

UNION INTERPARLEMENTAIRE



INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION

Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments

SUPPLEMENTARY REMARKS

from

Mr Liam LAURENCE SMYTH
Clerk of Legislation of the House of Commons of the United Kingdom

on

“The gendered nature of the pandemic”

Zoom Session
May 2021

During our virtual conference we heard from Chloe Mawson, the new Clerk Assistant of the House of Lords, and from my own boss Sarah Davies, the Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons.

During the pandemic it has been important for us to have a strong female presence at the decision-making level in our parliamentary administration.

It seems to me that the challenges of the pandemic have been particularly severe for women: maintaining a work-life balance, working from home and home-schooling children while schools are closed.

Our solutions have been more effective when the decisions we take have been made with empathy and informed by insights based on the lived experience of women.

Up to now, only men have filled the Secretary-General posts in the United Kingdom (Clerk of the Parliaments, Clerk of the House of Commons). That is not likely to remain the case for ever.