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MISSION STATEMENT

The Spirit of Women in Parliaments: Advancing Society

The Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) is an independent, international and non-partisan foundation established with the purpose of advancing society by building a network between Women in Parliaments.

Today’s world is a volatile, complex and interdependent one. As the only global forum reaching out to all female Parliamentarians on national level, WIP endeavours to find ways to address global challenges by using the collective strength and ability of women in Parliaments across the world.

WIP is determined to encourage and educate society to lean more on the untapped potential and talent of women.

WIP would like to see an increasing number of women representatives in Parliaments around the globe, to mirror their representation in society.

“By meeting at the Women in Parliaments Global Forum you are strengthening important networks and highlighting the benefits of women’s participation.”

Kofi Annan United Nations, Secretary General 1997-2006
GENDER ISSUES ON THE RISE

Over the last few years, gender issues have slowly but surely been pushed up the legislative agenda worldwide. More than 50% of the world’s population is female, but not even 20% of political representatives are women.

In 2010, the United Nations created UN Women, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, as part of its continued work to advance gender equality.

The focus of WIP is the parliamentary dimension of politics. Parliamentarians go through intensive scrutiny, and the election process, to become legislators.

Hailing from diverse political, cultural and geographical backgrounds, there are many elements that unite female Parliamentarians. They possess a unique perspective on societal issues that has too long been underrepresented in global politics.

WIP provides the platform for the exchange of ideas, experience and best practice, facilitating women in and across Parliaments to make the most of their potential and political power.

“The mission of WIP is to fight for women’s rightful opportunities to rule the world alongside men, not just to be called in to do the cleaning when men have messed up.”

Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir Republic of Iceland, Prime Minister 2009-2013
WIP MEMBERS AND ALUMNI

WIP members are Members of Parliament at national level, including those directly elected to the European Parliament. Membership is free and members are honoured by their participation.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, more than 9,000 women are members of national Parliaments. WIP is the only network of elected women on a global level. Parliamentarians have privileged insight into, and influence on legislative issues as a result of continuous contact and exchange with their electorate and stakeholders.

The WIP alumni brings together former female Members of Parliament who are pursuing their careers in academic, business or other political functions. WIP ensures that they remain connected, providing them with the platform through which they can continue to discuss pertinent issues and exert their collective influence.

WIP activities range from conferences to studies, academic cooperation, WIP Awards and awareness raising campaigns.

“WIP is a very powerful body of women who are dedicated to changing the lives of women forever.”

Muhammad Yunus, Founder of Grameen Bank and Foundation, Recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize
ADVISORY BOARD

WIP is governed by its Advisory Board. The Advisory Board is the guardian of the WIP mission of advancing society. It is responsible for inspiring political and public confidence in WIP through an exemplary leadership. Individuals with unique experience – from politics, academia and civil society – participate in the Advisory Board’s activities. The Advisory Board’s role includes: monitoring and advising on the execution of the strategy and activities of WIP, including their continuous improvement and review of strategies and activities in light of the mission of WIP.

H.E. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa
Pioneer female lawyer and distinguished diplomat from Bahrain. Elected President of the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly. Active participant in the movement to elevate the position of women in Bahrain.

Kathy Calvin
President and CEO of the United Nations Foundation. Former President of the AOL Time Warner Foundation, with a diverse career in politics, journalism, public relations, and business.

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma
Chairperson of the African Union Commission, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Health and Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of South Africa.

Jane Goodall
Primatologist and UN Messenger of Peace. Founder of the Jane Goodall Institute and the Roots & Shoots program.

Tarja Halonen
Former President of Finland and Finland’s first female Head of State. Member of the Board of Trustees of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. Co-Chair of the UN High-level Panel on Global Sustainability as well as Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders.

Zainab Bangura
Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Sexual Violence in Conflict. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Health and Sanitation for the Government of Sierra Leone.

Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director of the World Food Programme, former US Ambassador to the UN Agencies for Food and Agriculture, and former head of the US Mission to UN Agencies in Rome, Italy.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner

Rebeca Grynspan
Head of the Ibero-American Secretariat, former Associate Administrator of the United Nations Development Program and United Nations Undersecretary-General, former Vice-President of Costa Rica.

Tarja Halonen
Former President of Finland and Finland’s first female Head of State. Member of the Board of Trustees of the Oslo Center for Peace and Human Rights. Co-Chair of the UN High-level Panel on Global Sustainability as well as Chair of the Council of Women World Leaders.

Mo Ibrahim

“Women Parliamentarians can help draw a red line when it comes to using rape as a tool of war.”

Denis Mukwege
Founder and Director of the Panzi Hospital
Instead of standing in front of the Parliament, why don’t we go inside and join politics.

Malala Yousafzai Pakistani school pupil and education activist
TOPICS

Women take more than 70% of consumption-related decisions, be it food, clothing, furniture or cars. They tend to be in charge of health for their families and are a major influence on both the education and activities of family members.

Globally, women make up more than half of the human capital in any economy. Although still underrepresented among legislators, female political influence is growing rapidly, in Parliaments and as voters. They hold the majority of votes in political elections in a democracy.

WIP goes beyond classic gender-related issues and provides input to debates currently impacting our society including health, digital policy, sustained growth, finance, demographic change and energy. By raising and engaging in these debates, WIP mirrors the global political agenda and gives balance to the discussions by offering another perspective.

These, and other topics are on the agenda during WIP conferences, and continue to be discussed and debated online.

“I am so delighted that the Women in Parliaments Global Forum is bringing together female parliamentarians so that we can work to expand your influence and increase your numbers.”

Hillary Clinton US Government, Secretary of State 2009-2013
THE WIP AWARDS FOR CLOSING THE GENDER GAP

The Women in Parliament Global Forum believes that best practice examples are most convincing, and can encourage others. That is why WIP will present a series of WIP Awards to countries outperforming on issues, which are at the core of WIP.

The WIP Award for closing the gender gap in the category „Women in Parliaments“ is based on data by the Inter-Parliamentary Union, provided by National Parliaments and listing 188 countries.

The WIP Awards in all other categories are based on the rankings of the World Economic Forum’s „Global Gender Gap Report“. The Global Gender Gap Index introduced by the World Economic Forum in 2006, is a framework for capturing the magnitude and scope of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress. The Index benchmarks national gender gaps on economic, political, education- and health-based criteria, and provides country rankings that allow for effective comparisons across regions and income groups, and over time. The rankings are designed to create greater awareness among a global audience of the challenges posed by gender gaps and the opportunities created by reducing them. The methodology and quantitative analysis behind the rankings are intended to serve as a basis for designing effective measures for reducing gender gaps.

The Global Gender Gap Report’s index assesses 135 countries, representing more than 93% of the world’s population, on how well resources and opportunities are divided among male and female populations. The report measures the size of the gender inequality gap in four areas:

- Economic participation and opportunity – salaries, participation and highly-skilled employment
- Education – access to basic and higher levels of education
- Political empowerment – representation in decision-making structures
- Health and survival – life expectancy and sex ratio

(Source: World Economic Forum)

“Ending violence against women and girls is not only a basic human right; it is also a means to combat hunger and food insecurity.”

Ertharin Cousin World Food Programme, Executive Director
WIP AWARDS 2013

Winners in the categories of political empowerment

- Women in Parliament: Rwanda
- Legislators, Senior Officials and Managers: Jamaica
- Years with Female Head of State: Ireland

Winners by region in closing the gender gap

- Global Winner in Closing the Gender Gap: Iceland
- Middle East: Israel
- Oceania: New Zealand
- South and Southeast Asia: Philippines
- East Asia: Mongolia
- Africa: Lesotho
- Europe and Central Asia: Iceland
- European Union: Finland
- South America: Bolivia

Achievements in closing the gender gap in the Arab World

- Winner by Region for the Arab World: United Arab Emirates
- Achievements in Increasing the Percentage of Women in Parliamentary Positions: Algeria

“I am convinced that improved gender equality has significant advantages. Decision-making at its best is based on views expressed by representatives of both genders with various cultural backgrounds. We need to turn every stone to make full use of our talents and our human resources, to the benefit of society as a whole.”

Olli Rehn European Commission, Vice President
WIP ANNUAL SUMMIT 2013


The WIP Annual Summit was the first time that all female Parliamentarians in the world were invited to gather in a unique conference.

Participants from more than 100 countries came together, which made the WIP Annual Summit an unprecedented occasion to discuss the issues on the Global Agenda from the perspective of female political leaders. An outstanding selection of speakers contributed to the Keynote presentations, the five Interactive Plenary Debates, the WIP Award Ceremonies and the Working Groups, including several Nobel Prize Winners, Heads of Government, European Commissioners, Ministers, Academics and high profile representatives of the Civil Society and Philanthropy.

"Empowering women is a smart investment. It’s a human rights issue, but also it’s a smart investment – it will give back."

Tarja Halonen, Republic of Finland, President 2000-2012
The WIP Annual Summit 2013 also marked the historic anniversary of 120 years of women’s suffrage. On the 28 November 1893, the women of New Zealand became the first in the world to vote in a national election!

The cornerstones of the WIP Annual Summit were:

- High-level keynote speeches
- Panel debates / interactive plenary sessions
- Working Groups
- Award ceremonies to honour countries for leadership in closing the gender gap
- Townhall meeting
- Networking opportunities

The Working Groups were organized in cooperation with international partners, such as:

- UN Development Programme and UN Women
- Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Transparency International and Ernst & Young
- World Economic Forum
- World Bank

The WIP Annual Summit 2013 was a memorable occasion, bringing together female Parliamentarians from across the globe in the spirit of advancing society.

“\[In our part of the world, we say: if you climb the ladder as a woman, don’t push the ladder when you get to the top, leave it for other women to climb.\]”

Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, African Union Commission, Chairperson
WIP TEAM

The leadership and staff of WIP comprise individuals from different national and regional backgrounds and areas of expertise.

Administrative Council

The Administrative Council consists of the founding team of WIP.

The activities of WIP are managed by its executive.

Founder: Silvana Koch-Mehrin

Team Members

Marie Abanga
Bettina Appel
Alynn Cappon
Thomas Fillis
Tessa Fortescue-Armour
Aretha Francis
Claudine Hitimana
Stephanie Michel
Aygun Novruzova
Sinead O’Laoire
Aimée Pouézat
Pamela Rodriguez
Daniela Vigilante
Steffen Zorn

“...All humanity loses out if women are not empowered to play their part in building stability in our insecure world. The challenges to human security cannot be tackled without the contribution women make...”

Benita Ferrero-Waldner EU-LAC Foundation, President
RESOURCES

WIP is enhanced through contributions to its foundation. Supporters of WIP advocate the WIP ethos - The Spirit of Women in Parliaments: Advancing Society.

The supporters show a commitment to equal opportunities and advancing society by strengthening the global talent pool with an emphasis on female representation. Support enables WIP to meet during its annual summit and regional conferences, publish scientific reports, engage its network in awareness raising campaigns as well as to continue exchanging ideas online.

WIP works closely in partnership with the World Economic Forum and the Inter-Parliamentary Union in order to ensure the highest scientific standards in our mission and our efforts to advance society.

Registered as a non-profit foundation, WIP cooperates with partners and supporters from business, academia and society with a view to increase its influence and create opportunities for setting policy agenda and shaping policy outcome.

WIP believes strongly in the integrity of its financial practices and is committed to maintaining the highest standard of financial transparency. In order to achieve this, WIP is working together closely with the professional financial trust company Interhold. All contributions will be regularly published and made publicly accessible.

"Women have achieved levels of excellence that indeed have made our world a better place."

Pascal Lamy World Trade Organization, Director-General 2005-2013
CO-ORDINATES

The Women in Parliaments Global Forum (WIP) is an independent, international and non-partisan foundation established with the purpose of advancing society by building a network between Women in Parliaments. It is a not-for-profit foundation, based in Zurich, Switzerland.

The foundation’s legal structure has been established by the renowned Swiss law-firm Niederer Kraft & Frey, based in Zurich.

“I hope that I’ll live to see the day when we have a society in which it isn’t important whether you’re a man or a woman.”

Viviane Reding, European Commission, Vice-President