

Ensuring Gender Equality in Constitutions: Engaging the Next Generation of Stakeholders

UN Women and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) co-hosted an international symposium on the theme: **“Ensuring Gender Equality in Constitutions: Engaging the Next Generation of Stakeholders,”** in Washington, D.C from April 12-13, 2017. It was organized within the context of promoting gender-responsive teaching and research related to constitution-making and constitution-building, using tools such as the [Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database](#).

The participating students and law professors were from 11 universities comprising the Adam Mickiewicz University (Poland); the University of Chicago, Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania (USA); University of Birmingham (UK), University of Westminster (UK); Università Bocconi and Università degli Studi di Milano (Italy); Universidad de Alcalá, (Spain); the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Israel); and the University of Malawi (Malawi). The Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs of Princeton University (UAS) was also invited to the event.



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During the opening ceremony, Ms. Ulemu-Hannah Kanyongolo of the University of Malawi, elaborated on the constitutional reform process, which ultimately resulted in an increase in the age of marriage from 15 to 18 years and what it meant for girls in her country.

Students shared findings of their research on various issues related to women’s constitutional rights, such as harmful practices, discrimination in family law, property rights, women in leadership, and legislative advances in women’s rights. The symposium also included a public event on the sub theme **“Conflict and Constitutions: Ensuring Women's Rights.”** Kathleen Kuehnast, Director, Gender Policy and Strategy of USIP provided welcoming remarks, while Susan Deller Ross, Professor of Law at Georgetown University moderated the panel discussion. The panelists comprised Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, Executive Director, UN Women; Habiba Osman, Programme Specialist, Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls Programme UN Women Malawi; Jason Gluck, UNDP Policy Specialist, Political Dialogues and Constitutional Processes; Robin Lerner, Senior Adviser and Counselor in the Secretary of State’s Office of Global Women’s Issues, US Department of State; and Justice Yassmin Barrios Aguilar, President Judge, High Court, Guatemala.



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The two-day symposium concluded with a commitment from students, scholars, and law professors to foster cooperation, networking and enhanced gender mainstreaming in teaching, learning and research in constitutional developments worldwide.