

GQUAL ACTION PLAN

Participants of the GQUAL Conference to promote gender parity in international representation, having met in The Hague, from 3 to 5 of October 2017, adopt the following Action Plan:

Convinced that equality and non-discrimination are neither aspirations nor privileges; rather, they are human rights and fundamental principles of international law;

Persuaded that international justice is served best, is more legitimate and effective when the bodies that impart it reflect the diversity of humanity and combine, in equal terms, the perspectives of qualified, independent, and diverse women and men;

Noting that women are underrepresented in virtually all international bodies responsible for monitoring and developing international law, human rights, and international relations, including in the United Nations and relevant regional organizations in the Americas, Asia, Africa, and Europe;

Taking into account that, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world”;

Inspired by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’s recognition that gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but also a necessary foundation for sustainable peace and development, and motivated, in particular by Goal 5.5, which aims to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”, and Goal 16, which strives to “promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”;

Guided by the principle of equality between men and women and the correlative obligation to ensure equal access to public participation enshrined in international and regional human rights treaties and instruments;

Noting that Article 8 of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls on States to “take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations”

Taking into account that the Beijing Declaration calls on States and other institutions to ensure equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy-making processes;

Considering, in particular, that under the Beijing Platform for Action, States are encouraged to aim for and support gender balance in the composition of delegations to the United Nations and other international organizations, as well as “in the list of candidates nominated for election or appointment to United Nations bodies, specialized

agencies and other autonomous organizations of the United Nations system, particularly for posts at the senior level”;

Acknowledging that “gender balance” implies and has been understood in the follow-up processes to the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action as parity;

Recognizing that achieving gender parity in international bodies requires action and commitment from States, United Nations agencies and representatives of other international and regional organizations, international and regional tribunals, civil society organizations, academic institutions and others;

The signatories of this Action Plan commit to:

1. Take priority action within their spheres of influence to achieve gender parity in international tribunals, human rights commissions and treaty bodies, international arbitration, and in other international monitoring mechanisms and bodies, such as Special Procedures and Rapporteurships, special advisors and expert mandates or committees, and advisory panels (hereinafter “International Tribunals and Bodies”).

State representatives reaffirm their commitment to:

2. Intensify efforts at the international and regional level to make progress towards achieving gender parity in the composition of International Tribunals and Bodies;
3. Take steps towards the establishment of guidelines, mechanisms, and other appropriate measures on national and international levels, which guarantee gender parity in positions involving international responsibility, including in International Tribunals and Bodies;
4. Take steps at the national nomination stage to aspire to or institutionalize the nomination of an equal number of women and men to International Tribunals and Bodies in light of international human rights principles enshrined in international and regional human rights treaties and other instruments;
5. Promote and adopt transparent participatory mechanisms and practices that incorporate gender and diversity as necessary considerations for the nomination and selection of candidates for International Tribunals and Bodies;
6. Take progressive action towards the adoption of norms, statutes, policies, and practices that aspire to or ensure gender parity when voting for candidates for International Tribunals and Bodies, once those candidates have already been nominated by States;
7. Consider making firm commitments to guaranteeing parity when presenting and voting for candidates for International Tribunals and Bodies, as well as diplomatic or other positions of international representation in regional and international organizations;

8. Take steps to support the adoption of guidelines, procedures, and standards by the United Nations and other international organizations that incorporate gender balance as criteria for the composition of International Tribunals and Bodies;
9. Take steps towards the implementation of measures, including the adoption of temporary special measures, to accelerate progress in achieving gender parity representation in International Tribunals and Bodies at the international and regional levels;

Representatives of International Organizations and experts supporting the work of International Tribunals and Bodies, reaffirm their commitment to:

10. Foster transparency in selection procedures for members of International Tribunals and Bodies, by disseminating information about the historic and current gender compositions of each body, upcoming vacancies, domestic and international nomination and voting criteria and procedures;
11. Actively encourage Member States to nominate and vote for women whenever elections affect positions where no woman has been elected before, or where the current or historic composition of the International Tribunal and Body lacks a critical mass of women;
12. Take appropriate measures within international organizations to promote and adopt internal rules to help achieve gender parity representation in International Tribunals and Bodies;
13. Promote the establishment of gender focal points within the organizations to help in raising gender awareness and ensuring gender equality, including gender parity, amongst the staff;
14. Monitor progress and best practices in nominating, voting and selecting procedures and practices;
15. Publish observations, recommendations, and comments that analyze substantive and procedural aspects relevant to achieve equal gender representation in International Tribunals and Bodies;
16. Work closely with gender focal points across regional and international organizations to develop the actions included above and to share best practices;
17. Engage in broader educational campaigns to ensure the dissemination of information regarding the right to equality for all and the current state of affairs of underrepresentation of women in International Tribunals and Bodies;

International judges and members of International Bodies, reaffirm their commitment to:

18. Share information, whenever possible, particularly with State representatives, on selection procedures and gender balance in International Tribunals and Bodies with aspiring candidates, academics and organizations.

19. Share, whenever possible, their personal experiences accessing international positions and mentor aspiring candidates.

Members of civil society organizations, academia and others, reaffirm their commitment to:

20. Support the GQUAL Declaration and the strategies and objectives set by the campaign;
21. Actively promote parity or adequate gender representation in the nomination and appointments for positions at International Tribunals and Bodies at the international and regional levels;
22. Promote gender parity in International Tribunals and Bodies by making information on positions available to a diverse group of women;
23. Support the development of an information roadmap for women candidates on the nomination and selection processes to access different international positions in International Tribunals and Bodies;
24. Promote the development of a network of women interested in positions in International Tribunals and Bodies that includes the participation of current or former members of International Tribunals and Bodies to serve as mentors and advisers for women candidates;
25. Help document processes and results and gather data to support further advocacy to achieve gender parity in International Tribunals and Bodies;
26. Deepen research and discussions on local, regional, and global levels, and help identify and fill knowledge gaps concerning equal representation of women in the international arena;
27. Encourage a broad range of allies to work and share experiences and expertise in different regions on topics relevant to the GQUAL Campaign;
28. Use communication tools, networks, and social media to help raise awareness about the issues highlighted by the GQUAL campaign.

The undersigned, hereby adopt and commit to implement and support this Action Plan, with the goal of achieving gender parity in International Tribunals and Bodies.

We urge others, especially representatives of governments and international organizations, to commit themselves to the goals set in this Action Plan.