



Inter-Parliamentary Union
For democracy. For everyone.

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High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF) 2025

Input by the Inter-Parliamentary Union under Sustainable Development Goal 5

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(1) Assessment of the impacts of the multiple and interconnected crises on the implementation of SDG 5

Crises of all kinds – political, economic, climate or otherwise – tend to affect women disproportionately. Despite evidence showing that gender balanced leadership is more conducive to positive climate policies, economic development and more peaceful societies, women continue to be acutely underrepresented in decision-making positions. This poses a challenge to the achievement of the SDGs as a whole, and to addressing the gendered impacts of multilayered crises.

At 1 January 2025, only 27.2% of members of national parliaments across the globe were women. This was a mere increase of 0.3 percentage points in a year. Progress was on average of 0.5 points annually over the previous decade. Out of 72 parliamentary chamber renewals in 2024, only 33 saw progress in women's representation, while the share of women MPs stagnated in 20 of them and decreased in another 19. Progress is not only slowing down, but it even risks being reversed and has already been reversed in a number of countries.

(2) Three examples of measures to accelerate progress towards SDG 5

Adopt and enforce mandatory gender parity quotas for women in Parliament and in leadership positions within Parliaments. IPU data shows that gender quotas are a key determining factor in enhancing and consolidating women's political representation. In 2024 elections, chambers that applied quotas elected on average 31.2% and those without 16.8%. For quotas to be effective they must be ambitious, well-designed and strictly implemented. In 2024, substantial progress was achieved in countries that adopted new or enhanced quotas, namely in Ireland, Jordan, Mongolia and Uzbekistan.

Combat sexism, harassment and violence against women in Parliament. IPU surveys have indicated that over 80% of women MPs face some form of psychological violence during their term. Such violence constitutes a key barrier to women's political participation. Measures to ensure zero tolerance to violence against women in parliament and politics include adopting and enforcing specific legislation on online and offline violence against women in politics and internal policies in parliament to eliminate sexism, harassment and violence against women from the institution. In 2024, Tanzania adopted new legislation in this regard, following the path of a number of countries in Latin America in particular.

Enhance the gender sensitivity of parliaments. This includes promoting a culture of equality, instituting gender mainstreaming processes and gender equality policies, and establishing and resourcing dedicated bodies which are tasked with advancing gender equality.

(3) Follow-up actions and measures being undertaken by the IPU to support implementation of the 2023 Summit Political Declaration and the outcomes of the 2024 Summit of the Future

The IPU joined forces with the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and UN-Women with a view to the adoption of **General Recommendation 40 by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in October 2024**, which provides new momentum and concrete guidance towards achieving equal representation by women in decision-making. The IPU and its partners have been disseminating this new General Recommendation and will seek to promote its implementation by Parliaments across the globe.

At the 149th IPU Assembly in Geneva in October 2024, a **resolution on the impact of artificial intelligence on democracy, human rights and the rule of law** was adopted unanimously. Among its many provisions, the resolution notes that advances in AI have an impact on democracy and recognizes the risks it poses, especially for women and girls. Among its key provisions related to women's political participation, the resolution:

- Stresses that, in the absence of gender-balanced perspectives, AI technologies can create, perpetuate and amplify gender inequalities and gender-based discrimination and violence
- Notes that AI-generated deepfake material can negatively impact all women, and that for women in politics, these impacts often have the effect of silencing and excluding them from public and political life
- Urges parliaments to prioritize the prevention and elimination of, and response to, all forms of gender-based violence and discrimination generated or facilitated by AI, including better content moderation, accessible and effective reporting mechanisms and the establishment of procedures to remove illegal content
- Urges legislative action to prevent the creation and distribution of deepfake intimate images, recognizing that most of such content is pornographic in nature and disproportionately targets women and girls, as well as to prevent the distribution of other AI-generated content that propagates hate speech or incites violence, including gender-based violence.

In 2024, the IPU joined a new initiative called **Women and Youth Democratic Engagement (WYDE) Women's Leadership**. Supported by the European Union, the initiative is co-led by UN-Women, International IDEA and United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG). The initiative aims to advance women's political participation and decision-making through social norms change, networking and global advocacy.

Ahead of International Women's Day, in March 2025, the IPU released **new data on women in parliament**, which serves to raise awareness, draw lessons from progress and setbacks, and provide examples of measures that have helped achieve progress. The IPU data informs indicators under SDGs 5 and 16, and serves to drive renewed commitment by parliaments and other actors as part of the Beijing +30 review and key

parliamentary gatherings in 2025. These include the IPU-UN Women parliamentary meeting at the Commission on the Status of Women (11 March), the IPU Global Conference of Women Parliamentarians in Mexico (13-16 March), the 150th IPU Assembly in Uzbekistan (5-9 April), as well as the 15th IPU Summit of the Women Speakers of Parliament (28 July) and 6th IPU-UN World Conference of Speakers of Parliament (29-31 July) in Geneva.

The IPU also continues to **engage with parliaments with no or few women members**, and provide support on demand to its Member Parliaments.

(4) Recommendations and key messages to be considered for inclusion in the Ministerial Declaration of the 2025 HLPF

The 2025 HLPF should serve to commit to implementing new General Recommendation 40 by the CEDAW Committee, which is based on seven transformative pillars:

- Instituting 50/50 gender parity as a permanent norm for governance.
- Promoting a new cohort of young women leaders.
- Ensuring women in all their diversity access leadership roles.
- Applying parity to all decision-making spaces, levels and fields.
- Promoting equal power and influence through parity on the most senior roles.
- Eliminating gender stereotypes and care work inequalities. This includes combatting sexism and gender-based violence against women in the political arena and within institutions.
- Enhance women's organizations and women human rights defenders ability to organize and participate in decision-making.