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# **IPU strategies to advance gender equality in governance and delegations**



# Milestones for reform and lessons learned - overview

- Having a policy framework
- Building on an existing, strong women's movement
- Engaging leadership to build and sustain political will
- Establishing dedicated mechanisms
- Carrying out inclusive decision-making and implementation processes
- Setting targets
- Institutionalizing measures and sanctions to ensure effectiveness and sustainability
- Measuring impact
- Giving visibility
- Benefits of a forward-looking, incremental approach



# Policy framework

## IPU and gender

- The achievement of democracy presupposes a genuine partnership between men and women in the conduct of the affairs of society in which they work in equality and complementarity, drawing mutual enrichment from their differences.

*Universal Declaration on Democracy, 1997*

- Gender equality is a key component of better parliaments. The IPU pursues a strategy that focuses on monitoring and providing support for women's participation in politics, building the capacity of IPU Member Parliaments and assisting parliaments in their gender-related tasks.

*IPU Strategy 2012-2017,  
Better Parliaments, Stronger democracies*



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# Building on a strong women's movement

- A strong women's movement that began in 1978
- A Women's forum established in 1985
- A steering body (Bureau of Women Parliamentarians)
- Reformed and transformed internally and had ripple effects on parliaments



# Engaging leadership

- Awareness-raising
- Engaging in dialogue and consultations
- Lobbying
- Tricks: naming and shaming accompanied with constructive dialogue
- Multiplying strategies:
  - Integration of gender equality in the institution's key policy decisions (resolutions);
  - Engaging men;
  - Supporting and enhancing women's voice and visibility;
  - Identifying and supporting spokespersons (men and women);
  - Driving strong messaging from top leadership of the organization



# A dedicated mechanism: The Gender Partnership Group

- The Gender Partnership Group was established in 1997 to monitor partnership between men and women in the IPU.
- It consists of two men and two women members of the IPU Executive Committee. The Group reports twice a year to the IPU Governing Council.
- In October 2013, at the Group's initiative the Governing Council adopted the IPU Gender mainstreaming strategy. The strategy aims to :
  - (i) institutionalize gender equality in the organization,
  - (ii) promote equality in representation and participation, and build capacity, as well as
  - (iii) develop mechanisms for gender mainstreaming.



# Inclusive decision-making and implementation processes

- The Gender Partnership Group has led extensive and lengthy consultations (three years before the first measures were introduced through amendments to rules and statutes in 2003)
- Incremental and inclusive approach
- Setting clear targets
- Monitoring implementation and gathering data
- Giving visibility, including by «naming and shaming», calling for change and engaging in dialogue
- Crafting a sanction and incentive systems



# Targets, measures and sanctions

## *Gender-neutral targets :*

- **Governing body:** each parliament may send a 3-member delegation to the Council; the delegation must include at least a man and a woman. If strictly applied, the rule ensures that at least 30% of members be of each sex.
- **Sanction:** where this target is not respected, the delegation is reduced by one, thus reducing the delegation's voting rights by 1/3.
- **Assembly:** delegations from member parliaments must include men and women and are encouraged to be gender-balanced
- Parliaments are entitled to register up to 8 or 10 delegates depending on the country's population. Voting rights also vary depending on the population of the country. Starting with a minimum of 10 votes, delegations may cast additional votes, ranging from 1 to 13, depending on the size of their country's population.
- **Sanction:** where delegations attend IPU Assemblies without representatives of both sexes three times in a row, their voting rights are reduced by two and the officially registered number of delegates are reduced by one.





# Targets, measures and sanctions

## Rules governing membership of IPU Committees and working groups

Bodies	Measures	Required proportion
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	Yes	Minimum of one-third representation of either sex among the 15 elected members (33%)
BUREAUX OF STANDING COMMITTEES	Yes	Not more than two of the three candidates of the same sex (a minimum of 33%)
COMMITTEE ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF MPs	Yes	Gender balance in principle (50%) but a 40%-60% proportion required
COMMITTEE ON MIDDLE EAST QUESTIONS	Yes	No more than seven of the 12 members shall be of the same sex (41.7% minimum for the least represented sex)
IHL COMMITTEE	Yes	Each geopolitical group will be represented by one man and one woman (50%)
IPU ADVISORY GROUP ON HIV/AIDS AND MNCH	No	Gender balance is stated as an objective
BOARD OF IPU FORUM OF YOUNG PARLIAMENTARIANS	Yes	Each geopolitical group will be represented by one man and one woman (50%)



# Tracking progress, “naming-and-shaming” and engaging in dialogue

## Naming single-sex delegations

- A full list is made public during Assemblies, indicating the names of countries that have no women (or men) delegates and calling on delegates to take this up within their respective geopolitical groups.

## Dialoguing with parliaments with no or few women

- The Gender Partnership Group engages in dialogue with delegations from parliaments that have no or few women members.
- Adhesion of some parliaments to the IPU may also be subjected to a commitment that there will be efforts to improve women’s representation and attendance in IPU Assemblies.



# Measuring progress and impact

## Tracking attendance

- The IPU tracks the percentage of women delegates to the Assemblies. Since the introduction of specific measures, the numbers tend to be at around 30%, reaching at times nearly 33% (30.5% at the March 2018 Assembly, 32.9% at the October 2016 Assembly). For a detailed history see <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/dlgtns.htm>



# Incremental approach

- The minimum of 20% women in the IPU Executive Committee was the first gender quota introduced (2003).
- Ever since, more ambitious targets have been introduced, with the most recently-established bodies having a parity rule (50-50).
- In April 2017, the statutes were amended to introduce a 33% quota also at the Executive Committee as an intermediate, incremental step.





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# Lessons learned

# Lessons learned and remaining challenges

- You need to go beyond quotas in order to reach true parity
- Lack of systematic data collection on
  - Speaking time
  - Composition of panels (we have begun tracking in 2018 the composition of all panels organized by the IPU)
  - Leadership positions

