

## Parallel session 1

### Part I: Participation, Politics, POWER Part II: Safe public spaces: online and in town

#### Date & Time

Tuesday, 12 June, 9:00-11:00

#### Room

A1

#### Description

Gender equality is a cornerstone of human rights, democracy and social justice. Overwhelming evidence shows that it is also a precondition for sustainable growth, welfare, peace and security. The equal participation and influence of women in decision-making and the elimination of all forms of violence against all women and girls are crucial for achieving gender equality. This 2-part session explores how local action can play a pivotal role in achieving gender equality and empowerment objectives that have been adopted in international commitments such as the Beijing Platform for Action, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Developments and the New Urban Agenda. Each part will last one hour.

Part I will focus on the equal participation and influence of women and men, both as citizens and in public office, as a prerequisite for effective democracy and good governance. United Cities and Local Governments, of which CEMR is the European section, estimates that around 20% of councillors and just 5% of mayors globally are women. This imbalance is undemocratic and must be rectified. As the Mayor of Paris, Anne Hidalgo, said: *"We can't exclude half of humanity from political decision-making."*

Speakers in Part I will share their experiences as elected officials and experts, highlighting the opportunities that local and regional levels offer for women to get involved and make their voices heard.

Guiding questions Part I:

- *Getting into the pipeline, building a political profile - How to encourage women and girls to get involved as voters, as candidates for public office?*
- *What tools/measures are effective for increasing women's ability to participate (networks, quotas, mentoring, training, meeting times, etc.)?*
- *Different styles of leadership - Is there something different about the way women lead? What are the impacts of women's leadership on policy-making?*
- *Visibility - How can the internet and social media be used effectively by local elected women to spread their messages and interact with the public?*

In Part II, issues linked to public space and safety - online and on the ground - will be explored. Women and girls around the world fear and experience various types of sexual violence in public spaces, from unwanted sexual remarks and touching to rape and femicide. It happens on streets, in and around schools, public transportation, schools, workplaces,

public toilets, and parks in urban, rural, settings.<sup>1</sup> Cyber violence is also significant, according to a 2016 study by Women Political Leaders Global Forum, nearly half of the respondents to a survey about their use of social media – from every country, background, age, position and party – had received insulting or threatening comments about women’s ability and/or role.<sup>2</sup>

Speakers in Part II will share their perspectives on how public spaces can be conceived and managed to work in favour of gender equality and the actions that local and regional governments are taking to mainstream gender in urban planning, prevent and address harassment online and in town.

Guiding questions Part II:

- *What is gender-sensitive urban design and how can “placemaking” contribute to safer, inclusive communities?*
- *Tackling the normalisation of sexual harassment and violence - How can local and regional governments facilitate the reporting of violent or harassing behaviour that occurs in the public space? What support services can be put in place?*
- *Following up on one of the issues raised in Part I panel about the internet and social media, How can local and regional governments deal with harassing behaviour/trolling?*

## Format

Debate, panel

## Languages foreseen

Basque, English, French, Spanish (1 additional to be confirmed)

## Contact

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<sup>1</sup> [Adapted from Global corporate brief on UN Women’s Global Flagship Initiative Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces \(2017\), \[http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/un%20women-safecities-brief\\\_us-web%20\\(1\\).pdf\]\(http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/un%20women-safecities-brief\_us-web%20\(1\).pdf\)](http://www.unwomen.org/-/media/headquarters/attachments/sections/library/publications/2015/un%20women-safecities-brief_us-web%20(1).pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.womeninparliaments.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WIP-Harvard-Facebook-Study\\_Oct2016.pdf](http://www.womeninparliaments.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/WIP-Harvard-Facebook-Study_Oct2016.pdf)