

Statement Ms Åslaug Sem-Jacobsen, WPL ambassador, The Storting, Norway

*Since Norwegian women gained universal suffrage in 1913, our way into politics has been long, but women's participation in democratic processes has gradually increased.*

*Today, we have a historically high representation with 40.8 per cent women in the Norwegian parliament, and we have women at the very top in some of the most important political positions in Norway.*

*At the local level, women make up 39 percent of representatives in municipal councils, and in the public sector, there is a majority of women in leading positions.*

*However, at the very top in private business, the situation is the opposite.*

*This is why Norway, in 2003, adopted a new law demanding 40 percent of each sex on the corporate boards of public listed companies. Sadly, many large private companies have not followed suit to recruit more women to their boards.*

*So, we still have a job to do, to ensure that girls and women have access to leadership experience and good role models, in business as well as in politics.*

*Support and political will of male leaders is of vital importance for accelerating necessary changes in this respect.*

*Sexual harassment and bullying, both online and offline, have prevented many young women to take part in the public debate, and women from taking on leadership positions.*

*There is a direct line between online abuse and democratic participation, and that is why we should have a coordinated international effort to combat gender-based digital violence.*

*Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.*