



**International  
Disability  
Alliance**



## **CALL TO ACTION TO PROMOTE GENDER PARITY WITHIN THE CRPD COMMITTEE, ALL TREATY BODIES & INTERNATIONAL & REGIONAL BODIES**

In June 2016, elections were held for the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD Committee) which yielded a composition of only one woman member amongst 17 men members, starting from 1 January 2017. This lamentable result has served as an alarm for concerted efforts and action to ensure gender balance across all bodies, including within the United Nations human rights treaty bodies.

Despite explicit references to the need to consider gender balance within the CRPD Committee elections (Article 34(4), CRPD) and treaty body elections generally (General Assembly Resolution 68/28), within representation at the United Nations (Article 8, UN Charter) and at the international level entirely (Article 8, CEDAW), and calls made by the CRPD Committee and civil society for States Parties to be attentive to gender parity within the nominations and elections processes, these calls went unheeded.

The CRPD Committee now stands as the treaty body with the fewest number of women members, and could represent the worst example of gender parity in treaty body history. It is all the more deplorable considering that non-discrimination and equality between men and women are enshrined as general principles within the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and that there is a specific provision concerning women with disabilities which calls on States Parties “to take all appropriate measures to ensure the full development, advancement and empowerment of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms set out in the present Convention.” Further, the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals seek to realise the human rights of all and to achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Goal 5).

GQUAL aims to achieve change both, by getting a significant number of States to incorporate gender parity as a criteria in their nomination and voting (Pledge GQUAL), and by helping to change or introduce new rules, guidelines and mechanisms that can help promote women’s equal representation into the practices, policies, and normative framework of the targeted international bodies. To be effective, these efforts need to be complemented with a) improved and more transparent and participatory selection processes at the national and international level, b) a better understanding of the effects of women’s absence or under-re-

presentation in these spaces and of the rights that may be affected, and c) the consolidation of a robust and engaged global network.

In light of the negative result of gender representation of the CRPD Committee and the general picture of gender disparity across international monitoring bodies, all actors (States, NHRIs, independent monitoring mechanisms, treaty body and other human rights experts, civil society organisations, and women’s rights, disability rights, and human rights advocates, etc) are encouraged to sign this call to action. By doing so, we, the undersigned:

- \* Sign the GQUAL Declaration and join the GQUAL campaign to commit to promoting gender parity including across all treaty bodies, other international bodies and tribunals, Special procedures, and regional and international organisations;**
- \* Publicly pledge to guarantee parity when nominating and electing candidates for all treaty bodies, other international bodies and tribunals, Special procedures, and regional and international organisations;**
- \* Commit, in particular, to promoting the nomination of women candidates towards achieving an all women’s candidates list for the 2018 CRPD Committee elections (during which nine out of the eighteen seats within the Committee will be filled and given that the mandate of the sole remaining woman member will come to an end);**
- \* Commit to promoting the inclusion and participation of women with disabilities in decision-making at national, regional and international fora across all sectors, among others gender equality, disability rights, human rights and development.**

Signature: