Over the last years, political transitions in all regions of the world were marked by constitutional processes. To what extent have they defined legal frameworks that are truly conducive to the empowerment of women?

A constitution is a fundamental legal expression of the social contract between State and its citizens and contains the strongest legal means of protecting and promoting gender equality. As such, the constitution-building process provides an extraordinary opportunity for women and gender-equality advocates to participate in the framing of democratic governance, respond to current challenges and articulate aspirations for a future in which political, economic and social equality of women is realized. With 195 constitutions in existence around the world, it is crucial that these foundational documents “embody the principle of the equality of men and women” as an underling basis of State accountability, especially in light of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). To better address this, a number of useful tools have been developed to better analyze, advocate and hold constitutions and constitution-building processes accountable for greater equity. For instance, in 2016, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) developed a guidance note on Women’s Rights in Constitutions looks at key substantive constitutional issues across different themes that provides examples of “global good practices in advancing gender equality and women’s empowerment in constitutions”. From a comparative standpoint, the Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database was developed by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) created the first database searchable from a gender lens covering all 195 constitutions from around the world in their languages of origin and respective English translations. Concurrently, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) developed in 2016 its Constitution Assessment for Gender Equality which examines the critical constitutional issues that affect women’s rights and gender equality.

With this in mind, UNDP, UN Women, and International IDEA are organizing a side-event in the margins of the 61st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women to discuss the contributions that the three complementary tools can make to key stakeholders, advocates, policy makers, parliamentarians and civil society representative working to ensure that the constitutions advance gender equality and women’s empowerment, especially within the context of the adoption and ongoing implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

**Provisional Agenda**

**Moderator:** Mr. Jason Gluck, Policy Specialist, Political Dialogues and Constitutional Processes, UNDP

**Panel:**
- Ms. Suki Beavers, Policy Advisor, Inclusive Political Processes, UNDP
- Ms. Beatrice Duncan, Justice and Constitutional Advisor, UN Women
- Mr. Massimo Tommasoli, Permanent Observer for International IDEA to the UN

*Followed by an Interactive Discussion*
CONFIRMATION FORM

Side Event on “Constitution Building through a Gender Lens”

**Wednesday, 22 March 2017**  
**Venue: Conference Room B**  
11.30 – 12.45  
United Nations Headquarters, New York

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Attendees:</th>
<th>Titles:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affiliation:</th>
<th>Contact Information:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|              | If you have a UN Pass:  
Kindly return RSVP to Contact:  
The Office of the Permanent Observer for  
International IDEA to the UN  
E-mail: (unobserver@idea.int)  
Phone: +1 (212) 286-1084  
Fax: +1 (212) 286-0260  

If you **do not** have a UN Pass:  
Indicate Here  

If checked the above box, kindly return form by  
**Friday, 17 March 2017** |

**Invitation to Follow**