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Forum of Women Parliamentarians  
Item 5

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## Panel Discussion

### ***Moving from commitment to action: Women's leadership in diplomacy and peacebuilding***

Monday, 5 October 2026, 14:30–17:00

#### Concept Note

##### Background

In a world of turmoil with multilayered crises, bridging the gap between people and decision-making processes is key and requires inclusive institutions and processes. Yet, this objective remains far out of reach. Women hold only 27.5% of parliamentary seats and 20% of posts of Speakers of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> In diplomacy, the situation is slightly better: women make up 34% of Permanent Representatives before the United Nations (UN) in Geneva, 31% in Vienna and 23% in New York.<sup>2</sup> When it comes to peacebuilding, in 2024, only 7% of negotiators and 14% of mediators in formal peace processes were women, whereas community-based women's organizations remained active participants in informal processes.<sup>3</sup>

In July 2025, women parliamentary leaders gathered at the [15th Summit of Women Speakers of Parliament](#) took a strong stance by reaffirming the importance of parity in leadership, and of inclusive peace processes and foreign policy institutions as the only sustainable path to lasting peace. They called for, in particular:

- *Ensuring the meaningful participation of women at all stages of peace processes.*
- *Supporting women's leadership in diplomacy and foreign affairs by strengthening gender-balanced representation across all levels of diplomatic service.*
- *Allocation of adequate resources, training and support to empower women mediators and negotiators, particularly at the grassroots and community levels.*

Similarly, the IPU Standing Committee on United Nations Affairs called for stronger representation of women at the UN General Assembly in a [motion adopted at the 147th IPU Assembly in October 2023](#). In the motion, all IPU Member Parliaments were called upon, through their own parliamentary processes, among others, to specifically:

- *Ensure their recruitment process for their national foreign service encourages women's applications, promotes equal opportunities for advancement and, ultimately, to lead to 50:50 parity.*
- *Monitor appointments of their Permanent Representatives to the United Nations.*
- *Mark the International Day of Women in Diplomacy (24 June) with a hearing and other initiatives.*

<sup>1</sup> Inter-Parliamentary Union, [Women in Parliament in 2025: The year in review](#) (IPU, 2026).

<sup>2</sup> Global Women Leaders Voices, [Women in Multilateralism 2026](#) (GWL Voices, 2026).

<sup>3</sup> UN Women, [Facts and figures: Women, peace, and security](#) (UN Women 2025).

Article 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women also mandates States parties to ensure equal participation in diplomacy as clearly outlined in [CEDAW General recommendation No. 40](#) – developed in partnership with the IPU – which, in particular, calls for:

- *Gender parity in diplomatic appointments, international delegations and decision-making within multilateral institutions.*
- *Implementing a feminist foreign policy that promotes women's rights globally and prioritizes gender equality.*

### **Objective**

Participants will be invited to review the state of women's participation and leadership in their respective foreign services, in peace processes and in multilateral institutions. They will share promising initiatives led by their respective countries, as well as lessons learned and challenges in this area.

### **Proceedings**

The panel discussion will start with contributions from invited panellists who will share with the participants evidence-based information, insights built on experience and policy guidance on women's leadership in diplomacy and peacebuilding, and what is needed to move from commitment to action. Following the panellists' interventions, participants will be invited to contribute questions, reflections and experiences (limited to two minutes each).

### **Guiding questions**

- *What oversight initiatives are parliaments taking to ensure women are equally represented and equally lead in diplomacy – from the foreign service to international delegations and multilateral institutions?*
- *Are parliaments promoting women's leadership in peace processes, both at the international and at the community level?*
- *What lessons can be learned from feminist foreign policy and National Action Plans on Women, Peace and Security to effectively promote women's leadership in diplomacy and peacebuilding?*
- *How is women's leadership in diplomacy, peacebuilding, parliament and on the community level advancing sustainable action on the ground, including the protection of women and girls from violence, and gender-responsive legislation and budgets?*
- *What innovative practices and approaches exist that link science and diplomacy, making emerging technologies more gender-responsive, or enhancing women's leadership in global policymaking, such as in climate change responses and AI governance?*