



**INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**  
**OFFICE OF THE PERMANENT OBSERVER TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

Third Committee

Agenda item 63:  
Advancement of Women

Statement by Ambassador Anda Filip  
Permanent Observer

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Mr. Chairman,

The advancement of women in all areas of society is a principle on which there is international consensus. This is also one of the main areas of activity for the Inter-Parliamentary Union, as we believe that it is by working collectively through, and with parliaments and their members, that gender inequality and discrimination in society at large can be addressed.

Previously in IPU statements before this Committee, we have presented work and progress in shaping an enabling legislative environment for the advancement of women. This year, we would like to refer to the main theme of the upcoming session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, namely financing for gender equality. This is a challenging topic, one on which there is much to say. We at the IPU look forward to the debates and are keen to highlight the central role that Parliament should play in ensuring adequate financial support to policies and programmes aimed at promoting women's empowerment.

Our approach focuses first on the need to enhance national processes and to ensure that they are gender-sensitive. For more than seven years now, the IPU has placed particular emphasis on enhancing parliament's role in the budgetary process and ensuring that the latter responds to the needs of both men and women.

The budget is an important tool to hold the government to account and to meet the needs of the people. It is a process which involves not only the budget's development and adoption, but also its implementation and audit. Above everything else, the budget is not just about figures: it is primarily about people and their needs. From this perspective, Parliament needs to make sure that the budget is drawn up in such a way that it maximises the contribution that men and women, boys and girls, can make to the economy and that benefits are equitably distributed.

Last month the IPU organized its seventh regional seminar on Parliament, Budget and Gender. The seminar brought together members of parliament from Europe to focus on the role of parliaments in developing gender-responsive budgets. Participants unanimously agreed that gender-budgeting was a powerful tool for change and for the advancement of women. We are convinced that this approach will lead the way to greater financial support in favour of women's advancement.

But this of course is not enough. There is much more to do. In their discussions, participants highlighted the need to consider the overall environment in which budgets and financial allocations were decided upon. That entails, for example, ensuring that parliamentary working groups and committees are gender balanced, that

economic statistics and other data are gender disaggregated, and that women are adequately represented within the civil service and especially the economic and finance departments.

If we look at parliament, there is still room for improvement. Last year, when the IPU reported to the General Assembly, the world average of women in parliament was 16%. This year, I am glad to report that we have moved up by more than one percentage point to reach 17.4%. An all time high. But it is still not enough and we cannot expect political processes to be gender-sensitive if there are not more women in decision-making positions.

I would like to end on that note and inform you that the IPU is pursuing its work in support of women in politics. In two weeks' time, we are organizing with the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates a regional conference for women parliamentarians and women in political decision-making positions of the Gulf Cooperation Council States. The conference is entitled "Women making a difference in Parliament". We look forward to a very interesting and constructive debate, in a region of the world that is undergoing great change.

We will also continue to convene, in cooperation with the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) a parliamentary day on the occasion of the 52<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). This will be another opportunity to discuss further the role of parliament in developing gender-sensitive budgets and in financing women's advancement and gender equality.

We look forward to pursuing our partnership with the United Nations and other agencies in support of the empowerment of women.

Thank you for your attention.