

## OSCE parliamentarians discuss gender equality at Bishkek conference



Roza Otunbaeva, former President of Kyrgyzstan, addresses the gender conference on 15 May, with Roza Aknazarova and Gustavo Pallares listening.

OSCE parliamentarians participated in a conference in Bishkek on 15-16 May initiated by OSCE PA Second Committee Chair Roza Aknazarova (MP, Kyrgyzstan). Held under the theme “The role of the parliament in achieving gender equality in the context of the Beijing +20 process,” the conference was hosted by the Kyrgyz Parliament (*Jogorku Kenesh*) and supported by the OSCE Centre in Bishkek, the PA, the United Nations and other international organizations.

Kyrgyz Prime Minister Temir Sariiev, Vice Prime Minister Damira Niyazalieva, Parliament Speaker Asylbek Jeenbekov, Deputy Speaker Asiya Sasykbaeva, Supreme Court Chair Feruza Djamasheva, former President Roza Otunbaeva, and several Kyrgyz parliamentarians addressed the event. They offered their perspectives on successes and challenges in promoting women’s rights and political participation, as well as gender equality in government, society and the workplace.

Among the prevalent themes of the conference was the need for parliaments across the OSCE area and beyond not only to pass legislation to advance gender equality, but to more actively and effectively consider all legislation through the prism of gender. Aknazarova called for the implementation

of a gender-sensitive approach in professional-technical education in Kyrgyzstan and elsewhere, stating that “the goals of this approach must be equal access for both genders to education” and “an end to segregation on the basis of gender in the education process for various specializations.”

First Committee Rapporteur and Deputy Head of the Swedish Delegation Margareta Cederfelt noted that although Sweden’s Parliament has about 43 per cent women, “the number in itself is not enough, and there is still a lot to be achieved when it comes to gender equality in positions, influence and roles.”

Also participating in the conference were OSCE PA Members Bold Luvsanvandan (MP, Mongolia), Irena Kotseva (MP, Bulgaria), Rabiyyat Aslanova (MP, Azerbaijan) and Ilya Kostunov (MP, Russia). OSCE PA Deputy Secretary General Gustavo Pallares also addressed the conference, providing an overview of the PA’s efforts to promote gender balance in its leadership and delegations.

The conference concluded with the presentation of a final document, containing wide-ranging recommendations on achieving gender equality and utilizing parliaments to do so.

## PA Members participate in election observation briefing at Swedish Parliament



Urban Ahlin, Speaker of the Swedish Riksdag, addresses election observation event in Stockholm on 19 May.

More than 70 Members of the Swedish Parliament (*Riksdag*) participated in a briefing on election observation missions on Tuesday 19 May in Stockholm. OSCE PA Vice-President Kent Harstedt, Head of the Swedish Delegation to the Assembly, chaired the meeting, which was opened by the Speaker of Parliament, Urban Ahlin.

OSCE PA Director of Elections Andreas Baker gave a presentation, providing an overview of OSCE PA election observation activities and how observation missions are

conducted. Several Members of the Swedish Delegation to the Assembly participated in the briefing, with First Committee Rapporteur Margareta Cederfelt sharing her personal experiences and advice from observing numerous elections.

The Swedish Parliament has long been one of the most active contributors to OSCE PA election observation activities and both Harstedt and Cederfelt have served as leaders of election observation missions. Since 1993, the OSCE PA has deployed nearly 5,000 observers to more than 30 countries.