

For the attention of Human Rights Council Vice-President and Representative of the Western European and Other States Regional Group:

Her Excellency Ms. Heidi SCHRODERUS-FOX (Finland)

CC:

H.E. Mr. Marc PECSTEEN DE BUYTSWERVE (Belgium)
H.E. Mr. Jérôme BONNAFONT (France)
H.E. Mrs. Katharina STASCH (Germany)
H.E. Mr. Marc BICHLER (Luxembourg)
H.E. Mr. Paul BEKKERS (Kingdom of the Netherlands)
H.E. Mrs. Bathsheba N. CROCKER (United States of America)

7 March 2024

Excellency,

We write on behalf of [GQUAL](https://gqualcampaign.org), a global campaign seeking to achieve gender parity in international tribunals and monitoring bodies.

It is our understanding that your regional group has not yet nominated a member to serve in the Consultative Group in its term starting on 1 April 2024. We kindly request that your regional group considers the need to ensure gender parity within the composition of the Consultative Group of the HRC. Such consideration might require the nomination of a woman Ambassador to serve in the Consultative Group in order to ensure gender parity.

We note with concern that in its last composition (from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024), out of four members of the Consultative Group (given the absence of a member from the African group), there were three male and only one female Ambassador from the GRULAC. Additionally, Her Excellency Ms. Claudia Fuentes from Chile served in the Consultative Group only during the HRC 55th session, to cover the position of a male Ambassador, His Excellency Alvaro Moerzinger Pagani from Uruguay. We further observe that the composition of the Consultative Group in the two prior years had only one woman out of four members in each term.

According to the available [data](#), since 2007, a total of 86 Ambassadors have served as members of the Consultative Group, three of whom held the same position during different cycles, making for a total of 89 Ambassadorial appointments to the Consultative Group. Only 17, or 19% of them, have been women.

The Consultative Group itself in its legacy letter for the cycle 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 highlighted the “importance of ensuring a gender-balance representation of its own composition”¹. In addition, they referred to the HRC Advisory Committee Report (A/HRC/47/51) highlighting the historical under-representation of women in its own historical composition and mentioned that “the Consultative Grupo encourages regional groups to

¹ See: Enclosure Letter of the Consultative Group from the term from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 with observations on their work, April 5, 2023. Available at: <https://hrcmeetings.ohchr.org/PresidencyBureau/BureauRegionalGroupsCorrespondence/Correspondence/Fo rms/AllItems.aspx?FilterField1=Year&FilterValue1=2023>.

consider a balanced gender representation when nominating members for the Consultative Group”².

The Consultative Group plays a crucial role in considering, interviewing, selecting and proposing to the President a list of candidates who possess the highest qualifications to be appointed as mandate holders to the Special Procedures. The Special Procedures are key to ensuring a wide range of human rights from a thematic and country-based perspective. Ensuring that gender parity is observed in the composition of the Special Procedures is necessary to preserve their legitimacy, effectiveness, and compliance with the principles of equality and non-discrimination.

In this regard, we observe that the Advisory Committee recommended in its report [2021 report on current levels of representation of women in human rights organs and mechanisms](#), that “[r]egional groups invited to appoint members to the Consultative Group should ensure gender parity in making such appointments.”

Based on the above, we kindly request that your regional group considers the appointment of a woman Ambassador when required to ensure gender parity within the work of the Consultative Group in the term starting in April 2024.

Sincerely,

The GQUAL Secretariat:

Viviana Krsticevic

Maria Noel Leoni

Claudia Martin

Alejandra Vicente

² Idem.