



Chairperson, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen

GQUAL celebrates the adoption of General Recommendation 40 and congratulates the CEDAW Committee for its leadership in placing women at the center of decision-making systems. For GQUAL, a global campaign that aims to achieve gender parity in the composition of international tribunals, organs, and bodies, GR 40 represents a paradigm shift by upholding principles and claims for which we -women- have been fighting for years. The aspiration of GR 40 to become a vehicle for systemic change for women at all levels of decision-making represents a unique opportunity to challenge long held views that have prevented women from enjoying substantive equality in decision-making power in all sectors and spaces, including public, private, domestic and international.

For GQUAL's goals, GR 40 is transformative for three essential aspects. First, it asserts that "equal and inclusive representation" under the treaty must be defined as parity 50:50 between women and men in all their diversity and translated in practice as equal access to and equal power within decision-making systems. Parity is a starting point and universal norm, a legal principle, and a rule of good governance, which requires the sharing of power between women and men as a permanent and core feature of all areas, including political, public, and economic life.

Second, it acknowledges that the increasing challenges in our world require that women be provided access, representation, and recognition with the same power and influence to engage in decision-making spaces at the international and multilateral levels. From issues of international justice, peace and security, sustainable development, and economic growth to climate change, critical decisions that affect our daily lives are increasingly made at the global level; thus, international decision-making is an area where gender parity needs to be pioneered, upheld, and ensured.

Finally, GR 40 strengthens the centrality of Article 8 of the CEDAW Convention as the legal basis to require States to ensure the representation of women in parity with men in international decision-making. As part of that obligation, States must ensure parity in diplomatic appointments and the composition of delegations, develop a foreign policy guided by a gender criterion that makes the empowerment of women and girls a central focus of government policy abroad, and institutionalize parity laws and transparent procedures at the national level for nomination and selection for positions in international organizations.



In sum, GR 40 represents a breakthrough and a shifting point to move towards the adoption of radical systemic changes to ensure that gender parity in all sectors and at all levels, including the international, women are ensured equal and inclusive representation in decision-making. The time for this change is now, and what the CEDAW Committee calls a "surge in parity" must become a reality in the short term. Today marks the beginning of a new journey to start the implementation of the standards that GR 40 upholds. GQUAL is ready to accompany the CEDAW Committee in this transformational process.

- GQUAL Campaign, October 2024