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News Release

Parliaments are getting (slightly) younger according to latest IPU data

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The global proportion of MPs aged under 30 has edged up to 2.6 per cent, according to the latest IPU report on [Youth Participation in National Parliaments](#). This represents an increase of 0.4 percentage points compared with two years ago. However, with 50 per cent of the world's population under 30, the report highlights a sizeable deficit in the political representation of young people worldwide.

Just over ten years ago, the IPU's Member Parliaments adopted the [2010 resolution on youth participation in the democratic process](#). The resolution led to the creation of the Forum of Young Parliamentarians, the premier global body for the world's youngest MPs. It also led the IPU to collect data and information on youth participation in parliaments. This latest report is the fourth in the series and is based on data from 2020.

IPU President Duarte Pacheco said: "To deliver for the people, democracy must represent all the people. We need more young women and men parliamentarians to make parliaments more effective, innovative and inclusive. Increasing the number of young MPs is a priority of the IPU and is at the forefront of my three-year mandate."

President of the Board of the IPU Forum of Young Parliamentarians, Melvin Bouva, said: "Although youth all over the world need to play a more fundamental role in the development of our nations, progress in their participation in parliament needs to be improved. It is essential to raise awareness among especially youth and politicians. This IPU report provides a wealth of strategies to lead to the much-needed change. I firmly hope that this report also contributes to the next steps we need to take for more inclusive and stronger parliaments for the development of our people and nations. We urge all parliamentarians, political leaders, and in particular young leaders all over, to step up political will and take transformative actions to get more young people into office."

Country rankings

The report ranks countries according to how many parliamentarians are under 30, under 40 and under 45. Countries with the youngest parliamentarians tend to have made concerted efforts to engage young people in politics (for example, Norway and Djibouti). They also tend to have low ages of eligibility to run for office (for example, Denmark and Sweden).

The IPU report also shows progress in other age categories. Some 30.2 per cent of the world's MPs are under the age of 45, up 2.1 percentage points from 28.1 per cent in 2018.

Around 25 per cent of the world's single and lower chambers of parliament have no MPs under age 30. However, this an improvement compared to 30 per cent in 2018.

The top ten youngest parliaments in the world (parliamentarians under 30 in single or lower chambers).

Rank	Country	%
1.	Norway	13.61
2.	Armenia	12.12
3.	San Marino	11.67
4.	Gambia	10.34
5.	Venezuela*	9.82
6.	Suriname	9.80
7.	Denmark	9.50
8.	Sweden	9.42
9.	Djibouti	9.23
10.	Chile	8.39

**Data from the 2015 Parliament.*

Upper chambers of parliament have made slower progress: 73 per cent have no MPs under age 30, down from 75 per cent in 2018; 16 per cent have no MPs under age 40.

More women parliamentarians in younger age groups

While male MPs outnumber their female counterparts in every age group, data shows the proportion of women is higher in younger age groups.

The older the members of parliament, the fewer women MPs in the chambers. For example, within the 21-30 age group, the male to female ratio among MPs is approximately 60:40. For the 31-40 age group, the ratio decreases to approximately 2:1.

Lowering the eligibility threshold leads to more young parliamentarians

The data shows that lower eligibility ages to run for office lead to a younger average age within the parliamentary chambers.

In 69 per cent of countries, the voting age is lower than the minimum legal age to hold parliamentary office. For lower chambers and unicameral parliaments, the average waiting time for an eligible voter to become eligible for office was 3.5 years. For upper chambers, the difference was 10.4 years on average.

Youth quotas work

Evidence gathered for the IPU report confirms that well-designed youth quotas help increase youth representation, similarly to what the IPU advocates for gender parity. Quotas can take different forms, including reserved seats, legislated quotas and party quotas for younger parliamentarians.

Only four countries, Rwanda, Morocco, Kenya and Uganda, have specially reserved seats for youth representatives. All countries that have adopted youth quotas have often done so after introducing gender quotas. That suggests that the many countries with quotas for women may be fertile ground for youth quotas.

The findings and good practice in the report will be featured at the annual [IPU Global Conference of Young Parliamentarians](#) on 28 April.

The IPU is the global organization of national parliaments. It was founded more than 130 years ago as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations. Today, the IPU comprises 179 national Member Parliaments and 13 regional parliamentary bodies. It promotes democracy and helps parliaments become stronger, younger, gender-balanced and more diverse. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world. Twice a year, the IPU convenes over 1,500 parliamentary delegates and partners in a world assembly, bringing a parliamentary dimension to global governance, including the work of the United Nations and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

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