



WOMEN DELIVERING JUSTICE: INVESTING IN WOMEN JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE 2030 AGENDA

A CSW Side event organized by the Permanent Mission of the State of Qatar, International Development Law Organization (IDLO), International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), and the GQUAL Campaign

Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 18:30 - 19:45 hrs, Conference Room D, Conference Building
UN Headquarters, New York

The equal and effective participation of women in all aspects of justice delivery is a human right. It is a crucial element of good governance. The need for women's full participation has been reaffirmed by Agenda 2030's Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender equality and women's empowerment) and 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and articulated in the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and in Security Council Resolution 1325.

Ensuring the equal representation of women as justice professionals, however, is not only the right thing to do. There is also growing evidence that increased presence of women judges can contribute to improved access to justice for women more broadly and can also increase confidence in the rule of law through ensuring a more representative judiciary.

Women justice professionals play an important role in breaking down barriers that women face in accessing justice, including on gender-based violence. Women judges have authored landmark legal decisions and have shifted public policy. Furthermore, women judges have emerged as role models for other women justice professionals and aspiring young women, as champions for gender justice.

Research shows that women are making incremental headway in achieving gender parity in the judiciary in selected countries. However, in spite of increasing numbers, women judges continue to encounter barriers to their full and effective participation as justice agents. At the global level, there continues to be limited representation of women in international and regional tribunals and other dispute resolution bodies.

Even with a dedicated SDG target on proportion of positions in public institutions¹ (16.7.1), data on women justice professionals continues to be incomplete, inconsistent and uneven. In particular, data collection seldom reaches lower than a country's highest courts, making it difficult, for example, to analyse whether women who serve on courts actually reflect the diversity of their respective countries' populations, along other intersectional axes such as race, ethnicity, religion

¹ Proportions of positions (by sex, age, persons with disabilities and population groups) in public institutions (national and local legislatures, public service, and judiciary) compared to national distributions.



(or lack thereof), and disability. Furthermore, research rarely looks into barriers women justice professionals encounter and their contributions to justice. The paucity of data hinders comprehensive analysis on where the gaps are and what solutions are needed to increase women's participation in the justice sector.

This session will highlight the contributions of women justice professionals, as well as the barriers they face. It will also call for more investment to fully support women justice professionals.

More particularly, the session seeks to address the following questions:

- What challenges do women justice actors face in joining the bench and advancing through its career ranks? Is there a backlash facing women justice professionals?
- What are the specific contributions to justice of women justice professionals? Do research, monitoring and other evidence collection activities adequately capture their contributions? How might a more representative judiciary affect the perception – and reality – of a fair and equitable justice system?
- What policy and programmatic directions should we prioritize when it comes to supporting women justice professionals?

The discussions will be supported by the recently published IDLO report on *Women Delivering Justice: Contributions, Barriers, Pathways*.

Agenda

Panel discussion:

- Justice Susan Glazebrook, Judge, Supreme Court of New Zealand and President-elect of the International Association of Women Judges;
- Irene Khan, Director-General, International Development Law Organization;
- Dr. Hind Abdul Rahman al-Mufta, Member of the Shoura Advisory Council, Associate Professor and Vice-President for Administration and Finance, Doha Institute for Graduate Studies;
- Viviana Krsticevic, Executive Director of CEJIL and Member of the GQUAL Secretariat;

Moderator: Rangita de Silva de Alwis, Associate Dean of International Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania Law School.