



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

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## IPU Statement

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Mr. Chair,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We know that women are paying a heavy toll to COVID-19, both as frontline workers, and as those most adversely affected socially and economically.

We also know that women in power is good for governance, sustainable development, climate justice and peace.

So if we want to build back better – and we do –, we need women's voices and leadership more than ever.

It's not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union has been monitoring progress and drawing lessons from across the globe for decades.

And we have some good news and some bad news.

The good news is that today, more than ever before, our parliaments and governments have women in the driving seat. 59 Speakers of Parliament are women. In 22 countries there are women as elected heads of state or government. We also see record-highs of women MPs and women ministers: they are 25.5% and 21.9% respectively.

Now the bad news: progress has been too slow. At this pace it would take another half century to reach gender parity in parliaments and in governments.

So how do we accelerate progress?

First, we know today that gender parity is possible where there is political will. In every region there are parliaments and governments with at least 40% women. Most of these countries have put in place strong, well-designed laws mandating gender quotas. Since the 1990s, these quotas have become ever more ambitious, leaning towards gender parity. By accelerating progress in representation, they also challenge the belief that politics is not a place for women.

We find gender quotas in all regions and in all types of electoral system. And they work: in 2020, in countries where gender quotas were applied, women won 27.4% of seats in lower or single houses of parliament; while countries with no quotas only elected 15.6% women MPs.

Second, for progress to be achieved and for women to fully participate in decision-making, we need a gender-responsive political space, free from sexism, harassment and violence. Again, we need strong laws and policies of zero tolerance. And we need role models, starting with political leaders,

Third, gender parity in decision-making can only be achieved if we promote gender equality across the board. The task is immense. Discrimination in laws still affects 2.5 billion women and girls. With the current crisis, we could lose ground on hard won gains on women's rights and gender equality that also affect women's political participation.

Equal pay, equal property rights, affordable childcare, protection from gender-based violence... all of that requires

that we be vigilant and genuinely feminist when adopting our laws, policies and budgets.

The first step in this process is to ensure institutions are gender-responsive, namely that they have the legal mandate and the institutional capacity to mainstream gender equality. Most importantly, these institutions must work in close partnership with civil society, especially women's groups and feminist movements.

At the IPU we are committed to promoting gender parity and gender-sensitive parliaments by mobilizing our Members towards this feminist agenda. We are also glad to be engaging in this battle as part of Generation Equality's Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, so we can reach gender parity by 2030. This will be a game changer for the women and girls of today and tomorrow.

Thank you.