

Seven Women in Seventy Years: A Roundtable Discussion on Achieving Gender Parity at the International Law Commission

On the occasion of the 70th Anniversary of the International Law Commission (ILC) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, the Missions of China, Finland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and Turkey have the pleasure to invite you to a round table discussion to be held on **24 May 2018 at 13:15- 14:45 in Conference Rooms 11 and 12.**

The International Law Commission, which is celebrating its seventieth anniversary, in this period has only had a total of seven women members. The first two women who were elected in 2001 were Paula Escarameia of Portugal and Xue Hanqin of China. Since then only five more women were elected, of which four in 2016.

In 2017 UN Secretary General António Guterres launched a new strategy on achieving gender parity at the United Nations in an effort to strengthen the role of women in decision-making and inclusion at all levels of the United Nations.

“Gender parity at the United Nations is an urgent need and a personal priority. It's a moral duty and an operational necessity. The meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making increases effectiveness and productivity, brings new perspectives and solutions to the table, unlocks greater resources, and strengthens efforts across all the three pillars of our work.” UN Secretary General António Guterres

The International Law Commission is an organ of the United Nations General Assembly responsible for the progressive development of international law and its codification. The important policy of the UN Secretary General should also apply to the International Law Commission and requires the participation of the Member States of the United Nations when nominating and electing candidates for the Commission.

The round table will invite the active participation of all who attend in a discussion as to the reasons for this historic gender gap and how it may be bridged.

Opening remarks: Miguel Serpa Soares (Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs and United Nations Legal Counsel)

Moderator: UN Women

Messages from: Xue Hanqin and Marie Jacobsson (Former ILC Members)

Round table discussants: Eduardo Valencia-Ospina (Chairperson of the ILC), Concepción Escobar Hernández, Patrícia Galvão Teles, Marja Lehto and Nilüfer Oral (ILC Members)