

not only deals with legislation, but it also investigates public complaints regarding gender equality. The Committee has authority to investigate issues, summon persons and make recommendations regarding penalties. The final decisions of the Committee are made known to the public. The Committee works closely with the Human Rights Commission, and the Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare who have representatives appointed by Congress to serve as members of this Committee.¹⁰

5. Women's Parliamentary Caucus (WPC)

A parliamentary caucus is an internal group composed of legislators from different political parties who are interested in a common policy issue (e.g. gender issues) or advocates for a common position in several policy issues (such as the Hispanic Caucus in the U.S. Congress) based on their own ideological/political beliefs or the interests of the constituency they represent. A WPC is a structure that is crucial for effective gender review of legislation. Organized across party lines, the caucus can mobilize and push for legislation that promotes gender equality and women's empowerment. Perhaps the best example of how a Women's Parliamentary Caucus can be an effective advocacy group within the legislature is **Rwanda's Forum of Female Parliamentarians (FFRP)**, which included all female MPs—from both the upper and lower houses — and those who represented political parties or were elected on the "women's ballot". A formidable parliamentary body, the FFRP is a multi-party and multi-ethnic political caucus that has worked for the promotion of gender equality in the parliamentary agenda and for mechanisms to enhance gender oversight legislation since it was first established in 1996. One of its most significant accomplishments has been to propose a bill on gender-based violence. Its success in influencing legislation is the result of the openness of Parliament to allow active advocacy and close partnerships with Rwanda's women parliamentarians. It is also recognized as a formal body in the Parliament.¹¹

C. Research and Training Support Structures

It is critical to have competent technical support when crafting legislation as well as access to sex-disaggregated data and indicators that can assist in the evaluation of legislation from a gender perspective. In Mexico, a congressional research center, the Research Centre for Women's Advancement and Gender Equality or the Centro de Estudios, para el Adelanto de las Mujeres y la Equidad de Género (CEAMEG) was established in the Chamber of Deputies.¹²

The CEAMEG provides technical and information services to MPs, focusing on three fundamental areas: developing gender-responsive budgeting guidelines; enhancing women's formal and substantive political participation; and the integration and harmonization of Mexico's commitments to international treaties and conventions on the protection and promotion of the status of women into its national laws. It also compiles a documentary, statistical and electronic database on gender equality, the status of women, the exercise of women's rights and relevant federal and state laws.¹³

9. Mendez, C., 2010, "Gender Study in the Spanish Parliament," Case Study for IPU Gender Sensitive Parliaments Project, Geneva in Sonia Palmieri, 'Gender Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice', IPU Reports and Documents No. 65-2011, 36.

10. IPU Women in Parliament <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

11. Powley, E. Powley, 2010, 'Rwanda,' Case Study for IPU Gender Sensitive Parliaments Project, Geneva, in Sonia Palmieri, 'Gender Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practices', IPU Reports and Documents No. 65-2011, 46.

12. Cuevas, D., 2010 'Gender Mainstreaming in Parliament: A Mexican Case Study,' Case Study for IPU Gender Sensitive Parliaments Project, Geneva, in Sonia Palmieri, 'Gender Sensitive Parliaments: A Global Review of Good Practice', IPU Reports and Documents No. 65-2011, 55.