INTRODUCTION

ICC recognises that diversity is good for business. As is the case for many businesses represented by ICC, speakers at ICC conferences and ICC speakers at external events tend to be predominantly male. It is important to acknowledge and improve such situations by taking active steps to include more diverse, gender-balanced speakers.

Diverse panels improve the quality of discussions. A majority of male speakers from a specific region provides a limited perspective and deprives audiences of a broader range of views offered by diverse speakers from different backgrounds. We also risk limiting our audiences at these events and via our social media platforms if we only feature the same gender, age, ethnicity, etc.

When audiences are exclusively exposed to male role models, the absence of women is easily perpetuated: fewer women will volunteer for speaking opportunities and fewer will be invited to speak publicly. This has wider consequences career-wise, as public speaking is an important tool for increased exposure, recognition and new professional opportunities.

There is no good reason for this discrepancy between the number of male and female speakers - ICC has more women staff members than men, however, this is not yet reflected in ICC’s leadership or in the speakers chosen to represent the organisation externally.

ICC organises numerous events and ICC staff members are regularly invited to speak in prestigious panels and conferences around the world. We are therefore in a strong position to lead by example and to show the business community and the international forums in which we operate that ICC is actively committed to gender equality.
THE PLEDGE

WE COMMIT TO

• External panels with ICC staff members invited to speak:
  o Request confirmation of who the other speakers will be and how gender balance will be achieved;
  o Where possible, refuse to speak in any male-only or highly gender-imbalanced panels and suggest alternative diverse speakers.

• Panels organised by ICC:
  o Take active steps to encourage speaker gender balance, e.g. by asking for help finding diverse speakers if needed (from ICC colleagues, other panelists, industry insiders, lists of women speakers [see below], etc.);
  o Avoid limiting participation to very high-ranking speakers (CEOs, ministers, Secretary Generals...) - with a smaller pool of potential women speakers. A good speaker is not necessarily high-ranking. We should encourage opportunities to invite younger professionals in order to empower them. This will foster greater diversity and gender balance;
  o Distribute topics so that women speak as experts on “hard” topics, not just “soft” topics (e.g. not only in panels on gender, diversity, but also on trade, climate change, technology, finance, etc.);
  o Host panels about diversity issues, when relevant, to raise awareness externally about our internal commitment and link it to our external advocacy.

• Within ICC HQ:
  o Make pledge known and applied by all staff, and encourage adoption by ICC network;
  o Use and contribute to list of diverse speakers by topic of expertise set up by WBW;
  o Publish statistics on gender of speakers (for all ICC-hosted events and external events with ICC speakers where possible). Implement plans to improve results over time;
  o Offer public speaking guidance/training for women and young professionals.