

**Concept Note for a side-event at the  
59th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women  
New York, 9-20 March 2015**

**Women in Political Leadership:  
Achieving equality in political decision-making**

- Date** Monday, 9 March 2015, 3.00 - 4.15 pm
- Venue** DHL Auditorium - Dag Hammarskjöld Library, UN Headquarters
- Co-Hosts** Algeria, Australia, Chile, Switzerland
- Rationale** The Beijing Platform for Action argues that “women’s equal participation in political life plays a pivotal role in the general process of the advancement of women. Women’s equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as necessary condition for women’s interests to be taken into account.”<sup>1</sup> Nineteen years later, the Agreed Conclusions of the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the CSW in March 2014 called upon states to “Take measures to ensure women’s full, equal and effective participation in all fields and leadership at all levels of decision making in the public and private sectors [...]”.
- The publication of the “Women in Politics Map 2014” showed that “while progress on women’s political participation continues to be largely positive across the world, glass ceilings remain firmly in place for women at the highest levels”<sup>2</sup> which indicates the need to address the topic thoroughly. In executive government, the percentage of women in ministerial positions is on the rise and has now reached 17.2 %, up from 16.1 % in 2008<sup>3</sup>. A positive trend can also be observed in the attribution of portfolios since more women are now holding portfolios on hard issues such as defense and foreign affairs. Nevertheless, women are underrepresented in high-level political positions and the item should therefore remain high on the agenda.
- Objective** A cross-regional group of member states and UN Women invite you to discuss the relevance of women in high-level political positions. The event seeks to highlight the importance of gender equality and leadership of women in high level political positions in order to foster women’s empowerment as well as diversity in decision making in general and to make sure women’s specific needs are included in policy making and legislation. Challenges, as well as means and measures to achieve a higher proportion of women in politics, are addressed also against the background of the post-2015 agenda.
- Panel** H.E. Ms Mounia Meslem Si Amer, Minister of National Solidarity, Family and the Status of Women, Algeria  
Senator The Hon Michaelia Cash, Minister Assisting the Prime Minister for Women, Australia  
H.E. Ms Claudia Pascual, Minister-Director of the National Women’s Service, Chile  
H.E. Ms Corine Mauch, Mayor of the City of Zurich, Switzerland  
H.E. Ms Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of UN Women  
Ms Kareen Jabre, Director of the Division of Programs of the Inter-Parliamentary Union
- Moderator** H.E. Mr Benno Bättig, Ambassador, Secretary General of the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Switzerland

<sup>1</sup> Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action : G-181

<sup>2</sup> Source : <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/3/progress-for-women-in-politics-but-glass-ceiling-remains-firm>.

<sup>3</sup> idem