

# Press Release

Inter-American Court of Human Rights

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## I/A Court H.R. Protecting Rights

### **INTER-AMERICAN COURT FINALIZES CONFERENCE ON GENDER PARITY IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE**

*San Jose, Costa Rica, March 12, 2021.-* On March 8, 9 and 10, 2021 the Inter-American Court of Human Rights held a Conference in cooperation with the Inter-American Commission of Women (ICW) entitled "Challenges for gender parity in justice: mechanisms and opportunities for overcoming obstacles to the professional advancement of women in the judiciary." The Conference marked International Women's Day on March 8.

Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito, President of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, said, "This event was critical for bringing to bear specific data that would reveal the deep gender gap facing the full participation of women in the administration of justice both locally and internationally, and barriers to meeting parity goals, most especially in high-level positions of representation, decision-making and leadership." Despite the caliber of women jurists in our region, with their excellent professional training and impressive human values, very few ever reach the highest levels of the judiciary, and this led President Odio to highlight "the importance of building synergies to lay the groundwork and promote concrete mechanisms toward the full participation of women in the administration of justice."

The three-day Conference offered three topical panel discussions taking a comprehensive view of the local and international dimensions of this issue, which is clearly paramount in the sphere of human rights protection. The event provided a venue for reflection, where renowned women judges from the national and international circuits joined forces with representatives of international organizations serving women's rights mandates, together with members of civil society to talk about the current situation and discuss ways to narrow the very evident gap.

#### **Panel 1: Bringing Gender Parity to International and Regional Courts**



The event began on March 8 with the first panel discussion, "Bringing Gender Parity to International and Regional Courts." The panel was made up of women judges from the International Criminal Court and the Inter-American Court, who discussed the major challenges for achieving full participation of women in the leadership of international administration of justice, barriers to access and professional advancement in the judiciary, and the challenges that hinder the justice sector from adopting a correct gender perspective in international courts.

The panelists were: Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi, former President of the International Criminal Court; Margarette May Macaulay, Commissioner with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and former Judge on the Inter-American Court; Nancy Hernández, Judge on the Costa Rican Supreme Court, and Sylvia Steiner, former Judge on the International Criminal Court. Judge Elizabeth Odio Benito, President of the Inter-American Court, moderated the panel discussion.

A video recording of the panel discussion can be found [here](#).

## **Panel 2: Outlook for the Participation of Women in Justice**



The second panel discussion took place on March 9 under the title, "Outlook for the Participation of Women in Justice." The guest speakers represented the main International Organizations with mandates for women's rights, as well as members of civil society organizations. They discussed recent conceptual developments on full participation by women in all spheres of public life, with a focus on justice. They also talked about the mechanisms available for overcoming obstacles to equality and hastening the participation of women under conditions of equality. They shed light on some of the ways gender stereotypes are expressed in the administration of justice.

The panelists were: Alejandra Mora Mora, Executive Secretary of the International Women's Commission; Maria-Noel Vaeza, Regional Director of UN Women–Americas and the Caribbean; Vanessa Ruiz, President of the International Association of Women Judges; Viviana Krsticevic, Member of the secretariat for the Gqual campaign, and Julissa Mantilla, Commissioner with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The moderator of the panel was Romina Sijniensky, Assistant Registrar of the Inter-American Court.

A video recording of the panel discussion can be found [here](#).

## **Panel 3: Bringing Gender Parity to every level of National Justice Systems**



The third panel discussion, held on March 10, was entitled: “Bringing Gender Parity to every level of National Justice Systems.” Judges and Chief Justices from the high Courts of Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru portrayed conditions in their particular jurisdictions regarding the gender gap in the administration of justice and took stock of initiatives and mechanisms in place in their countries. They also shared personal experiences with barriers to their own professional development in the judiciary.

The panelists were: Elvia Barrios Alvarado, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Peru; Andrea Muñoz Sánchez, Justice on the Supreme Court of Chile and head of gender affairs; Clara Mota Pimenta, Federal Judge and Coordinator of the Commission to Support and Guide Women in the Judicial Branch of Brazil; Norma Lucía Piña Hernández, Federal Supreme Court Justice from Mexico, and Daniela Salazar Martín, Vice President of the Constitutional Court of Ecuador. Luz Patricia Mejía, Technical Secretary of the Follow-up Mechanism to the Convention of Belém do Pará (MESECVI), moderated the panel discussion.

A video recording of the panel discussion can be found [here](#).

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