



What will it take to reach gender parity in political participation in a post-COVID-19 world?

A parliamentary event organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women at the 65th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women in line with the priority theme *Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*

Tuesday 23 March 2021, virtual event

INFORMATION NOTE

During the 65th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), whose priority theme is *Women's full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls*, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women are organizing a parliamentary meeting entitled *What will it take to reach gender parity in political participation in a post-COVID-19 world?*

The Parliamentary Meeting will take place on Interprefy on **23 March 2021**. Given the online form of this year's CSW, the meeting will be held at two different times on the same day. Members of Parliament are only expected to attend one of the two sessions.

Meeting option 1: 23 March 2021 from 9.00 a.m. to 11.00 a.m. ET (or 2.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m. CET)

Meeting option 2: 23 March 2021 from 12.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. ET (or 5.00 p.m. to 7.00 p.m. CET)

Objectives

In keeping with its strategy of contributing to major international forums to introduce a parliamentary dimension into the proceedings of intergovernmental organizations, the IPU is organizing this one-day meeting with UN Women in order to provide a forum for debate between parliamentarians from all over the world, and to contribute to the deliberations of the 65th session of the CSW.

The impacts of crises are never gender neutral, and COVID-19 is no exception. Beyond the public health crisis, COVID-19 has become a full-fledged economic and social crisis. Rampant inequalities, including in the participation of women in political decision-making and leadership, have once again been revealed and further exacerbated. An effective response to and recovery from the pandemic and its social and economic consequences requires strong and sustained leadership, action and the participation of everyone affected. The international goal of achieving balanced power between women and men in decision-making is more crucial than ever and parliaments have a key role to play to scale up political will and transformative actions towards gender parity in political participation.

The Parliamentary Meeting will offer a platform to take stock of recent developments in women's participation in parliament, explore the impact of COVID-19 on women's access to parliament in 2020 and identify priority parliamentary actions to further progress towards gender parity in political participation.

Expected outcome

A brief message to the CSW will be issued, stressing areas for priority action, with particular emphasis on the role of parliaments. Key findings and recommendations of the Parliamentary Meeting will also inform and contribute to the deliberations and decisions of the 142nd Assembly of the IPU (May 2021), which will focus on overcoming the pandemic and ensuring post-COVID recovery.

Relevant documents

Background documents to be used throughout the meeting include:

- Written contributions of the panellists, when available;
- [Official documents of the 65th Session of the CSW](#), when available on the website.

Participants

The participants in the parliamentary event will include:

- Parliamentarians connected to the online platform for the 65th Session of the CSW as members of their respective delegations. A letter of invitation is being sent by the IPU Secretary General to all Member and non-Member Parliaments of the IPU.
- Representatives of governments, relevant organizations and funds of the UN system, and civil society will also attend the virtual event.

Agenda

Opening

- IPU and UN Women: Introductory remarks (5 minutes)

Session 1: Women's participation in parliament in 2021 and the impact of COVID-19

Moderated discussion (55 minutes)

This session will focus on the presentation of recent developments in women's participation in parliament. Good practices will be shared, including from parliaments that took legal measures to support women's equal political participation by, for example, adopting legislation that includes temporary special measures, including gender quotas with enforcement mechanisms; enhancing existing gender electoral quotas by introducing a parity provision; legislating financial incentives for political parties for complying with legislated quotas and funding women's campaigns or sanctions for their failure to do so.

Short presentations will be followed by a moderated debate among participants.

Session 2: Priority actions for gender parity in parliaments

Moderated discussion (50 minutes)

Participants will discuss priorities for parliamentary action for the next five years. During the discussion, MPs will have the opportunity to define transformative actions they can lead or promote to:

- Introduce or enhance legislated gender quotas with effective enforcement mechanisms;
- Enhance the participation of underrepresented groups of women, including young women, women with disabilities and women belonging to national minorities.

Wrap-up and the way forward (10 minutes)

- Wrap-up by the moderator

Languages

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the four languages customarily used at IPU Assemblies, namely English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

Registration for the meeting

Persons wishing to participate in this meeting are invited to register as soon as possible, and **by 21 March 2021 at the latest**, using [this link](#). Once this online form has been filled out, participants will receive a confirmation e-mail. If you require additional information regarding this virtual event, please contact Ms. Marie-Graziella Nguini at this email address: mgn@ipu.org (cc/ to postbox@ipu.org)

Side events

The IPU will also be co-hosting informal side events during the CSW session on:

- *Fifth anniversary of the #NotTheCost campaign to stop violence against women in politics* on **Tuesday 16 March 2021, from 3.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. CET** (10.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m. ET), hosted by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and other partners. Additional information to be provided in due course.
- *“We Have Your Back” - Breaking the cycle from online harassment to threats to violence against women and girl leaders* on **Wednesday 24 March 2021, from 3.30 p.m. to 5.00 p.m. CET** (10.30 a.m. to 12.00 a.m. ET), co-hosted with the League of Women Voters (LWV), UN Women, permanent missions in New York and several NGOs. This side event will have simultaneous interpretation in English, French, Spanish and Arabic. Registration available at [this link](#).