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مجلس الإمارات للتوازن بين الجنسين
UAE GENDER BALANCE COUNCIL



The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), in collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) / CEDAW Committee, Generation Equality's Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership, GQUAL, the International Gender Champions (IGC), the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council, Canada and the Permanent Missions of Ireland, Mexico and Switzerland are pleased to invite you to a side event at the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW):

Equal participation and leadership for a more peaceful world: Lessons learned and the way forward

13 March 2024, 11:30 – 12:45

Conference Room 6, General Assembly Building, United Nations Headquarters

For over two decades, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has stressed the importance of women's leadership and their empowerment to achieve and sustain peace. Gender equality in decision-making is also a human rights imperative, a democratic imperative and a key element of sustainable development.

Gender parity at all levels and across sectors has now become a common target – from national parliaments¹ and governments² to the CEDAW Committee³ and Generation Equality's Action Coalition on Feminist Movements and Leadership.⁴ Beyond numbers, gender parity in decision-making also implies equal voice and power so that decisions made by deliberative bodies and processes are fully inclusive and therefore legitimate, effective and responsive to the needs of everyone. Likewise, peace processes are most genuine and likely to lead to sustainable peace if women are meaningfully involved.

We know by now that gender parity is not only a distant dream – it has been achieved and sustained in certain countries, local governments and international bodies. At a time of distrust in

¹ IPU resolution, [The freedom of women to participate in political processes fully, safely and without interference: Building partnerships between men and women to achieve this objective](#) (2016), p. 3.

² See CSW 65 agreed conclusions, [UN Doc. E/CN.6/2021/L.3](#), p. 14.

³ See statement by the IPU and the CEDAW Committee (2021), available at www.ipu.org/iwd-2021-statement. The CEDAW Committee's upcoming General recommendation 40 will outline more explicitly the obligations of States in this regard. See: www.ohchr.org/en/documents/general-comments-and-recommendations/draft-general-recommendation-no-40-equal-and.

⁴ See: https://forum.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2021-03/FML_FINAL_VISUAL_EN.pdf.

national and international governance bodies, and of great political instability and rampant conflicts, it should be an objective pursued by all. Yet, only a handful of bodies have achieved it.

At the level of national parliaments, as at 1 January 2024, only six countries had 50% or more women in their lower or single chambers: Rwanda, Cuba, Nicaragua, Andorra, Mexico and the United Arab Emirates.⁵ However, globally only 26.9% of MPs are women and only 1.4% of parliamentary seats are held by women under 30.⁶ Women are acutely underrepresented in leadership positions in national parliaments: they make up 24% of Speakers of parliament and less than one in five chairs of parliamentary committees focusing on defence, finance, foreign affairs and human rights.

In the executive branch, as of 25 January 2024, in only 27 countries women serve as Heads of State and/or Government.⁷ Women make up only 22.8% of cabinet ministers heading ministries, leading a policy area as at 1 January 2023.⁸

At the local level, UN Women data, as at 1 January 2023, show that 35.5% of elected seats in local deliberative bodies around the world are held by women.⁹ Women's representation at local level varies from one country to another, from 1% to 67%, with only three countries reaching gender parity (50%) or more among locally elected officials.

Data on multilateral and peace processes also show a mixed picture. Currently only one in four Permanent Representatives at the UN General Assembly are women. Women also continue to have limited opportunities to influence negotiations for peace. In 2022, out of 18 peace agreements reached, only one was signed or witnessed by a representative of a women's group or organization. And while women participated as negotiators or delegates in four of the five active peace processes led or co-led by the United Nations, their level of representation stood only at 16%, marking a further drop compared with 19% in 2021 and 23% in 2020.¹⁰

We cannot change what we cannot see. Data on participation in decision-making are the starting point for change. Also, progress relies on the ability to work across sectors, and to create a space for truly inclusive and transformative leadership. This event will therefore bring together experts, gender equality advocates, and decision-makers at different levels who will share information on the current state of women's representation at local, national and international levels, including in peace processes, as well as lessons learned and how to work across sectors to achieve gender parity in decision-making and peace processes.

Participants will be invited to reflect and share experiences on the following:

- *What good practices exist when it comes to constitutional and electoral law reform, legislating on incentives for political parties/governments and international norms change, with the aim of achieving **gender parity in local, national and international bodies**?*
- *How to create **an environment that is conducive** to gender parity in decision-making and women's participation in all their diversity? How to break down stereotypes and open up the space for women in a male-dominated political environment?*

⁵ See: IPU Parline, [Monthly ranking of women in national parliaments, situation at 1 January 2024](#).

⁶ IPU (2023), [Youth in Parliament infographic](#).

⁷ UN Women data based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Countries with monarchy-based systems are excluded from the count of Heads of State.

⁸ Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women (2023). [Women in politics: 2023](#).

⁹ UN Women (2023), [Women in Local Government](#).

¹⁰ See [report of the UN Secretary General](#), 28 September 2023, S/2023/725, p. 3.

- *Beyond the numbers, how can institutions and decision-making processes **promote equal power and gender-responsive outcomes**? What is the key to women's full and equal participation, leadership and influence at all levels, including in peace processes?*

Moderator: Ms. Nicole Ameline, Member of the CEDAW Committee

Opening remarks: Dr. Tulia Ackson, President of the IPU and Speaker of the Parliament of the United Republic of Tanzania

Presenters:

- Ms. Mariana Duarte, Programme Officer, Gender Partnership Programme, **IPU**
- Ms. Maria Noel Leoni – Deputy Executive Director at the Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) – **GQUAL** campaign
- Dr. Melissa Torres, Vice-President of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (**WILPF**)

Respondents:

- Ms. Silveria Jacobs, Prime Minister of Sint Maarten (the Kingdom of the Netherlands)
- Ms. Nilam Nematullah, civil society representative

Interventions to be followed by an interactive discussion

Interpretation will be available in Arabic, English, French and Spanish.

The side event will be webcast through UN Web TV and can be accessed at the following link: <https://webtv.un.org/en/asset/k1x/k1x8m9gsp9>