



Inter-Parliamentary Union

For democracy. For everyone.

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## IPU Statement

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Launch of the *Strategy on Equality  
in Law for Women and Girls by  
2030:  
A Multi-stakeholder Strategy for  
Accelerated Action*

New York, 20 March 2019

Mr. Secretary General,  
Madam Executive Director,  
Your Excellences,

The Inter-Parliamentary Union is glad to join forces - and in such good company – to launch this multi-stakeholder Strategy on Equality in Law for Women and Girls by 2030.

The IPU has placed gender equality high among its objectives. We consider gender equality is a precondition for strong, genuine democracy. It is a pillar of peaceful and prosperous societies grounded in the rule of law – in a nutshell, societies that can meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

Yet, we are still far behind in achieving these objectives. In every corner of the globe, and while most national Constitutions uphold gender equality, national laws still condone gender inequalities. In more than 50 countries, women do not have an equal right as men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. One in three countries still restrict women's ability to move, work or simply open a bank account.

This can no longer be so.

The challenge is immense. But we have no more time to wait. That is why we need a robust strategy that addresses structural inequalities that are entrenched in national laws and customs across the globe.

We need to reaffirm the urgency to ensure equal rights for women and men in laws governing family and marriage relations, nationality rights, personal status and economic life, and to develop robust laws to combat violence against women and girls.

**This is where parliaments and members of parliament have a key role to play.**

Gender equality requires strong, comprehensive legislation and public policies.

At the IPU we have been facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues nationally, based on the CEDAW Convention. This has helped parliamentarians map out discriminatory legislation and engage in a dialogue with government and civil society on how to improve their laws and make sure they are free from discrimination.

Putting these laws into practice remains a challenge. We know that the role of MPs is crucial in scrutinizing budgets to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated to the effective implementation of legislation.

But for parliaments to actively play their part, they need to be more inclusive and representative; they need to embody and advance gender equality. We know that more women in parliament bring about more gender responsive laws. And yet, only one in four MPs worldwide is a woman. We will continue to strive to change this picture.

We also know that levelling the numbers won't be enough. Repealing discriminatory laws cannot be the sole responsibility of women MPs. Male MPs are crucial towards garnering support to legal reforms, changing mentalities and creating the transformation that societies need.

We also need proper parliamentary processes to be in place. At the IPU we have developed a toolkit for parliamentarians to assess the gender-sensitivity of their institutions. The toolkit challenges parliaments to take a fresh look at their working culture, methods, processes and structures. It allows them to develop their own roadmap to achieve better outcomes for society.

Ladies and gentlemen,

At the IPU we are convinced that, if each of us plays our part, our 2030 goals can be achieved. We look forward to working with all of you in this endeavour.

Thank you.