

**12 VOICES FOR GENDER PARITY
AT THE INTER-AMERICAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The women undersigned request a determined action from the States Parties to the American Convention on Human Rights to nominate and elect women to the highest Court of human rights in our region in order to achieve gender parity.

During the next General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), to be held in 2021, the States Parties to the American Convention on Human Rights will elect four persons to serve on the Inter-American Court of Human Rights as judges for an initial period of 6 years. Currently, the Inter-American Court has only one female judge and six male judges. Historically, of 39 judicial positions in the Court, only five have been held by women. This requires a decisive, energetic and urgent action by the States Parties to nominate and elect women candidates for the Inter-American Court, since they have assumed the obligation to respect the principle of equality and non-discrimination, including gender equality. This principle of universal application is the cornerstone of universal and regional systems for the protection of human rights, so it must also be projected in the composition of the bodies that make up these systems.

Additionally, the composition of the Court must reflect the commitments made by the highest political bodies of the OAS in this matter. Since 2016, the General Assembly has reiterated the importance of guaranteeing gender representation in the organs of the Inter-American system. In its most recent resolution of October 2020, the General Assembly expressed the commitment of the States of this region to “achieve parity in the composition of the Tribunal, promoting more nominations of women candidates” (AG/RES 2961).

This call for parity is consistent with the Sustainable Development Goals that the States have set at the international level, including explicitly to ensure that women are included in all decision-making spaces and levels. Our continent has highly qualified women jurists in the field of human rights to act as judges. Their appointment to the position should not only be done as a measure to correct gender inequality, but also as a recognition of the human capital and value of women and the importance of their contribution to the protection of human rights in the hemisphere.

This election presents a unique opportunity to transform a historical inequality in the composition of the Tribunal and to make public the real commitment of the States Parties to gender parity. For this reason, we make an energetic call for States Parties to nominate and elect suitable women as judges to serve on the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in order to achieve an equal composition. This step will contribute to consolidating the values and principles of equality, inclusion, representativeness and democratic pluralism to which we aspire on the continent.

Elizabeth Odio Benito

Judge (2016-2021) and President (2020-2021) of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Sonia Picado Sotela

Judge (1989-1994) and Vice-President (1991-1994) of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Gladys Acosta Vargas

Expert (2015-2022) and Vice-Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

Catalina Botero

Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (2008-2014)

Stella Maris Martínez

General Coordinator of the Inter-American Association of Public Defenders and National Public Defender of Argentina

Tracy Robinson

Commissioner (2012-2015) and President (2014-2015) of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Cecilia Medina Quiroga

Judge (2004-2009) and President (2008-2009) of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights

Margarette May Macaulay

Judge of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (2007-2012) and Commissioner (2016-2023) and President (2018-2019) of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

Line Bareiro

Expert of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2011-2014)

Christiana Figueres

Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (2010-2016)

Mónica Pinto

Professor Emeritus of the University of Buenos Aires

Sylvia Steiner

Judge of the International Criminal Court (2003-2016)