Making the Case for Gender Equality

Male allies may need to defend their commitment to gender equality in different parliamentary contexts, explaining to others that it is both the right thing to do from a moral standpoint and the smart thing to do given its benefits to economic and social development. The talking points below can be used in discussions with colleagues on the importance of supporting and investing in this agenda.

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| Women’s participation strengthens political parties | • Parties that adopt reforms to promote gender equality can increase their support base and make potential electoral gains through access to new groups of voters¹  
• Higher numbers of women members correlate with greater efforts by parties to fight corruption² |
| Gender equality enhances democratic governance and citizen trust in institutions | • Countries where women hold more than 30% of the seats in political bodies are more inclusive, egalitarian, and democratic³  
• Equitable representation in governments and parties increases citizen perceptions of credibility and legitimacy, and increases levels of support⁴ |
| Improving gender equality in the workforce is good for businesses | • Companies with more women on their board of directors are more profitable, have higher sales, and see greater return on invested capital⁵  
• Eliminating discrimination against women workers and managers would increase work productivity by 25-40%⁶ |
| Women’s economic empowerment has national and global economic benefits | • Enabling more women to join the workforce could boost the world’s economy by $12 trillion USD over the next decade⁷  
• There can be a $7 USD return for every dollar invested in programs to improve income generation for women⁸ |
| Gender equality helps to achieve sustainable development | • Higher levels of gender equality are associated with lower rates of poverty, higher standing in the Human Development Index, and less environmental degradation⁹  
• Out of the 169 SDG targets, economists found eliminating gender-based violence to be one of 19 that would yield the highest social benefits from investing in its achievement¹⁰ |
| Pursuing gender equality as part of the national development strategy also grows the economy | • Increasing women and girls’ access to the internet could boost national GDP¹¹  
• Each USD spent on family planning can save governments up to $6 on health, housing, water, and other public services¹² |
| Incorporating gender equality into education results in better health outcomes | • Maternal mortality would fall by 66% if all women completed primary education, and each additional year of education has been found to decrease child mortality by 9.5%¹³,¹⁴  
• Educating boys and men on responsible sexual behaviour can reduce school pregnancy rates by two-thirds¹⁵ |
| Gender equality improves quality of life for all members of society | • Agricultural yield could increase by 20-30% if women farmers had equal access to resources, which could reduce the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%¹⁶  
• Women’s political participation can improve socio-economic conditions, as many will more readily prioritise poverty reduction and service delivery than male counterparts¹⁷ |
| Gender equality is critical to adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change | • Corporations led by women are more focused on sustainability, and countries with more women in parliament are more likely to ratify environmental treaties¹⁸,¹⁹  
• Meeting women’s family planning needs would decrease global carbon emissions by 8-15%—the equivalent of stopping all current deforestation²⁰ |
| Families are strengthened by equitable gender relations | • Equitable division of responsibilities related to managing the home, paid employment, and parenting benefits all members of a household²¹  
• If women and men were to share unpaid tasks equally, women would gain 5 hours of time per week which could be dedicated to education, productive pursuits, or self-care²² |
Sources

11. “Closing the Digital Gap,” USAID
17. “Why Women in Politics?,” National Democratic Institute
22. “7 Data Visualizations that Opened the World’s Eyes to Gender Inequality,” Katja Iversen (August 23, 2017)

This tool is part of the “Men as Allies for Gender Equality” toolkit available on the web portal Gender Equality Tools for Parliamentarians in the Caribbean (www.parlgendertools.org), which is a joint initiative of ParlAmericas and UN Women Multi-Country Office - Caribbean.