Early 21st century, many states are commemorating universal suffrage for women. The media has been referred to as the fourth branch of government and social media as a source for democratic good. At the same time, the corporate media and the internet are also used to instigate and spread fear, prejudice and hate, all of which is putting democracy at risk.

Research indicates that the reality of online abuse and hate speech is gendered, with women disproportionately affected. Further, certain form of abuse online, such as image based sexual abuse and threats of sexual violence is directed in vast majority towards women. Nevertheless, legal responses to online abuse, hate speech and threats are generally gender neutral, often missing the severe implications that the harsh reality of misogyny and digital gendered violence and abuse can have on women’s participation in the democratic discourse taking place online.

Some recent initiatives like the #metoo and #freethenipple campaigns have proved that social media can magnify the voices of women, providing powerful response to a culture of misogyny and gender disparity. Despite this, there are indications that due to the abuse that women face online, they hold back their public participation.

Against this backdrop, the event draws on the following questions:

- What will the democratic consequences be 100 years onward if one of the major platforms for contemporary democratic discourse – the online space - does not provide parity for women’s voices?
- Will we face a democratic deficit in near future or the long run?
- What is the appropriate response from states when the democratic participation of women meets new challenges?
- Besides the government and the legislator, how can civil society contribute to a solution and what role should men in particular play in achieving gender parity online?

**Speakers**

- **Welcoming Remarks:**
  - His Excellency Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister of Social Affairs and Equality, Iceland

- **Ms. Albertina Friðbjörg Elíasdóttir:**
  - Member of Parliament in Iceland
  - Topic: #metoo in Iceland and the role of the legislator

- **Mr. Unnsteinn Manuel Stefánsson:**
  - Musician and champion of the Icelandic National Committee of UN Women in Iceland

- **Ms Maria Rún Bjarnadóttir:**
  - Lawyer and doctoral researcher, University of Sussex
  - Topic: What’s gender got to do with it? Online abuse and (lack of) legal responses

**Panelists**

- **Mr Ásmundur Einar Daðason,** Minister of Social Affairs and Equality

- **Ms Albertina Friðbjörg Elíasdóttir,** Member of Parliament

- **Ms Maria Rún Bjarnadóttir,** Lawyer and Doctoral Researcher, University of Sussex

- **Mr Unnsteinn Manuel Stefánsson,** Musician and Champion of the Icelandic National Committee of UN Women in Iceland

**Save the date**

**Digital Gender Violence and Hate Speech**

Role of men, the legislator and the implications for democracy

**Date:** Monday, 12 March 2018  **Time:** 13:15-14:30  **Venue:** Conference room 12, GA building, UNHQ

**Hosts:** The Icelandic Ministry of Welfare in collaboration with the Parliament of Iceland, the Icelandic Women’s Rights Association and the Icelandic National Committee of UN Women.

**Welcoming Remarks:**

- His Excellency Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister of Social Affairs and Equality, Iceland

- Ms María Rún Bjarnadóttir, lawyer and doctoral researcher, University of Sussex

**Topic:** What’s gender got to do with it? Online abuse and (lack of) legal responses

**Moderator:**

- Ms Brynhildur Heiðar- og Ómarsdóttir, Icelandic Women’s Rights Association

**Panel Discussions – Qs and As**

- Mr Ásmundur Einar Daðason, Minister of Social Affairs and Equality

- Ms Albertina Friðbjörg Elíasdóttir, Member of Parliament

- Ms Maria Rún Bjarnadóttir, Lawyer and Doctoral Researcher, University of Sussex

- Mr Unnsteinn Manuel Stefánsson, Musician and Champion of the Icelandic National Committee of UN Women in Iceland