the interviews were not primarily connected to the committees. We make an attempt to compare what emerged in the interviews with a former newspaper survey that stated that a majority of women members of parliament experienced problems in the Riksdag. Our conclusion is that the results do not necessarily contradict each other.

A Riksdag with gender equality should, according to most, be characterised by equal treatment, for example that everyone should be treated in the same way regardless of gender. Some immediately rejected the idea that gender equality could be achieved by merely having a certain percentage of women in the Riksdag.

In reply to the question whether gender equality has been achieved in the Riksdag, the most common response was that if it has not yet been achieved, it is well on the way, and that it is either as good as or better than in society at large. Those who were more critical were able to refer to the fact that the Riksdag is a part of a gender power hierarchy that prevails in society at large. The majority of those who did not consider that gender equality had been achieved in the Riksdag were women.

A great majority thought that the Riksdag should work actively to promote gender equality. However, knowledge of the Riksdag's gender equality programme and the Speaker's Network seemed limited.

There were few concrete suggestions as to what could be done to improve gender equality.

In a concluding section we put forward some thoughts on issues that may be worthy of discussion.

## **15 Proposals for a Riksdag with gender equality**

### **To the Secretary-General of the Riksdag**

The Working Party on Gender Equality in the Riksdag hereby submits its proposals to the Secretary-General of the Riksdag. With the submission of these proposals, we consider our assignment complete.

### **Summary**

In this report, we submit 15 proposals for a Riksdag with gender equality. The background to the assignment is a communication submitted by the Social Democrats in the Riksdag to the Riksdag Board in November 2003.

In the introduction to the report, we describe the background to the assignment and report on the contents of the Social Democrats' communication. We give a report on how the gender equality issues in the Riksdag have attracted attention in different ways during the course of our assignment. Some statistical information is shown. There is a general view of the goals of Swedish gender equality policy, in particular, with regard to the intermediate goal of even division of power and influence. As we interpret our assignment not to be primarily about the quantitative aspects of equality in the Riksdag, we try to analyse the concepts of quantitative and qualitative equality and what they mean in

terms of even distribution of power and influence. In a later section, there is an argument of compulsion or voluntariness with regard to equality in the political sphere. We assume that the parties have a willingness to improve equality. We also discuss the political game and different political cultures. We establish that it is difficult, for a variety of reasons, to be more precise when formulating the problems that lie behind the communication. We then get on to the questionnaire for women members published by Svenska Dagbladet in the spring and the conclusions that can be drawn from it. With regard to goals and methods, we assume that it should still be possible in some respects to apply the Law on Equal Opportunity - which does not apply between members or between the Riksdag and its members - analogously to the political sphere. Methods and success factors of active equality work are identified. Important factors include methodicalness and so-called equality integration.

We set out some general starting points for our proposals. It is about increasing and deepening knowledge of the Riksdag from an equality perspective. One basic requirement is for the efforts to have broad support from the Riksdag parties.

The tangible proposals are grouped under seven subheadings.

**Method and responsibility.** (1) We propose that a programme of equality is drawn up for every mandate period with the aim of promoting equality in the Riksdag. (2) The Riksdag Board approves the programme for every mandate period. A civil servant is given the operative responsibility of implementing the programme.

**Visibility and increased knowledge.** (3) We propose that regular seminars are arranged for the committee bureaux to discuss working methods, the chairman's role, meeting culture, etc. (4) A panel with a representative selection of members is set up to conduct questionnaires etc. (5) A routine is introduced to conduct questionnaires for members who have left as well as a number of qualitative in-depth interviews. (6) We adopt the proposals that have been worked out within the framework of the Parliamentary Commission for a compilation of research into the Riksdag with a gender perspective and also those for a seminar. We believe that efforts of this kind should be incorporated as part of the programme of equality. Continuous contact should be established with the research world. (7) The Riksdag's homepage should be developed with regard to gender-segregated statistical information.

**Efforts for individual members.** (8) There should be a professional support function for members who feel they are subjected to negative treatment. (9) The introduction for new members is developed to include more informal knowledge of the Riksdag. (10) The committees are encouraged to include questions on issues, in their work programmes.

**Co-operation between party groups.** (11) The Riksdag offers the party group secretariats places in which to meet to exchange knowledge and experiences in the field.

**Investigations in the Riksdag.** (12) Investigations set up within the Riksdag should report on any consequences for equality. Even gender distribution should be the aim of the members of the investigation as well as the secretariat.

**Riksdag appointments and parenthood.** (13) The committees' work planning should take into consideration the feasibility for members to combine their Riksdag assignment with parenthood.

**Factual politics.** (14) International Women's Day is observed in different ways. (15) To give the members the chance to increase their knowledge, SCB's "På tal om kvinnor och män, Lathund om jämställdhet" is handed out when appropriate.