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## News Release

### Political leadership roles in 2025: Men continue to dominate

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New data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and UN Women reveals limited progress in achieving gender equality in political leadership at the start of 2025, the year which marks the 30th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the landmark UN framework which set out the roadmap for gender equality and women's rights.

According to the 2025 edition of the [IPU-UN Women Women in Politics](#) map, men outnumber women by more than three times in executive and legislative positions. The map presents the latest rankings of women in executive positions and national parliaments as of 1 January 2025.

While the proportion of women in parliament has increased fractionally by 0.3 percentage points to 27.2% compared to a year ago, in government positions it has declined by 0.4 percentage points.

IPU President Tulia Ackson said: *"The glacial pace of progress in women's parliamentary representation, even after a year of significant elections, is alarming. The global disparity highlights a systemic failure to advance gender equality in politics in some parts of the world. It's high time for decisive action to shatter these barriers and ensure women's voices are equally represented in politics worldwide. The health of our democracies depends on it."*

Martin Chungong, IPU Secretary General, said: *"The lack of progress in achieving gender equality in political leadership serves as a sobering call to action. Accelerating progress requires the active participation and support of men. It is our collective responsibility to break down barriers and ensure that women's voices are equally represented in leadership roles, fostering a more inclusive and robust democracy for all."*

Sima Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women, stated: *"Thirty years after the Beijing Declaration, the promise of gender equality in political leadership remains unfulfilled. Progress is not just slow — it is backsliding. We cannot accept a world where half the population is systematically excluded from decision-making. We know the solutions: quotas, electoral reforms, and the political will to dismantle systemic barriers. The time for half-measures is over — it is time for governments to act now to ensure women have an equal seat at every table where power is exercised."*

#### **Women leading countries remain the exception**

Women hold top State positions in just 25 countries. Europe remains the region with the highest number of women-led countries (12).

Although 2024 saw historic firsts — including the first directly elected women Presidents in Mexico, Namibia and North Macedonia — 106 countries have still never had a woman leader.

#### **Women's representation among Cabinet Ministers declines**

As of 1 January 2025, the proportion of women heading ministries decreased to 22.9%, down from 23.3% a year ago. This decline is due to 64 countries seeing a decrease in women's representation at this level and another 63 stagnating, with just 62 increasing compared to a year ago.

Only nine countries, predominantly in Europe, have achieved gender-equal cabinets, with 50% or more women holding cabinet positions as heads of ministries. These are Nicaragua (64.3%), Finland (61.1%), Iceland and Liechtenstein (60%), Estonia (58.3%), and Andorra, Chile, Spain and the United Kingdom (all at 50%). This represents a decline compared to 2024, when 15 countries had gender-equal cabinets.

There are an additional 20 countries where women's representation among Cabinet Ministers ranges between 40% and 49.9%, with half of these countries in Europe. Nine countries, mostly in Asia and the Pacific, do not have any women serving as Cabinet Ministers, an increase from seven countries in 2024.

Europe and North America (31.4%), and Latin America and the Caribbean (30.4%), have the highest shares of women Cabinet Ministers.

In contrast, women are significantly underrepresented in most other regions, with regional figures as low as 10.2% in the Pacific Islands (excluding Australia and New Zealand) and 9% in Central Asia and Southern Asia.

### ***Ministerial portfolios continue to endure gender-based bias***

The allocation of ministerial portfolios highlights a continuing gender bias. Women are still primarily assigned to head policy areas concerning gender equality, human rights and social affairs. Most influential policy areas, such as foreign affairs, financial and fiscal affairs, home affairs and defence remain largely controlled by men.

Ministerial portfolio	% women
Women and gender equality	86.7
Family and children affairs	71.4
Social inclusion and development	55.6
Social protection and social security	42.1
Foreign affairs	17.8
Financial and fiscal affairs	16.4
Home affairs	13.2
Defence	13.0

While still underrepresented, new data shows more women at the helm of other important policy portfolios, such as culture (35.4%), education (30.6%) and tourism (30.5%).

### ***Growth of women in parliament stalls***

The map follows the release of the IPU's annual *Women in parliament* report, which revealed that, despite 2024 being a super election year, progress towards greater women's representation was the slowest since 2017.

The data also reveals significant regional disparities:

- The Americas has the highest proportion of women MPs (34.5%) and women Speakers of parliament (33.3%).
- Europe comes second with 31.8% women MPs and 30.4% women Speakers.
- The Middle East and North Africa region is placed last, with women occupying only 16.7% of parliamentary seats and currently no women Speakers of Parliament.

In a rare bright spot, the total number of women Speakers increased to 64 out of 270 positions, reaching 23.7%, up from 22.7% in 2023 (62 out of 273).

And women Deputy Speakers of Parliament now constitute 32.6% of the total, up from 28.9% in 2023.

The new IPU-UN Women *Women in Politics* map was presented during the 69th session of the Commission on the Status of Women, the largest UN gathering on gender equality.

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### **About the IPU**

*The [IPU](#) is the global organization of national parliaments. It was founded in 1889 as the first multilateral political organization in the world, encouraging cooperation and dialogue between all nations. Today, the IPU comprises 181 national Member Parliaments and 15 regional parliamentary bodies. It promotes peace, democracy and sustainable development. It helps parliaments become stronger, younger, greener, more innovative and gender-balanced. It also defends the human rights of parliamentarians through a dedicated committee made up of MPs from around the world.*

For more information about the IPU, contact [press@ipu.org](mailto:press@ipu.org)

### **About UN Women**

*[UN Women](#) is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide.*

For more information about UN Women, contact the media team at: [media.team@unwomen.org](mailto:media.team@unwomen.org).