



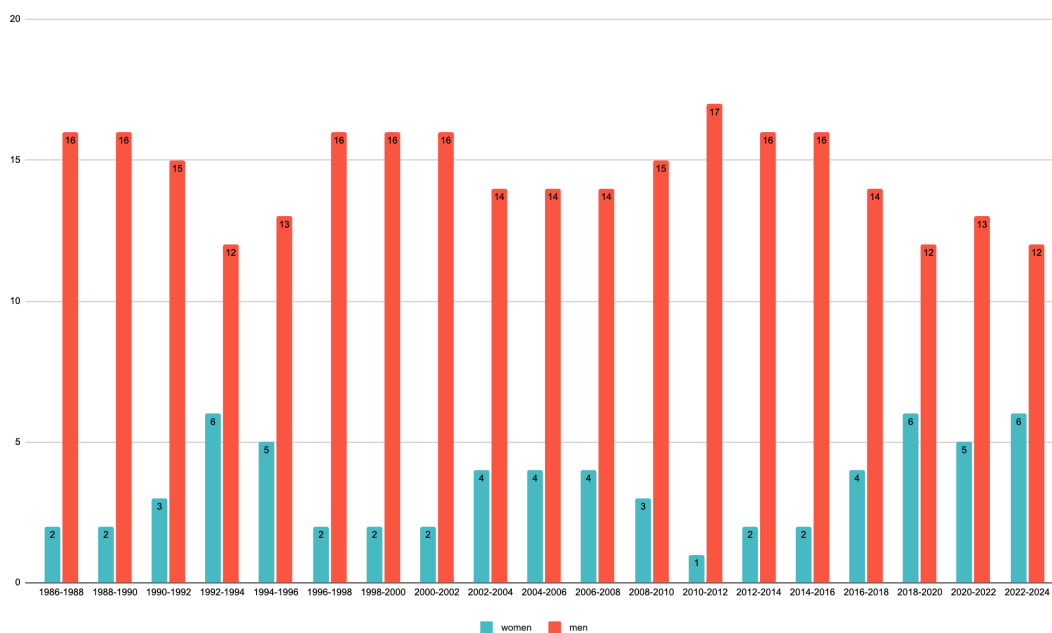
THE GQUAL CAMPAIGN AND THE GLOBAL INITIATIVE FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (GIESCR) CALL ON STATES PARTIES TO DE ICESCR AND THE ECOSOC TO ENSURE GENDER PARITY IN THE NOMINATION AND ELECTION PROCESS OF MEMBER OF THE UN COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS.

On April 9, 2024, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) will elect 9 of the 18 members of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR). The [CESCR](#) is a key United Nations Treaty Body in charge of protecting fundamental human rights related to health, education, food, water, housing, social security, work, and more.

States Parties to the International Covenant on Social, Economic, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) have until November 23, 2023, to nominate candidates to fill these vacancies. [ECOSOC Resolution 1985/17](#) establishes that due consideration must be given to equitable geographical distribution and the representation of different social and legal systems. For the 2024 election of the nine seats, the available positions are distributed across UN regional groups as follows: African States (2 seats), Asia Pacific (2 seats), Eastern Europe (2 seats), Latin American and Caribbean) (1 seat), and Western Europe and Others (2 seats).

At the same time, membership needs to reflect gender balance. According to General Assembly [Resolution 68/268 Strengthening and enhancing the effective functioning of the human rights treaty body system](#), States are encouraged “to give due consideration, as stipulated in the relevant human rights instruments, to equitable geographical distribution, the representation of the different forms of civilization and the principal legal systems, balanced gender representation and the participation of experts with disabilities in the membership of the human rights treaty bodies”

Currently, out of 18 members of the CESCR, twelve are men and six are women, representing only 33% of its current membership. Moreover, it is worth noting that [the CESCR has never achieved gender parity in its 38 years of existence.](#)



Source: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/treaty-bodies/cescr/membership>

By the end of 2023 seven men and two women will end their mandates. This means that at least five women should be elected to achieve gender parity in the CESCR. Member States of the ICESCR have an opportunity in this election process to help overcome the historic underrepresentation of women in the Committee, while at the same time ensuring independent, qualified, and impartial candidates.

Achieving gender parity in the UN Treaty Bodies was highlighted as a specific objective by [UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk](#) in an open letter published on June 9, 2023.

Furthermore, the historic underrepresentation of women in the CESCR was noted by the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee in its report on “Current levels of representation of women in human rights organs and mechanisms: ensuring gender balance” ([A/HRC/47/51](#)) of 21 May 2021. As concluded in the report, the lack of gender balance in international bodies not only affects women’s right to equality, but also erodes the effectiveness of the institutions and limits the range of issues and perspectives that should be part of their legal and political agenda. This is particularly key in the CESCR considering that violations of the rights protected by the ICESCR have on women in all their diversity and the essential role women play in ensuring equal and sustainable development and prosperity for all.

To tackle this problem, States Parties to the ICESCR and to the ECOSOC should consider the specific recommendations put forward by the UN HRC Advisory Committee in its 2021 report, including:

1) Ensuring that more female candidates are identified and nominated by:

- Working with relevant civil society organizations and other non-state actors to collect profiles of qualified women for United Nations human rights positions.
- Disseminating information regarding vacancies, being proactive to ensure that such information reaches qualified women.
- Developing and adopting formal, open and transparent national nomination procedures
- Including gender parity as a specific selection criterion and goal
- Considering the actual and historical gender composition of the respective UN body and committing to nominate an independent and qualified expert of the underrepresented gender

2) Ensure that more women are elected or appointed by:

- Undertaking firm commitments to guarantee gender parity in the election of candidates
- Incorporating gender parity in voting practices
- Implementing target measures, such as encouraging States to commit to electing independent and qualified members of the gender that is underrepresented in that body
- Voting for women candidates in consecutive voting rounds if the minimum targets for parity are not achieved in the first round of votes

We strongly call on States Parties to the ICESCR and to the ECOSOC to ensure gender parity in the composition of the CESCR. States Parties have the chance to strengthen the Committee's function, impact, and legitimacy. The 2024 CESCR elections are an opportunity for change and a tangible step towards a future in which gender parity is not just an ideal but a concrete reality.

GQUAL Campaign

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