



## **PREVENTING POLITICAL HARASSMENT AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: AN ACTION PLAN FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS**

### **1) Apply multisectoral approaches to the prevention of gender-based political harassment/violence**

Promising practices:

- a) Advocate for awareness campaigns to visibilize harassment against women in politics, to make all forms of gender violence (and the threat of violence) socially unacceptable, and to support legal literacy in the areas of civil and political rights.
- b) Promote early rights-based education and interventions to empower girls and guarantee their economic, social and political development.
- c) Establish effective sanctions -- where appropriate -- that are dissuasive, enforceable, and proportional to the offence committed.
- d) Adopt coordinated measures in the justice and health sectors to ensure immediate responses to complaints and the protection of victims and their families.
- e) Fund gender equality programs and prioritize considerations such as empirical evidence, community knowledge, and women's full participation in program design, implementation and evaluation.

### **2) Engage men in the empowerment of women in politics at all levels**

Promising practices:

- a) Promote men's responsibility to advocate for gender equality and to combat all forms of violence, including political harassment.
- b) Seek out the expertise of civil society organizations that have made important gains through male-led campaigns that teach men to take a stand against gender violence.
- c) Use public platforms to demand nonviolence in both private and public spheres, as well as equitable distribution of domestic and caregiving responsibilities.
- d) Encourage men and women legislators to support women's political participation by mentoring and sharing access to decision-making spaces, and by speaking out against political harassment/violence in the media and through other public platforms.
- e) Engage male colleagues in UN Women's HeForShe movement.

### **3) Hold political parties accountable for gender equality**

Promising practices:

- a) Provide financing, capacity building and professional development opportunities for women – whether candidates or already holding public office -- to help overcome the barriers faced when entering or pursuing senior leadership positions in parties.
- b) Conduct a comprehensive review of internal policies and ensure that a formalized protocol and enforcement mechanism exist in order to respond to cases of gender quota

violations and violence committed within the parliamentary precinct or by male parliamentarians.

- c) Strengthen cross-party solidarity and collaboration by participating in relevant commissions, committees or caucuses that build continuity in legislative work to support women's political participation.
- d) Ensure that information about party policies is clear, accessible and communicated using inclusive language.
- e) Make political parties and parliaments parent-friendly workplaces through the provision of services such as onsite daycares and the institutionalization of policies such as flexible work schedules and paid parental leave.

#### **4) Create an enabling environment to raise the issue of political harassment/violence for public and parliamentary debate**

Promising practices:

- a) Work alongside civil society advocates to improve understanding of the spectrum of violence impacting women's lives.
- b) Propose or invoke national plans on violence against women to open up spaces for political dialogue.
- c) Utilize the media to denounce gender-based political harassment/violence and to draw attention away from women politicians' personal characteristics in favour of their contributions to policy issues.
- d) Include in public discourse the frequency and severity of political harassment/violence against women in rural areas and in subnational contexts.
- e) Collaborate with international and regional stakeholders, through forums such as the Follow-Up Mechanism to the Belém do Pará Convention (MESECVI), to foster the political will necessary to combat political harassment/violence and ensure it is taken into account in information gathering, monitoring and evaluation activities in the Americas.

#### **5) Present policies, bills or reforms on political harassment/violence, and once passed ensure compliance by the corresponding institutions**

Promising practices:

- a) Draw upon ratified international and regional women's rights conventions to support motions to criminalize all forms of gender violence (e.g. CEDAW, Belém do Pará Convention).
- b) Participate in regional networks and with organizations working on this issue from a legislative viewpoint, with an eye to tools such as the framework law (*ley marco*) currently being developed by the Inter-American Commission of Women (CIM).
- c) Open a combination of civil, penal, electoral and administrative avenues to receive, investigate and respond to complaints of political harassment/violence, as appropriate in the local context (e.g. through an ombudsperson's office or similar).
- d) Prioritize ease and safety of reporting and clarity of processes for survivors who choose to file formal complaints.
- e) Support ongoing gender-sensitivity training initiatives, particularly for service providers responsible for handling cases of political harassment/violence and supporting survivors.