



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT

WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT-2020

IWD 2021 CAMPAIGN

This tool kit is designed for IPU Members, leadership, staff and partners. It contains the following:

1. Key messages
2. Ready-made social Media posts
3. Press Release

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact press@ipu.org

All the assets are or will be available on a dedicated [Trello Board](#) which we will update regularly with new material.

1. Key messages

Facts and figures

- For the first time in 2020, women made up more than a quarter of parliamentarians. The global average of women in parliament has reached 25.5%, representing a yearly increase of 0.6%.
- Although progress is steady, and the pandemic did not halt the upward trend, it is painstakingly slow. At the current rate, it will take another 50 years before achieving gender parity in parliament.
- As of 1 January 2020, only 3 parliaments have 50% or more women members (Rwanda, Cuba and the United Arab Emirates). 20 others have between 40 and 50%.

Women in Leadership

- Women held speaker positions in all regions of the world in 2020, with regional variations.
- Globally, 58 women held speaker roles in 2020, an increase of one from the previous year, representing a global average of 20.9%.
- The United States made history in 2020 with the first election of a woman as Vice President. Vice President Kamala Harris also constitutionally became President of the Senate. With Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House of Representatives, both chambers of the US Congress are now presided over by women.
- Women's role in transition and peace processes and constitutional reform is key to their political empowerment across the board.

Impact of Covid-19

- The COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on elections and campaigning in 2020. National parliamentary elections were postponed in nearly 20 countries, but proceeded in 57.
- The economic downturn caused by the pandemic exacerbated existing gendered socio-economic inequalities, and adversely affected women's ability to campaign for office and access campaign funding.
- As people were obliged to stay in their homes, online violence against women became even more widespread and was a particular threat for women's participation in public life in 2020
- In some regions of the world, women were disadvantaged in comparison to men with access to information on Covid-19 and protection methods from the virus.
- Flexible and remote workplace practices may allow more women and men to combine caretaking with political career aspirations. Technology-driven parliamentary practices such as virtual voting and sittings helped promote participation by members for whom travel is difficult, including those with disabilities or young children.
- Peer-to-peer learning and greater engagement with virtual networks of women parliamentarians internationally can contribute positively to the resilience and empowerment of women MPs through the pandemic and beyond.

Quotas

- Well-designed and ambitious gender quotas remain critical success factors for women to be better represented in parliament.
- Electoral gender quotas were applied in 25 of the 57 countries that had parliamentary renewals in 2020. On average, parliaments with quotas elected 11.8% more women to single and lower chambers and 7.4% more women to upper chambers.
- Electoral systems play a role in the adoption – but not the effectiveness – of quotas. Quotas were much less likely to be used in countries with majoritarian electoral systems in 2020. But when they were in place, quotas in majoritarian electoral systems performed as well as quotas in proportional or mixed electoral systems
- New or revised quota policies helped protect some gains against instability. But the importance of adequate enforcement measures and sustained political will cannot be overstated. A lack of political will on the part of some political parties to respect quota laws and to non-enforcement of those laws by the electoral authorities resulted in stagnation and sometimes regression in certain countries.

Regional messages

1. Sub-Saharan Africa

- Women represented 25% of parliamentarians in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 (+0.6 from 2019), the world's third ranking region after the Americas and Europe. In sub-Saharan Africa, Mali and Niger made significant gains in women's representation, despite grave security challenges
- During parliamentary renewals in 2020, sub-Saharan African countries that had previously attained comparatively strong levels of women's representation (30% or higher) held the course. These included Burundi, Tanzania and Cameroon.
- States with low levels of women in parliament (less than 15%) had divergent outcomes. Representation remained very low in some countries, including Liberia, Madagascar and Ghana. Burkina Faso experienced further backsliding.
- Several elections were postponed to 2021 in some countries, including Chad, Ethiopia, Gabon and Somalia, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

2. Americas

- The Americas outpaced other regions with 32.4% women in parliament. This was despite political upheaval experienced across Latin America, in particular Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. In the United States, 2020 marked the highest levels in history of women's representation in its national legislature, at 26.9% of the combined chambers.
- The pandemic took a uniquely large toll on Latin American economies, which will only lead to further inequality in what is already the world's most unequal region. Despite the impact of Covid-19, feminist social movements played a significant role in shaping the region's political landscape in multiple countries.
- The greatest improvements in women's parliamentary representation occurred in the Caribbean sub-region, with the best performers being Jamaica (+11.1 points) and Guyana (+5.2 points). The small parliaments of Saint Kitts and Nevis (15 members) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (23 members) also registered significant percentage gains (+11.7 points

and +5.1 points respectively). In upper houses, the most notable gains were achieved in Jamaica (+14.2 points), Belize (+13.2 points) and Trinidad and Tobago (+8.4 points).

3. Europe

- The most significant overall gains in the region were registered in Croatia (+10.6 points) and Ireland's upper house (+10 points). Three chambers experienced minor setbacks in the following countries: Romania, Montenegro and the Czech Republic.
- Four countries exceeded 30% women's parliamentary representation, Ireland (40% women in the upper house), Serbia (38.8%, unicameral), North Macedonia (35.8%, unicameral) and France (33.3%, upper house). With the exception of Ireland's indirectly elected upper house, these countries followed a similar trend from previous electoral cycles.
- Among European countries that held elections in 2020, only Azerbaijan, the Czech Republic and Romania failed to elect at least a 20% share of women to parliament.

4. Middle East and North Africa

- Women's representation in parliaments in the MENA region grew by 1.2%, reaching 17.8% in 2020. The proportion of women in parliament in the MENA region is the lowest globally.
- Wide divides exist among parliaments renewed in 2020, ranging from no seats won by women in Kuwait to a record high number in Egypt following the introduction of quotas. The lower house now has 26.2% of seats held by women, up from 14.9% previously.

5. Asia

- The average proportion of women in Asian parliaments rose slightly to 20.4% in 2020.
- Gains in Asia were driven by women's representation in upper houses in Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Of parliamentary renewals in 2020, only Nepal exceeded 30%, sustaining a strong decade-long record on women in parliament.

6. Pacific

- With the exception of New Zealand, women's representation in parliaments in the Pacific region remained consistently low or entirely absent in elections held in 2020.
- On average, women's representation accounted for only 6.4% of newly elected houses in the three Pacific Island Countries that held elections in 2020. Kiribati elected four women to its 45-member unicameral parliament. Palau elected one woman to each chamber of its parliament. Whereas Vanuatu failed to elect any women to its Parliament.
- New Zealand's new government made history with more women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ people and Maori MPs than at any time in the past.

2. Social Media

#ChoosetoChallenge #genderequality #IWD #IWD2021 #InternationalWomensDay

 <https://twitter.com/IPUparliament>

 <https://www.facebook.com/InterParliamentaryUnion/>

 https://www.instagram.com/ipu.parliament_official/

 <https://www.linkedin.com/company/inter-parliamentary-union/>

 <https://www.youtube.com/user/iparliamentaryunion>

Handles/Who's who

Name	Organisation & title	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram
Duarte Pacheco	President, IPU	@IPUPresident	@duarte.pacheco.3154	@duartepacheco9437
Martin Chungong	Secretary General, IPU	@MartinChungong		
UN Women		@UN_women	@unwomen	@unwomen
Women Political Leaders		@wpleadersorg		
UK Government Equalities Office		@geogovuk		
UK org for equal rep		@5050Parliament		
European Parliament Committee for Women's Rights		@ep_genderequal		
Center American Women & Politics		@cawp_ru		
Non-profit NGO She Should Run		@SheShouldRun		
Women in the World		@WomenintheWorld		
Int Centre for Research on Women		@ICRW		
News Hub for Women		@WomensAgenda		
Economic Empowerment-UN Women		@Empower_Women		
Women's Rights in Development		@AWID		
Advocate for gender equality		@WomenDeliver		
Media account-UN Women		@UNWomenWatch		
Women's Media Centre		@womensmediacntr		
Independent Women's Forum		@IWF		

Executive Committee

Name	Country	ExCom title	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram
David McGuinty	Canada	IPU Vice-President	@DavidMcGuinty		@davidmcguinty
Juan Pablo Letelier	Chile	Member	@jplchile	@jplchile	@TodosxLetelier
Raza Rabbani	Pakistan	Member	@SenatorRabbani		@SenatorMianRazaRabani
Cecilia Widegren	Sweden	Member	@WidegrenCecilia	@ceciliawidegren	@WidegrenCecilia
Adji Diarra Mergane Kanouté	Senegal	Member	@AdjiKanoute		@AdjiDiarraMerganeKanoute-HonorableDéputé
Esther Anyakun	Uganda	Member	@EstherAnyakun		@EstherAnyakun
Beatriz Argimón	Uruguay	Member	@beatrizargimon	@beatrizargimon	@ArgimonBeatriz
Susan Wakarura Kihika	Kenya	President of the Forum of Women MPs	@susankihika	@susankihika	@SenatorSusanKihika
Melvin Bouva	Surinam	President of the Forum of Young MPs	@MelvinWJB		@MelvinBouva

Influencers and Members of the Bureau of Women MPs

Name	Country	Twitter	Facebook	Instagram
Jacinda Ardern	Prime Minister, NZ	@jacindaardern		
Nancy Pelosi	Speaker of the House of Reps, USA	@SpeakerPelosi		
AOC	Democratic MP, USA	@RepAOC		
Kamala Harris	Vice President and Speaker of the Senate, USA	@VP @KamalaHarris		
Charity Kathambi Chepkwony	Kenyan MP	@honKathambi		
Fawzia	Afghanistan	@FawziaKoofi77		

Koofi				
Zobia Khurshid	Member of Islamabad youth parliament	@ZobiaKhurshid		
Jenny Alvarez	Chilean MP, Bureau of Women MPs	@jennyalvarezv @Prensa_Jenny		
Lesia Vasylenko	Ukrainian MP, Bureau of Women MPs	@lesiavasylenko		
Salma Atallahjan	Canadian MP, Bureau of Women MPs	@SenatorSalma	@SenatorSalma	@SenatorSalma
Gordana Comic	Serbian Deputy Speaker, Bureau of Women MPs	@GordanaComic		

Postcards

“While we note that a quarter of MPs in the world are women, we see how this still falls far short of representing half the world’s population.

Unleashing the full potential of women who make up that 50% should be our number one priority.”

Susan Kihika

President, IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians
Kenyan MP



“Achieving gender equality in parliaments is a shared responsibility of men and women, and especially of men and women MPs, who by definition, are elected to lead. Only by working together and taking strong action can we move forward and accelerate the pace of change.”

Duarte Pacheco
IPU President



“Progress is being made, but parliaments must be more open to women.

They should be gender-sensitive and transform their functioning and structures to facilitate work-life balance for women and men, have zero tolerance towards all forms of violence against women in politics, promote legal change for better inclusion of women and be key actors in women’s political empowerment.”

Martin Chungong
IPU Secretary General



Posts

The below posts are drafted for twitter but can be amended for Facebook/Instagram.

1. For the first time in 2020, women made up more than a quarter of [#parliamentarians](#).

The global average of women in parliament has reached 25.5%, representing a yearly increase of 0.6%.

ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020

[#IWD2021](#) [#ChoosetoChallenge](#)



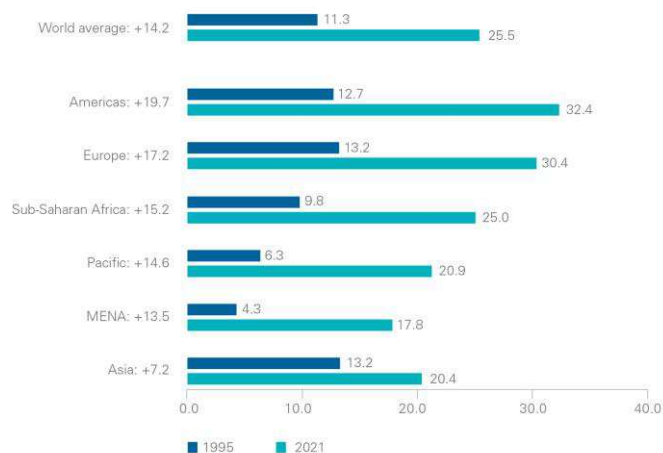
2. While [#Covid19](#) did not halt progress, it is painstakingly slow. At the current rate, it will take 50 yrs before achieving [#genderequality](#) in parliament. Only 3 parliaments have >50% women (Rwanda, Cuba and the UAE).

ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020

[#IWD2021](#) [#ChoosetoChallenge](#)

Figure 1

World and regional averages of women in parliaments, 1995 and 2021



Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) data for all houses combined, figures correct as of 1 July 1995 and 1 January 2021 respectively.

3. Women held speaker positions all over the world in 2020, with regional variations.

Globally, 58 women are speakers, an increase of 1 from 2019, representing a global average of 20.9%.

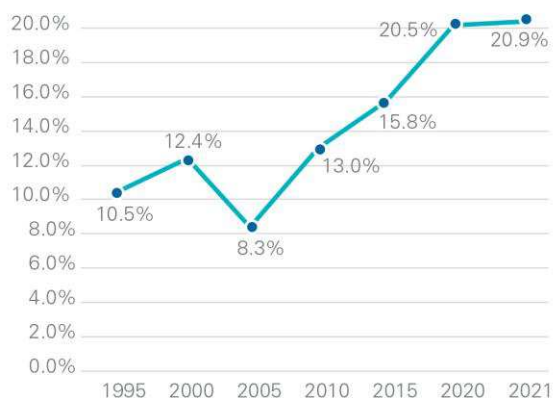
There is much more to be done!

→ [ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020](https://www.ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020)

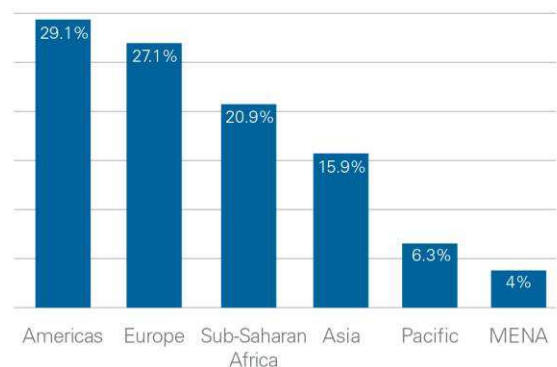
#IWD2021 #ChoosetoChallenge

Figures 6 & 7

Women Speakers of Parliament, all chambers combined
Progress of women Speakers 1995–2021



Proportion of women Speakers per region, 1 January 2021



4. Elections were postponed in nearly 20 countries due to #Covid19 in 2020.

The economic downturn caused by the pandemic exacerbated existing gendered socio-economic inequalities, and affected women's ability to campaign.

→ [ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020](https://www.ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020)

#IWD2021 #ChoosetoChallenge



5. Obligations to stay at home due to [#covid19](#) lockdowns meant online violence and harassment proliferated against women even more, and was a particular threat to women's participation and [#genderequality](#) in public life in 2020.

→ [ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020](https://www.ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020)
[#IWD2021](#) [#ChoosetoChallenge](#)



6. Flexible workplace practices may allow more women & men to combine [#caretaking](#) with political careers. Virtual voting & sittings promoted participation by [#MPs](#) for whom travel is difficult, including those with disabilities or children.

→ [ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020](https://www.ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020) [#IWD2021](#)



7. Greater engagement with virtual international networks of women [#parliamentarians](#) can increase resilience & empowerment of women [#MPs](#).

In some regions, women found it more difficult to access info on [#Covid19](#) and protection methods from the virus.

ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020 [#IWD2021](#)



8. Women's role in transitions of power, peace processes and constitutional reform is key to their political empowerment across the board.

When women step up and [#choosetochallenge](#), their participation makes a difference to how government works.

→ ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020 [#IWD2021](#)



9. Gender **#quotas** remain critical success factors for women to be better represented in **#parliament**.

Electoral systems play a role in the adoption – but not the effectiveness – of quotas.

→ [ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020](https://www.ipu.org/news/women-in-parliament-2020)

#IWD2021 #ChoosetoChallenge



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For Democracy, For All Peoples

Women in Parliament 2020

Of the **57** countries that held elections in 2020,

25 implemented legislated quotas

Parliaments with quotas elected **>10%** women than parliaments without

3. Press Release

Proportion of women MPs inches up but gender parity still far off

EMBARGO Geneva, 5 March 2021.

Following elections in 2020, the global proportion of women in parliament reached a record 25.5 per cent, representing an increase of 0.6 points compared with 2019, according to the IPU's latest Women in Parliament report.

The IPU has tracked women's participation in parliament for decades, allowing it to measure progress and setbacks. Every year, the IPU publishes a report to coincide with International Women's Day on 8 March. Although progress has been steady over the past few years, it is still excruciatingly slow. At the current rate, it will take another 50 years before gender parity is achieved in parliaments worldwide. As at 1 January 2021, women accounted for 50 per cent or more of members in just three parliaments (Rwanda, Cuba and the United Arab Emirates).

The President of the IPU Forum of Women Parliamentarians and Kenyan MP, Susan Kihika, said "While we note that a quarter of MPs in the world are women, we see how this still falls far short of representing half the world's population. Unleashing the full potential of women who make up that 50 per cent should be our number one priority."

The IPU President, Duarte Pacheco, said: "Achieving gender equality in parliaments is a shared responsibility of men and women, and especially of men and women MPs, who by definition, are elected to lead. Only by working together and taking strong action can we move forward and accelerate the pace of change."

The IPU Secretary General, Martin Chungong, said: "Progress is being made, but parliaments must be more open to women. They should be gender-sensitive and transform their functioning and structures to facilitate work-life balance for women and men, have zero tolerance towards all forms of violence against women in politics, promote legal change for better inclusion of women and be key actors in women's political empowerment."

COVID-19 and women's political representation

The IPU Women in Parliament report shows that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on elections and campaigning in 2020. National parliamentary elections were postponed in nearly 20 countries, mainly due to COVID-19, but went ahead in 57 countries overall in 2020. The economic downturn caused by the pandemic exacerbated existing gendered socio-economic inequalities, and adversely affected women's ability to campaign for office and access campaign funding. Online violence against women has become even more widespread, and has been a particular threat to women's participation in public life.

However, the shift to remote, technology-driven parliamentary practices may have a potentially positive long-term impact for women in parliament. Virtual voting and sittings have helped promote participation by members for whom travel is difficult, including those with disabilities or with young children. Flexible and remote workplace practices may allow more women and men to combine caring responsibilities with political career aspirations.

Likewise, peer-to-peer learning and greater engagement with virtual networks of women parliamentarians internationally can contribute positively to the resilience and empowerment of women MPs through the pandemic and beyond.

Women in the top leadership of Parliament

Globally, 58 women held speaker positions in 2020, an increase of one from the previous year, representing a global average of 20.9 per cent. Women held speaker positions in all regions of the world in 2020, with regional variations.

The United States made history in 2020 with the election for the first time of a woman as Vice President. Vice President Kamala Harris also constitutionally becomes President of the Senate. With Nancy Pelosi as Speaker of the House of Representatives, both chambers of the US Congress are now presided over by women.

Well-designed quotas are the key to progress

Electoral gender quotas were applied in 25 of the 57 countries that had parliamentary renewals in 2020. On average, parliaments with quotas elected 11.8 per cent more women to single and lower chambers and 7.4 per cent more women to upper chambers.

Generally, well-designed and adequately enforced quotas acted as a shield against backsliding in 2020.

Progress in all regions of the world in 2020

Once again, the Americas outpaced other regions with women making up 32.4 per cent of MPs. This was despite political upheaval experienced across Latin America, in particular in Chile, Colombia and Ecuador. In the United States, 2020 marked the highest levels in history of women's representation in its national legislature, at 26.9 per cent of the two chambers combined.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Mali and Niger made significant gains in women's representation, despite grave security challenges. New or revised quota policies helped protect these gains against instability. These countries are testament to the fact that women's role in transition processes is key to their political empowerment.

In Europe, of 14 parliamentary renewals in 2020, four countries – Ireland, Serbia, North Macedonia and France – witnessed women's representation exceed 30 per cent in at least one chamber. Three countries – Azerbaijan, Czech Republic and Romania – failed to reach the 20 per cent mark.

Within the Middle East and North Africa region, Egypt reached historic highs for women in parliament thanks to a new quota law for the House of Representatives. However, taken as a whole, the proportion of women in parliament in the region is the lowest among all regions at 17.8 per cent, all chambers combined.

Gains in Asia were driven by women's representation in the upper houses of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Of parliamentary renewals in 2020, only Nepal exceeded 30 per cent women, sustaining a strong track record on women in parliament over the past decade.

With the exception of New Zealand, women's representation in parliaments in the Pacific remained consistently low or entirely absent in elections held in 2020. New Zealand's new parliament made history with more women, people of colour, LGBTQ+ and Maori MPs than at any time in the past.

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.

For more information about the IPU, contact Thomas Fitzsimons at email: press@ipu.org or tf@ipu.org or tel: +41(0) 79 854 31 53