



BEYOND BEIJING: TOWARDS GENDER EQUALITY IN POLITICS

New York, 3 March 2005



A parliamentary event organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union
and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women
on the occasion of the 49th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

INFORMATION NOTE

During the 49th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which will be reviewing and appraising the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the outcome document of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW) are organising a parliamentary event entitled *Beyond Beijing: Towards gender equality in politics*.

The meeting will take place on 3 March 2005, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.,
in the Trusteeship Council Room at United Nations Headquarters in New York

Objectives

In keeping with its policy of contributing to major international forums by seeking to introduce a parliamentary dimension into the proceedings of intergovernmental organisations, the IPU is organising with UNDAW this one-day event in order to provide a forum for debate for parliamentarians from all over the world, and to contribute to the review and appraisal of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action.

With its well-developed programme on gender issues, the IPU will also be able to provide substantive input into the discussion of the progress and setbacks encountered by women parliamentarians worldwide in the 10 years since the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. The IPU previously contributed to both the Beijing Conference in 1995 and the Twenty-Third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly (Beijing +5), held in New York in 2000.

This event will focus on the strategic objectives of women in power and decision-making, and the role of parliaments in meeting these objectives. Parliamentarians will therefore be invited to share experiences and reflections on the role of women in politics and consider mechanisms to strengthen parliaments' capacity to address all of the Beijing objectives. As detailed in the attached provisional agenda, the meeting will address two main topics: *Improving women's access to parliament* and *Strengthening parliament's capacity to address the Beijing objectives*. Each topic will be introduced by three panellists, and will give rise to a general discussion.

Expected outcome

At the close of the meeting, a brief message to the CSW will be issued, stressing areas for future priority action, with particular emphasis on parliamentary mechanisms.

The President of IPU's Coordinating Committee of Women Parliamentarians will take the floor at a plenary meeting of the 49th Session of the CSW on behalf of the world parliamentary community, and will transmit the message from the meeting.

Relevant documents

Background documents to be used throughout the meeting include:

- ◆ written contributions of the panellists;
- ◆ documents of the 49th Session of the CSW;

- ◆ the resolution of the 111th Assembly of the IPU entitled "Beijing +10: An evaluation from a parliamentary perspective";
- ◆ the IPU's annual analysis of progress and setbacks of women in the elections of the previous year (2004);
- ◆ the IPU Information Kit on women in politics.

The event will also provide an opportunity to launch the *World Map of Women in Politics (2005)*, presenting the latest statistics on women in parliament and the executive branch around the world, to be jointly produced by the IPU and the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (UNDAW).

Participants

The participants in the Parliamentary Event will include:

- ◆ parliamentarians present in New York for the 49th Session of the CSW as members of their respective national delegations and other MPs delegated by their parliaments to attend;
- ◆ representatives of governments, relevant organisations and funds of the UN system, and civil society.

Programme

9 – 10 a.m. Registration of participants and distribution of documents

10 – 10.45 a.m. Inaugural session

10 a.m.- 1 p.m. Session 1:

Improving women's access to parliament

- Women in parliament: A review of the status quo
- Winning a seat: Barriers, techniques and alternatives
- Women and politics in post-conflict situations

General discussion

1 - 3 p.m. Lunch break

3 - 5.30 p.m. Session 2:

Strengthening parliament's capacity to address the Beijing objectives

- Gender-sensitive parliaments: Mechanisms and challenges
- Gender issues as "people" issues: The role of male parliamentarians
- Enriching parliament's capacities: The role of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations

General discussion

5.30 – 6 pm Closing session

Speeches

Summary of proceedings

Languages

Simultaneous interpretation will be provided in the four languages customarily used at IPU Assemblies, namely English, French, Spanish and Arabic.

Access badges for United Nations Headquarters

As is customary during General Assembly sessions, security arrangements are very strict and no one may enter the United Nations premises without a special badge (for delegates and visitors). In keeping with normal practice, national delegations and diplomatic missions in New York will be invited to attend to all matters relating to visas, UN Badges, hotel reservations and transportation. Participants must therefore request their badge from their country's permanent mission to the United Nations.

Registration

Persons wishing to participate in this meeting are urged to register as soon as possible using the attached form. Once this form has been filled out, it should be sent directly to IPU Headquarters (Fax: +41 22 919 41 60 or e-mail: postbox@mail.ipu.org), copy to the Office of the Permanent Observer (Fax 1 212 557 39 54 or e-mail: ny-office@mail.ipu.org) by Monday, 31 January 2005 at the latest.