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# 153rd IPU Assembly

Arusha,  
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5–9 October 2026



Forum of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 4

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## Contribution to the work of the 153rd Assembly from a gender perspective

Monday, 5 October 2026, 11:00–12:30

### I. Arrangements for the debate

The Forum of Women Parliamentarians will discuss the draft resolution on the agenda of the 153rd Assembly, *Inclusive social development for all: Parliamentary strategies to promote the rights and empowerment of persons with disabilities* (Standing Committee on Democracy and Human Rights). Participants will discuss the draft resolution from a gender perspective and issue recommendations on gender-related amendments to be submitted by the Forum of Women Parliamentarians to the Standing Committee.

After a short presentation on the draft resolution, the Forum will debate it in plenary. On the recommendation of its Bureau, the Forum will designate a rapporteur, who will present recommendations from the debate to the Forum at its afternoon sitting.

### II. Focus of the debate

The debate will focus on the main gender aspects of the draft resolution.

Approximately 1.3 billion people, or 16% of the world's population, live with disabilities. Their full and effective participation in society must be regarded as a pillar of democracy, as well as a human rights issue. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities requires States to eliminate discriminatory laws and practices, ensure accessibility and support independent living, as well as consult persons with disabilities through their representative organizations.

Parliaments have a central role to play in this field. They legislate, allocate budgets, oversee governments and represent society in all its diversity. In so doing, they must take into account the specific needs of persons with disabilities, as well as recognize that such persons are not a homogeneous group.

Women and girls with disabilities face particular barriers to participating in social, economic and political life and to claiming their rights. For instance, according to a [recent report by the UN Secretary-General](#), only 23% of women with disabilities (compared to 34% of men with disabilities) are employed globally. Women and girls with disabilities also face a higher risk of violence than other women and girls, with barriers to accessing justice compounded by structural discrimination based on gender and disability. For example, the same UN Secretary-General report noted that 8% of women with disabilities (compared to 5% of women without disabilities) reported having suffered sexual violence in the 12 months prior to completing a survey.

While data on political participation is scarce, a [recent report by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of persons with disabilities](#) indicates that women with disabilities face disproportionate obstacles in participating in political life. In addition to candidacy restrictions, a lack of accommodations, and disability-related stigma, women with disabilities also face gender bias, and, in many contexts, more acute socioeconomic exclusion.

The guiding questions for the debate will include the following:

- *How can parliaments ensure that targeted measures to promote the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities take into account the specific needs of women with disabilities and the intersecting forms of discrimination they face?*
- *What targeted measures have proven effective in empowering women with disabilities in areas such as education, employment and access to justice?*
- *What good practices exist to ensure due representation of women with disabilities in civil society organizations and in public consultations?*
- *How can the representation of women with disabilities in parliament be ensured?*
- *Are “nested” quotas – such as parity requirements within reserved seats for persons with disabilities – the best answer?*
- *Are women’s and disability caucuses in parliament supporting the inclusion of the voices of women MPs with disabilities?*