

INTERNATIONAL  
GENDER CHAMPIONS  
ANNUAL REPORT

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INTERNATIONAL  
**GENDER**  
CHAMPIONS

# SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

## #INTGenderChampions



**Doreen Bogdan-Martin** @ITUsecGen

Breaking the glass ceiling as the 1st woman @ITUsecGen was a huge step. Tonight, a new chapter in @ITU's journey towards #GenderEquality begins. Excited to work with fellow #INTGenderChampions to close the gender digital divide and build a more inclusive digital future

**Swiss Embassy in the Netherlands** @Swiss\_NL

Currently live-streaming the online campaign launch "I Say No To Sexism Online" organised by @INTGenderChamps Secretariat in Geneva. With #FocalPoints of #TheHague #Hub we promote gender equality through spreading awareness by launching the Social Media Challenge #LogIntoEquality

**UN GA President** @UN\_PGA

Sexual abuse, exploitation and harassment are entrenched in the abuse of power and gender inequality.

We all have a responsibility, especially those of us in positions of power or influence, to speak up and to speak out against such wrongdoings

I thank @swiss\_un for the invitation to the interactive awareness-raising theatre event for prevention and action regarding sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (#PSEA1) and for their commitment towards this critical issue.

**CTBTO** @CTBTO

Speaking at biannual @INTGenderChamps meeting, @RobFloyd said #CTBTO strives to ensure staff, talented female & young scientists, and experts with disabilities are empowered to contribute to our goal of banning nuclear tests worldwide. #GenderChampions #DiversityMatters

**Matthew Wilson** @Matthewbarbados

Absolute privilege to moderate event on 'men engage' with the wonderful @UNCTAD SG @RGrynsSpan heading an excellent panel of women sharing their experiences on #genderequality & what men- especially the Ambassadors there- can do better. Thanks @PPJ\_Bekkers for the vision

**International Gender Champions** 3,032 followers 6d · Edited ·

Meet the #INTGenderChampions Nairobi Hub!

Last week, Nairobi-based Champions came together for their Annual Champions meeting, hosted by Swiss Ambassador and Permanent Representative **Valentin Zellweger**.

**International Gender Champions (IGC)** @INTGenderChamps

We celebrated #IWD2023 with a thought-provoking 4th edition of our Geneva Gender Debate - this time on #FeministForeignPolicy.

Thank you for an enlightening debate @agan\_chapagain, Caecilia Riederer, @Cfuentesjujo, @BichlerMarc and @DariusFarman!

#INTGenderChampions

**UN today** @un\_today

November's magazine is live today, focussing on the work of the International Gender Champion leadership network and more.

Read the magazine online here: [untoday.org/project/un-tod...](https://untoday.org/project/un-tod...)

All articles can be read online here: [untoday.org](https://untoday.org)

#UNTODay #genderchampions

**Ambassador Sheba Crocker** @USAmbGVA

Pleased to participate in this discussion among Geneva #INTGenderChampions hosted by @WIPO DG Tang & to continue efforts to ensure multilateral strategy & policy include explicit, measurable advances that promote gender equality & the rights & empowerment of women & girls.



## FOREWORD

In a world facing substantial rollbacks on women's rights, committed leadership is a pivotal force for change. Leaders can and must drive meaningful progress towards gender equality by shaping policies, influencing perceptions and creating the momentum needed to overcome obstacles. Leveraging this influence, both at personal and organisational levels, is the essence and mission of the International Gender Champions (IGC).

With our Annual Report, we reflect on joint accomplishments and showcase the creative ways in which Champions have translated their IGC commitments into tangible and impactful actions for gender equality. I hope that this report will not only serve as a retrospective lens on the past year's activities, but also inspire future action. Progress is not merely a concept, but the result of shared dedication towards deepening our work and leveraging setbacks as opportunities for creating new impetus for positive, lasting change.

Throughout 2023, the IGC network has exemplified the transformative potential of partnerships by uniting leaders, organisations, sectors and regions. This report highlights some of the excellent initiatives that were undertaken by Champions working together in the IGC's six hubs. Examples include the launch of a Champion-led initiative to engage men for gender equality in Geneva; workshops on promoting gender parity in the international justice system in The Hague; the use of interactive theatre as an innovative method for deconstructing workplace sexism in New York; and mentoring programmes to build women's leadership and a female talent pipeline in Vienna.

The report also celebrates milestones in the implementation of the IGC's strategic objectives. This includes the creation of two new Impact Groups in Geneva. The Climate Impact Group will promote gender-responsive climate action and women's equitable representation in climate negotiations. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Impact Group will strengthen dialogue and international cooperation to advance the WPS Agenda, with a particular focus on human rights and conflict prevention ahead of the Summit of the Future.

To further our work towards eliminating all forms of gender-based violence (GBV), the IGC Secretariat, in partnership with the United Nations International Computing Centre (UNICC), launched a new campaign: *'I Say No To Sexism Online'*. Globally, Champions participated in the campaign to take an active stance against technology-facilitated GBV and create a chain of positive messaging for safe, respectful and inclusive online spaces.

I thank you for your strong leadership commitment. I also salute the dedication and professionalism of the Secretariat that has been so instrumental in all these achievements and remains committed to continuing to support your work.

As we look ahead into 2024, I invite you to step up your endeavours to embed gender equality into the fabric of your organisations.

I urge all of you to stay vigilant in adhering, in a more dedicated manner, to the Panel Parity Pledge which we will be relaunching in 2024, and to meaningfully engage with those traditionally marginalised from power. Also, in 2024 we will remain committed to working towards our strategic objectives of promoting the GBV Pledge, strengthening the Climate-Gender Nexus and diversifying the IGC network. In addition to these, the Global Board has set a new strategic objective to leverage digital technologies for gender equality and counter the risk that such technologies can deepen existing inequalities.

For the IGC to succeed in its mission, we must all act as role models and changemakers within our own spheres of influence. I wish to thank all of you for the time, energy, and resilience with which you propel forward our aspirations. It will require each of us to intensify our efforts and take on our shared responsibility to bring about the change we need. We must fully utilise our positions and mandates to grow stronger and more determined in our work towards gender equality. Together, let us create a world in which gender equality is not just a distant goal, but a lived reality. There are lots of successes we can build on. Surely, we can do it.

**Martin Chungong**

Secretary General  
Inter-Parliamentary Union  
Chair of the IGC Global Board



# THE IGC GLOBAL BOARD AND GOVERNANCE

In 2023, the Global Board welcomed several new members, reflecting the IGC's diverse constituency. In Geneva, we were delighted to welcome Ambassador Matthew Wilson, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, Philip Lynch of the International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) and Doreen Bogdan-Martin of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). Furthermore, we are pleased to announce that Audrey Azoulay of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Roger Yates of Plan International's Regional Office for East and Southern Africa and the Middle East have both joined the Global Board, representing the Paris and Nairobi Hubs, respectively. Finally, Ambassador Hugh Adsett of Canada to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has taken over the role from his predecessor. We look forward to the upcoming appointment of the currently vacant New York seat in 2024.

The tenure of Ambassador Athaliah Molokomme, Permanent Representative of Botswana to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, was renewed, as well as that of the Chair of the IGC Global Board, Martin Chungong of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Meanwhile, the Global Board extended its thanks to Anne-Sophie Lois of Plan International and Ambassador Jean Kimani, Permanent Representative of Kenya to UN-Habitat in Nairobi, for their engagement as their terms came to an end.

The Chair and members of the IGC Global Board work in close collaboration with the IGC Secretariat based in Geneva. Since 2019, the Secretariat has been hosted by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP) with the long-standing support of the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA). In 2023, the IGC secured funding from the UN Foundation to support the Nairobi Hub and the US Permanent Mission in Geneva provided a grant for 2023-2024, which advanced the Secretariat's activities and communications efforts. The Global Board and Secretariat persist in their efforts to secure additional funds to launch new projects, continue fostering community engagement and amplify Champions' initiatives.

During its November meeting, the Global Board approved a revised Panel Parity Pledge – which is outlined in detail in the 'Commitments' sec-



**Martin Chungong**  
Secretary General,  
Inter-Parliamentary  
Union, Chair of the  
IGC Global Board



**Hugh Adsett**  
Ambassador  
and Permanent  
Representative,  
Embassy of Canada  
to the Netherlands



**Audrey Azoulay**  
Director General,  
UN Educational,  
Scientific  
and Cultural  
Organization  
(UNESCO)



**Doreen  
Bogdan-Martin**  
Secretary-General,  
International  
Telecommunication  
Union (ITU)



**Rafael  
Mariano Grossi**  
Director-General,  
International Atomic  
Energy Agency  
(IAEA)



**Caitlin  
Kraft-Buchman**  
CEO / Founder,  
Women@TheTable



**Jürg Lauber**  
Ambassador  
and Permanent  
Representative,  
Permanent Mission  
of Switzerland  
to the UN and  
other International  
Organisations  
in Geneva



**Philip Lynch**  
Director,  
International  
Service for Human  
Rights (ISHR)



**Athaliah  
Molokomme**  
Ambassador  
and Permanent  
Representative,  
Permanent Mission  
of the Republic  
of Botswana to  
the UN and other  
International  
Organisations in  
Geneva



**Maimunah  
Mohd-Sharif**  
Executive Director,  
UN-Habitat



**Matthew Wilson**  
Ambassador  
and Permanent  
Representative,  
Permanent Mission  
of Barbados to  
the UN and other  
International  
Organisations in  
Geneva



**Roger Yates**  
Regional Director,  
East and Southern  
Africa and the  
Middle East,  
Plan International

tion – and a new strategic objective on leveraging digital technologies for gender equality. As of January 2024, this new strategic objective will aim to raise awareness, generate synergies, and identify concrete areas for action on:

- Closing the digital gender divide to accelerate gender equality, uphold and advance human rights;
- Using technology to enhance disaggregated data collection, and develop more gender-responsive, intersectional policies;
- Mitigating gender bias in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and using AI as a force for good.

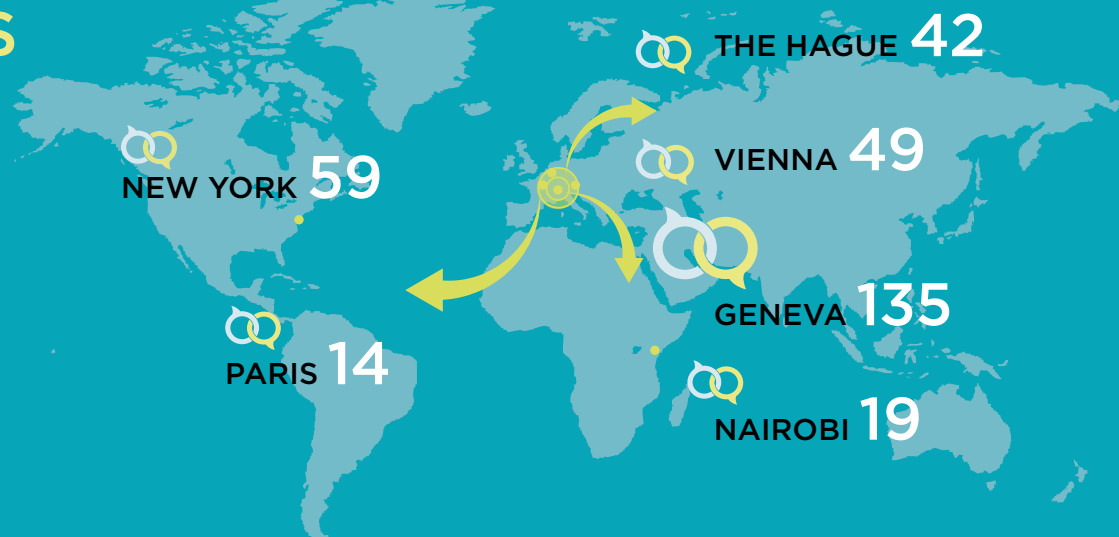
# OUR NETWORK

**321**  
**CHAMPIONS**

united by our  
commitment to break  
down gender barriers  
a unique network of leaders  
from over 60 countries



**INTERNATIONAL  
CHAMPIONS** **3**



## IGC's four strategic objectives are:

1. Strengthen the Climate-Gender Nexus through the creation of new Impact Groups in each hub;
2. Implement the Gender-Based Violence Pledge through concrete commitments and actions;
3. Diversify the network to include more Champions from across regions and sectors;
4. Leverage the potential of digital technologies for gender equality.

# CHAPTER I

## COMMITMENTS

### CORE PLEDGES

#### Panel Parity Pledge

The Panel Parity Pledge is at the heart of the IGC commitment. By making the Pledge, Champions commit to no longer participate as speakers or moderators in single-sex panels, and to advocate for gender balance. In 2023, **72 per cent of Champions reported successfully adhering to the Panel Parity Pledge**. This constitutes a decrease compared to 2022 (77 per cent) and 2021 (89 per cent). According to the responses received, of those Champions who reported not having fully adhered to the Pledge, 83 per cent participated in no more than two single-sex panels throughout 2023, and the majority participated in just one single-sex panel. 81 per cent of the single-sex panels reported were all-female and 19 per cent all-male.

Meanwhile, when asked how often they requested panel organisers to improve gender balance, 71 per cent of Champions responded either never or less than 10 per cent of the time. Only 5 per cent reported declining to participate in a panel because it was all-female or all-male.

Whilst originally designed to foster the inclusion of women in male-dominated panels, the Pledge is also intended to apply to all-female panels. The Global Board recognises that women have been and continue to be historically underrepresented across many spheres. However, noting that all-female panels are most common on topics of gender equality and women's rights, the Board sees men's engagement in these topics as vital to transforming social norms. It encourages all Champions to send a strong message that gender equality concerns us all. The Pledge is a tool to create a positive mindset for inclusion and leverage diverse points of view to generate sustainable and innovative solutions.

To strengthen the Pledge, the IGC's Global Board adopted the '**Panel Parity Pledge Reloaded**' to promote diversity, ensure meaningful participation beyond numeric representation and promote safe spaces for civil society representatives.

#### Share of all-male and all-female panels among reported single-sex panels



## As of January 2024, the revised Panel Parity Pledge will feature the following components:

**Intersectionality:** commit to diverse panel compositions that reflect not only gender balance, but a broad spectrum of social identities, including geography, age and other elements of diversity.

**Guidelines for moderators:** methods to ensure equal and meaningful participation of all panellists, promote inclusive and respectful discussions, actively engage underrepresented voices, and speak out against discriminatory attitudes and behaviours.

**Safe and inclusive language:** promote the use of inclusive language in panel discussions to challenge persistent stereotypes and discriminatory norms.

**Timing:** organise panel discussions and events within working hours, wherever possible.

**Civil society engagement:** provide guidance towards actively including members of local feminist civil society and putting mechanisms in place to allow for the safe participation of human and environmental rights defenders, who often experience reprisals.

## Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Pledge

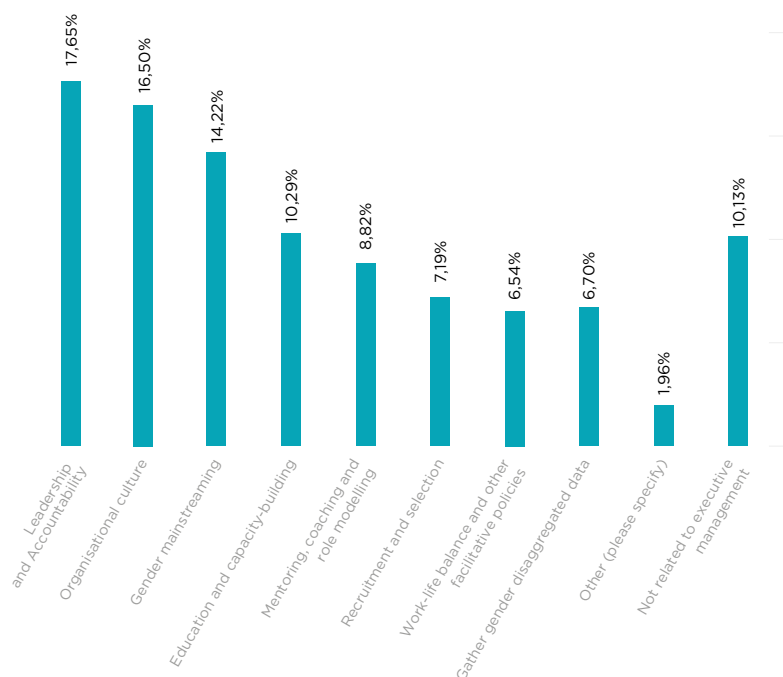
The GBV Pledge – a core commitment since 2022 – commits Champions to stand for zero-tolerance of any form of GBV, sexist attitudes, and behaviours. **In 2023, a majority (77 per cent) of Champions stated they had spoken up publicly and privately against GBV and sexism.** Meanwhile, 65 per cent reported having initiated activities to create and maintain safe and respectful workplaces. 49 per cent strengthened support and accountability mechanisms in their workplace and field of work, whilst 41 per cent applied an intersectional approach to their work. Finally, 30 per cent reported participating in the IGC's '*I Say No To Sexism Online*' campaign, to raise awareness about the dangers of technology-facilitated GBV.

## Personal Commitments

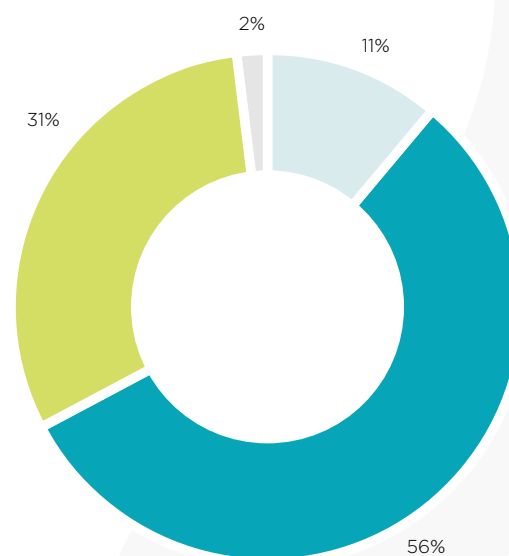
Upon joining – and at the beginning of each calendar year – Champions are asked to make two personal commitments to advance gender equality either in their programmatic work and/or through the executive management of their organisation. Assisted by the [2023 Commitments Guide](#), Champions devised a total of 581 personal commitments throughout the year. They were encouraged to make these Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (S.M.A.R.T) to optimise their chances of successfully implementing them.

## Commitments related to executive management

(each commitment can touch upon multiple areas)

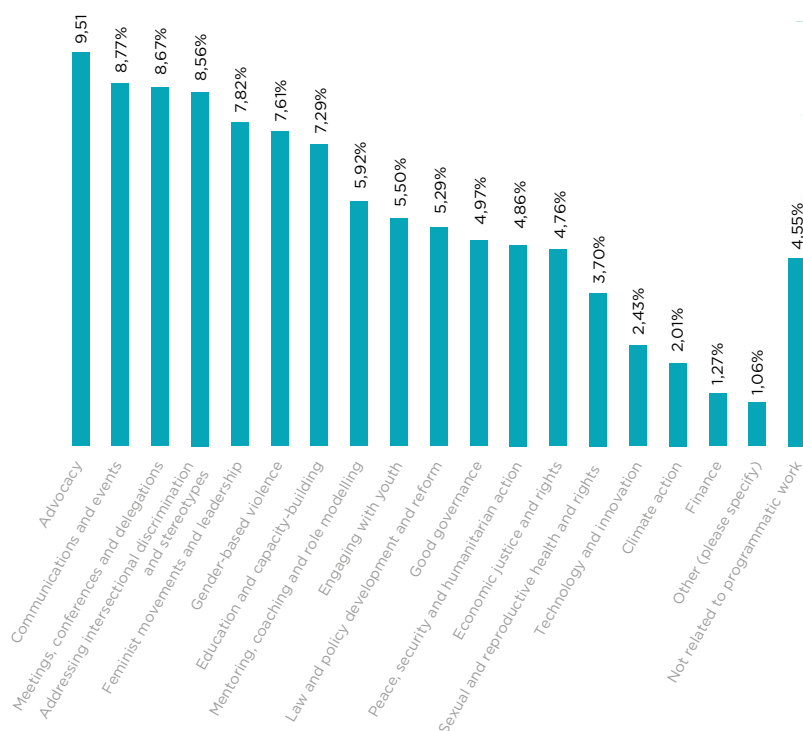


## 2023 Commitments Level of Achievement



## Commitments related to programmatic work

(each commitment can touch upon multiple areas)



We have successfully accomplished this Commitment. We will replace it with a new Commitment

We have partially accomplished this Commitment but we plan to continue our work to establish long-term success

We have successfully accomplished this Commitment, but we plan to continue our work to establish long-term success

This Commitment proved too difficult to achieve. We will replace it with a new Commitment

# ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF 2023 COMMITMENTS

Champions are tasked with assessing their progress in fulfilling their personal commitments annually, reflecting on both their accomplishments and the obstacles encountered during implementation. They do so by completing the IGC Annual Survey, which serves as the IGC's main accountability mechanism. In addition to providing a snapshot of 2023 priorities, the survey facilitates the identification of trends and patterns over several years.

In 2023, **internal commitments predominantly focused on leadership and accountability (18 per cent), organisational culture (17 per cent) and gender mainstreaming (14 per cent)**. These results reflect the continued importance of strengthening institutional capacity to ensure gender-related issues are being addressed across organisations. Other areas that Champions worked on included education, capacity-building, mentoring, coaching and role modelling. Comparatively, only a small portion of Champions decided to address work-life balance and other facilitative policies (7 per cent) or gather gender disaggregated data (7 per cent).

Meanwhile, **commitments relating to programmatic work were mainly centred around advocacy (10 per cent), communications and events (9 per cent), and meetings, conferences and delegations (9 per cent)**. Commitments also had thematic focus areas, addressing both intersectional discrimination and stereotypes (9 per cent), and gender-based violence (8 per cent) amongst other topics. Champions also prioritised support for feminist movements and leadership (8 per cent). Results for commitments relating to climate action and technology and innovation (2 per cent each), as well as finance (1 per cent) were similar to 2022.

**Two-thirds (67 per cent) of commitments reported in the 2023 Annual Survey were successfully accomplished.** This figure remains stable and consistent with results of past years. One-third (31 per cent) of commitments, according to Champions, were partially accomplished. 85 per cent of Champions agreed or strongly agreed that the impact of their commitments was significant.

Once more, Champions saw time constraints (31 per cent) and insufficient resources (31 per cent), including staff and budget, as the biggest obstacles to achieving their commitments. These results highlight the importance of crafting realistic commitments that can comfortably be implemented within the span of twelve months. However, this also reflects some

Champions' preference to work towards fulfilling more long-term commitments with lasting impact. Regardless of the nature of the commitment, providing adequate human and financial resources is key to accelerating progress.

Overall, 2023 survey results are remarkably similar to those of 2022, illustrating a certain level of continuity in both individual priorities and challenges. When looking at thematic focus areas, it is encouraging that Champions have kept issues such as GBV and addressing intersectional discrimination and stereotypes at the top of their agendas. It is key that these remain primary issues as the world faces backlashes in these areas. **Only a small number of commitments are related to climate action, and technology and innovation.** This suggests that connections between these thematic areas and gender equality are either not fully acknowledged and/or treated as separate portfolios.

# COMMITMENTS IN ACTION



## Elena Sokova

Executive Director, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP)

“

The VCDNP collaborated with the EU Delegation to the International Organisations in Vienna to organise a half-day career event on 6 July 2023, titled 'Empowering the Next Generation of Women in the Nuclear Field'. The event aimed to inform and empower young women interested in a career in the majority male nuclear field and brought together 50 interns and junior staff from 34 countries, working at the IAEA, CTBTO, UNODA, World Institute for Nuclear Security, Open Nuclear Network, and at many permanent missions in Vienna. The event show[ed] that there are many ways to make an impact in the nuclear field, be it as a diplomat, at an international organisation, as a policy researcher, or a scientific expert. Participants drilled deeper into key topics in four discussion groups; for example, how to modernise working methods and workplace cultures in the nuclear field. Participants had the opportunity to connect one-on-one with EU Ambassador Klement and Executive Director Sokova as well as with CTBTO Executive Secretary Dr. Floyd and the Ambassadors of Chile, El Salvador, Latvia, and Spain – all Gender Champions.

”



## Daren Tang

Director General, World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

“

Throughout 2023, I significantly elevated our commitment to advancing women's involvement in innovation and intellectual property (IP) and worked with WIPO member states and other stakeholders to align efforts with the IP and Gender Action Plan (IPGAP), WIPO's strategic initiative publicly unveiled in April 2023. We intensified our work to encourage and assist governments in incorporating gender considerations into their policies and programmes related to innovation, IP, and entrepreneurship for women. We employed new ways to communicate and connect with women to help make IP more meaningful and relevant to their personal experiences such as through storytelling, social media, and customised presentations. Our commitment also extended to the enhancement and expansion of sex-disaggregated data collection methodologies and analyses with both existing and new partners, set to continue with focused initiatives in 2024. Together with governments, small business intermediaries, civil society, and NGOs around the world, we actively collaborated to conceive and deliver impactful projects serving women entrepreneurs, and women-led businesses and start-ups, including from indigenous peoples and local communities.

”



## Ambassador Burhan Gafoor

Permanent Representative of Singapore to the United Nations in New York

“

In line with Singapore's commitment to promote gender equality and the advancement of women as integral and equal members of society, the Permanent Mission of Singapore has participated in various events on gender equality, including co-organising an informal dialogue with the Women's International Forum, titled 'Women as Leaders and Changemakers for a Sustainable Future' on the sidelines of the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67), which engaged about 50 women Permanent Representatives, as well as sessions organised by the Group of Friends of Women, Peace and Security, which Singapore is part of.

”



### Alix Vuillemin

Executive Director, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice

“

In 2023, Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice took the lead in several transformative initiatives, specifically concentrating on raising awareness and promoting gender expertise among international criminal law practitioners. A significant milestone was the 'Training of Trainers on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine', a collaborative effort with the Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group. This initiative aimed to empower local advocates by providing them with knowledge and tools to effectively address conflict-related sexual violence. [It] also established a network of dedicated advocates in Ukraine. In tandem with this effort, we partnered with Korea Future to co-organise training sessions centred on survivor-focused documentation of sexual and gender-based violence in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). We also launched our report on 'Judicial Approaches on Sexual and Gender-Based Crimes at the International Criminal Court' through a discussion with practitioners at the 2023 Assembly of State Parties in New York. These initiatives facilitated meaningful knowledge exchange and generated actionable commitments towards gender parity.

”



### Ambassador Gillian Bird

of Australia in France

“

At the Australian Embassy in Paris, we advocate for gender equality and equal rights through our public diplomacy program. Utilising our exhibition space and auditorium, we have organised bespoke events to target specific issues. The opening night of our current exhibition, 'Blak Rainbow: the art of Dylan Mooney', attended by LGBTQIA+ associations from French ministries and multilateral organisations, was a proud demonstration of Australia's gender and racial inclusivity. Earlier this year, our Songlines exhibition, a collaboration with the Musée du Quai Branly, was a celebration of some of the remarkable artists amongst Australia's First nations, many of them women, but also an opportunity to share the story of the Seven Sisters as they journeyed across Australia. As one of the artists explained, one of the story's many teachings is the need to protect and support our young sisters and daughters. At our Women in Entrepreneurship event in April, we brought together Australian and French businesswomen to discuss equal economic opportunities, obstacles that persist for women entrepreneurs, and the changes that need to be made to overcome them.

”



### Luther Bois Anukur

Regional Director, Eastern and Southern Africa, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)

“

The main topic of discussion at one of the regional senior leaders' meetings this year was the regional gender equality policy and the IUCN action plan to bring it to pass. I co-facilitated the conversations with the regional gender specialist, and we both concentrated on coming to a consensus on how to boost capacity at the national level. As the primary point of contact, it was decided that the argument for a gender country focal point was essential. The focal persons are in charge of involving all staff members in gender issues through various initiatives that are implemented, policy engagements, and ongoing updates to ensure that all staff members receive accurate and timely information. The focal persons have made it possible for staff at the national level to learn about the gender status of different initiatives, including information on their implementation, outcomes, and impacts.

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## CHAPTER II

# IMPACT

# TAKING JOINT ACTION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The IGC Impact Groups are vehicles for advancing gender equality by addressing gender blind spots in policy and practice. By bringing together Champions across organisations and sectors, they enable Champions to de-silo their work and achieve collectively what they cannot achieve alone. In 2023, established Impact Groups continued their trajectory while new ones emerged.

## Disarmament

The Disarmament Impact Group is an expert forum that seeks to promote dialogue, shared knowledge and the pursuit of concrete opportunities to advance gender-responsive action within disarmament processes. The group is currently co-chaired by the following Champions: Robin Geiss, Director of the UN Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR); Ambassador Amanda Gorely, Permanent Representative of Australia to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva; Ambassador Julia Imene-Chanduru, Permanent Representative of Namibia to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva. Ambassador Noel White, Permanent Representative of Ireland to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva has also joined the group.

In 2023, the Disarmament Impact Group and the broader disarmament community carried

out activities to **promote gender equality, inclusion and diversity across arms control and disarmament fora.**

Collaborating with several member states, the Impact Group coordinated the submission of a working paper to the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The paper '[Taking forward gender mainstreaming efforts in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty](#)' explored practical ways to promote gender analysis and to support women's participation and leadership across all pillars of the NPT: nuclear non-proliferation, disarmament, and peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In September, the Impact Group, together with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), launched an updated version of the factsheet on [Gender and Diversity in the Convention on Cluster Munitions \(CCM\)](#). Tailored to disarmament delegates, the factsheet offered information about the gendered impacts of cluster munitions remnants and the importance of incorporating gender and diversity considerations in the implementation of the CCM.

In 2023, UNIDIR upgraded its [Gender and Disarmament Online Hub](#) by adding new visuals and the latest data on gender balance and gender perspectives in arms control and disarmament processes. The Online Hub also offers ideas for Gender Champions on how to address the gender dimensions of international security affairs.

## Representation

The Geneva Representation Impact Group is co-chaired by Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU, and Caitlin Kraft-Buchman, IGC Co-founder and CEO of Women@TheTable. Continuing their work on the Gender Responsive Assemblies Toolkit, developed in 2018 with the Permanent Mission of Sweden to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva and a wide range of International Organisations, the Impact Group focused on ensuring equality in numbers and influence in international decision-making.

Early in 2023, the Impact Group, in collabora-

First session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), in Vienna © UN Photo/Ana Moruja Nigro



tion with the IGC Secretariat, contributed to the elaboration of the upcoming [General Recommendation 40 \(GR40\)](#) by the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to focus on the equal and inclusive representation of women in decision-making systems through the submission of a [written contribution](#) to the Committee's consultation process. The IGC contribution underlined the central aspects of the [Gender Responsive Assemblies Toolkit](#) and advocated for the application of good practices by IGC member organisations in mainstreaming gender-sensitive processes in international meetings and fora. This includes tools that can be applied before, during and after an assembly. This comprehensive plan of action aims to shift paradigms by role modelling gender-inclusiveness in the international policy shaping stage, creating new impetus for women's leadership and gender-responsive outcomes.

**The CEDAW Committee's decision to develop a new General Recommendation on women in decision-making systems** emerged amidst intersecting crises that require new models of governance. The contribution of the Impact Group builds upon article 8 of the CEDAW Convention which requires States parties to ensure women's equal role in representing their governments at the international level and their right to participate in the work of International Organisations on equal terms with men.

The IPU and Women@TheTable are separately key partners in the development of GR40. Invited as a main speaker during a half-day public event organised by the CEDAW Committee on 22 February 2023, Martin Chungong introduced both IPU's key lessons learned at parliamentary level and the IGC Representation Impact Group's guidance. He called for applying concrete policies and actions with the aim to reach **parity in representation** and to ensure **gender-sensitive decision-making** processes. Caitlin Kraft-Buchman organised the AI Impact research and convening on the topic for GR40.

The Impact Group also continued to promote the Gender Gap App (G-app), an open-source software conceived by Women@TheTable, ideated with IPU, IUCN, WMO, WIPO, UNAIDS and UN Women, and built pro bono by Thoughtworks, a global software company. The G-app works by taking speaker demographics and session recordings and analyses who speaks on which topics, with how much time and influence, visualising who gets to speak and who gets heard.

In March 2023, the G-App was presented to parliamentarians attending the 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in New York. **The G-App was highlighted as an example of good use of new technologies in addressing the gender divide** through data-driven solutions. It was presented to an audience of 75 parliamentarians from 23



*IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Türk, and Nicole Ameline, Member of the CEDAW Committee, at the parliamentary roundtable organised by IPU and OHCHR, 22 June © Pierre Albouy/OHCHR*



*IPU Secretary General Martin Chungong presenting at a public event on GR40 organised by the CEDAW Committee, 22 February*



*Caitlin Kraft-Buchman at parliamentary event organised by the IPU and UN Women at CSW67, 7 March © IPU*

countries, attending the annual IPU-UN Women parliamentary meeting at CSW. Thoughtworks hosted an evening reception for the members of parliament at its New York headquarters.

## Oceans

In 2023, the Impact Group on Research and Oceans for Women (IGROW) marked significant milestones and hosted impactful events, advancing its mission to enhance women's participation in ocean affairs, notably marine science and ocean governance.

World Oceans Day celebrations on 8 June marked a pivotal moment for IGROW and the vital contributions of women scientists in deep-sea research. IGROW, co-chaired by the International Seabed Authority's (ISA) Secretary-General Michael W. Lodge and Ambassador Viliami Va'inga Tōnē, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Tonga to the UN in New York, commemorated its **first anniversary as a platform for collaborative action to increase women's participation in ocean affairs**. A webinar on women in deep-sea research showcased inspiring testimonials from women scientists, including Dr. Kirsty McQuaid, the 3rd recipient of the ISA Secretary-General Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research. IGROW also developed a [short video](#) to highlight persisting gender gaps in ocean affairs.

IGROW's 2023 work built on the success of initiatives like the Women in Deep-Sea Research project (WIDSR), which involved collaboration with ISA, the UN Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries, and Small Island Developing States (OHRLLS), as well as governments, and academia.

IGROW leveraged the partnership between ISA and the UN Technology Bank for Least Developed Countries (UNTB-LDC), which was launched at the UN Conference for Least Developed Countries (LDC5) held in Doha in March 2023, and corresponding implementation of the joint project '*Building and developing capacities of least developed countries in deep-sea-bed related science, technology and innovation in support of sustainable development of blue emerging economies*' to promote **women's empowerment and leadership in ocean science and technology**. Recognising the need for diverse skills and perspectives in marine scientific research and engineering, IGROW collaborated with stakeholders across different sectors to develop and implement initiatives that foster professional development opportunities for women in traditionally male-dominated fields.

The 2023 ISA Secretary-General Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research, which spotlights exceptional women scientists, was presented to Rima Browne from the Cook Islands. As a technical officer specialising in Geographic Information Systems, Rima Browne's exceptional contributions to mapping and improving understanding of the Blue Pacific were celebrated during the 28th session of the ISA Assembly in July.

Looking ahead, IGROW remains dedicated to its mission. With plans for further outreach, IGROW seeks to encourage leaders from other sectors to join the IGC network and contribute to its ongoing efforts to ensure gender parity and empowerment in ocean affairs. IGROW's commitment to advocacy, capacity-building, and collaboration sets the stage for continued action for sustainable development.



Trainees of ISA's Contractors Training Programme on a vessel during at-sea training



Rima Browne, recipient of the ISA Secretary-General Award for Excellence in Deep-Sea Research

## Climate Impact Group (NEW)

Considering the compelling evidence indicating that climate change and environmental degradation disproportionately impact women and girls, the IGC has made it a strategic priority to strengthen the Climate-Gender Nexus. In line with this objective, a Geneva-based Climate Impact Group emerged during 2023, co-chaired by Elise Buckle, Co-founder of SHE Changes Climate; Jagan Chapagain, Secretary-General of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Ambassador Christian Guillermet Fernández, Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva; and Ambassador Katharina Stasch, Permanent Representative of Germany to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva. Initial conversations to create the group were kicked off with a Champion-level dinner hosted by Ambassador Stasch in January 2023, and gained momentum with a high-level dialogue organised by SHE Changes Climate for World Environment Day in June. With the objectives of solidifying group membership and establishing a clear roadmap for action, the IGC Secretariat hosted a series of working-level workshops with interested members over the summer. The results of these discussions informed the drafting of the group's Terms of Reference.

### The group will focus on the following priorities:

- **Representation:** Fostering an intersectional approach to climate action by promoting equitable, diverse, meaningful and safe representation in policy- and decision-making bodies.
- **Synergies:** Helping the IGC community and broader Geneva ecosystem to connect the dots between gender, climate and different policy areas by strengthening a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach.
- **Gender-responsive budgeting:** Advancing the integration of gender considerations into climate finance and budgeting processes to promote effective resource allocation towards gender-responsive climate solutions, localised action and an empowered feminist civil society.

The group's outputs will include advocating for equitable representation, promoting evidence-based messaging, organising events for strategic alignment and knowledge sharing, and strengthening partnerships for effective mandate delivery. **Launching officially in 2024, the group is open to receiving indications of interest from prospective members.**

## Women, Peace and Security (NEW)

In the year 2000, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and nine subsequent resolutions provided a framework for action known as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda. It has enabled wider understanding of the crucial role of gendered norms in armed conflict as well as in a country's capacity to build positive peace and resilience. National Action Plans and informal and formal networks of experts, mediators and civil society groups have enabled cooperation within and between states, International Organisations and civil society actors. However, the Agenda is subject to unintentional and intentional backsliding, with insufficient investment in it and increasing diversion of resources towards military endeavours. The UN Secretary General's new Agenda for Peace recognises the **transformative potential of the WPS Agenda for sustaining peace by shifting power**, yet currently "generational gains in women's rights hang in the balance".

In September 2023, Ambassador Thomas Greminger, Director of the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP), convened a group of Champions committed to exercising their leadership to strengthen the WPS Agenda. Following further consultations, the group will be co-chaired by Ambassador Thomas Greminger and Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), and already counts 13 Geneva-based Champions who will meet regularly to work towards the following outcomes:

- Facilitate **dialogue and strengthen international cooperation** between member states, International Organisations and civil society to improve coherence and ensure prioritisation of the WPS agenda within Geneva.
- **Support the implementation of the Global Compact on Women Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action** and encourage more actors to become signatories and make commitments.
- Collectively develop **evidence-based recommendations and policy language** that promotes a human rights-based approach to conflict prevention, integrating the perspectives of diverse stakeholders.

The Impact Group will officially launch in February 2024 with a discussion on the International Criminal Court ruling on gender-based persecution, the first time the ICC will adjudicate on the issue, and a schedule of events will be determined for the year. It is hoped that the group and activities will also be of interest to other Champions and hubs.

# #LOGINTOEQUALITY

## THE IGC'S '*I SAY NO TO SEXISM ONLINE*' CAMPAIGN



Information and communications technologies have presented new opportunities and enabled various efforts towards promoting gender equality. However, they can also be used as tools to perpetrate technology-facilitated GBV. **Amplified by the anonymity, scale and speed of the internet, the lack of law enforcement mechanisms and gendered gaps in digital literacy, technology-facilitated GBV has become a pervasive issue across the world.** Targeting primarily women, it encompasses a wide range of sexist behaviours and actions online, including online harassment, gendered hate speech, intimate image abuse, trolling, and sharing of deepfake images. The political, social, and economic consequences of online GBV are significant. It increases the digital gender divide, silences women's voices, has serious impacts on victims' health and well-being, and undermines their safety, reputation, freedom of expression, and participation in the digital realm.

To address this pressing issue, **the IGC Secretariat, in partnership with the UNICC, launched a new campaign in September 2023: '*I Say No To Sexism Online*'.** Building on the

successes of the '*I Say No To Sexism*' campaign, first launched in 2018 at the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) and relaunched in 2022, this new campaign sought to tap into the potential of connective technology for gender equality by building awareness, engaging senior leaders as positive role models, and promoting actionable pathways towards digital safety for all.

Under the hashtag #LogIntoEquality, over 20 Champions participated in a social media challenge to create a chain of positive messaging, take a stance against online GBV and challenge their peers to do the same. To build awareness of the negative implications of technology-facilitated GBV, the IGC Secretariat produced a [short educational video](#), developed an [online resource repository](#) and designed a series of informative social media posts. It also created a [range of communications assets](#), including social media cards, virtual backgrounds and email signatures, which were made available for the IGC community to share in their respective virtual networks. A new [Champions' Guide for Action](#) offers concrete suggestions for **promoting safe, respectful and inclusive online spaces.**

## 10 Actions Against Technology-Facilitated GBV

1. **Set a positive example in your virtual network:** Avoid perpetuating gender stereotypes or harmful norms in your online communications. Call out, report, or, where possible, delete sexist content in your online interactions. Include your commitment towards a sexism-free online space in your email signature.
2. **Take a public stance:** Participate in initiatives like the IGC's #LogIntoEquality social media challenge to visibly demonstrate your commitment to combatting online GBV and create a chain of positive messaging towards a safer, more inclusive digital world.
3. **Amplify existing initiatives:** Post or reshare educational and advocacy-related content, using your online platform and voice to raise awareness across your networks. Share informative articles, resources, and stories that shed light on the issue and promote a positive online culture.
4. **Continue educating yourself:** Complete a training course on the topic and consult with an expert or your organisation's Gender Focal Point. Stay informed and engaged by following relevant pages and hashtags on social media platforms. To get you started, some useful links can be found on the IGC website's resource repository.
5. **Promote safe online spaces within your organisation:** Ensure that your organisation's prohibited conduct policies account for technology-facilitated GBV, establish clear reporting and investigation mechanisms, and dedicate resources to offer confidential support to victims of online GBV. Develop a comprehensive Code of Conduct moderating behaviour in your online spaces and share with your employees and constituents.
6. **Fund civil society organisations:** Support specialist organisations dedicated to building digital literacy, advocating for the elimination of technology-facilitated GBV or offering psychological and legal support to victims.
7. **Build institutional capacity:** Initiate regular training and awareness programmes within your organisation to sensitise staff, educate on available support and reporting mechanisms, and encourage employees to intervene when witnessing instances of technology-facilitated GBV. Where possible, participate in such training sessions yourself to lead by example.
8. **Protect privacy:** Where needed, equip your employees with business phones or other IT equipment, to avoid using private equipment. Ensure that all employees have a professional phone number or business account for any platforms used in professional settings to avoid any need for having to share personal details.
9. **Take the pulse:** Periodically assess the effectiveness of your organisation's policies, procedures and measures for preventing and responding to online GBV to identify potential areas for improvement. Ensure the collection of gender disaggregated data on technology-facilitated GBV to inform targeted strategies and evidence-based solutions.
10. **Consult and collaborate with others:** Forge partnerships, for instance with feminist civil society organisations, educational institutions and law enforcement bodies, to leverage collective expertise and resources in addressing technology-facilitated GBV.

# AMPLIFYING INSIGHTS

Effective communication serves as a powerful tool to educate on gender equality topics, enable a better understanding of the IGC's impact, and inspire broader engagement. Social media plays a key role in disseminating important advocacy messages, particularly when Champions choose to amplify them via their own platforms and networks – **the 'I Say No To Sexism Online' campaign** being only one example. Sharing success stories also fosters transparency and builds trust, strengthening relationships with partners and building an engaged community. Therefore, the IGC Secretariat revised and successfully ramped up its communications activities in 2023. It quadrupled its followership on LinkedIn to over 3000 followers, exceeded 6000 followers on [Twitter/X](#) and soft-launched an [Instagram](#) page to strengthen audience engagement with a younger demographic. To increase its visibility and make it more accessible to a larger audience, the IGC podcast is now, next to [Soundcloud](#), also available on [Spotify](#).

For **World Earth Day** on 22 April, the IGC Secretariat released an [educational video](#) on the right to a clean, healthy and sustainable environment for women and girls. Building on the IGC's priority of strengthening the Climate-Gender Nexus, the video aims to inform the IGC community of the ways in which the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss disproportionately impacts women and girls.

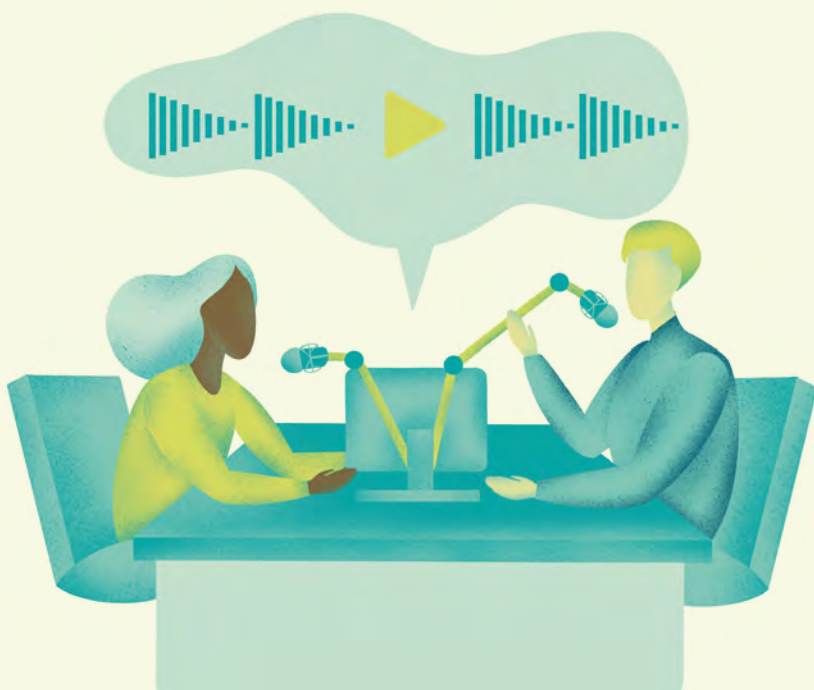
## 12 IGC Podcast Episodes

The monthly IGC podcast shines a spotlight on Champions and illustrates the IGC's work by providing practical, hands-on examples of personal commitments and impact stories. In 2023, 10 Champions, sometimes accompanied by a second guest, drew on their respective thematic expertise to demonstrate the **need to mainstream gender across all social, political, economic and cultural dimensions and fields of work**. Their contributions were complemented by an episode in March, which offered highlights of the Geneva Gender Debate on feminist foreign policy, and an episode in September, which provided a recap of the *'I Say No To Sexism Online'* campaign launch.

The first episode of the year featured Ambassador Matthew Wilson, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, who brought with him Risée Chaderton-Charles, a prominent equality activist and photographer from Barbados. They discussed the **urgency of intersectional approaches** in gender equality work, highlighting how gender inequality intersects with other forms of social discrimination to create unique experiences of marginalisation and oppression.

To commemorate the 52nd session of the UN Human Rights Council in February, Ambassador Michèle Taylor, Permanent Representative of the United States to the UN Human Rights Council, joined by Naomi Kikoler, Director of the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, focused on the importance of **meaningful participation of women and girls** in human rights conversations, gender-responsive language, and addressing GBV.

Champions also covered themes of gender equality and diversity in the workplace. In April, Dr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation (CTBTO) shared insights on how leaders can intentionally **promote gender parity** by cultivating female talent and dismantling roadblocks to women's career development. Corinne Momal-Vanian, Executive Director of the Kofi Annan Foundation, and Karen Zamberia, a programme officer at the foundation, pleaded for the importance of walking the talk by promoting gender equality in the workplace as well as through organisational programming.



Episodes discussing the linkages between gender, disarmament and nuclear diplomacy featured Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, in June, and Elena Sokova, Executive Director of the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP), in November. Izumi Nakamitsu explained the various gender dimensions of disarmament policy and practice and offered insights on how leaders and organisations can promote **gender-transformative approaches to disarmament**. Elena Sokova celebrated important advancements in positioning gender equality matters in the sphere of nuclear diplomacy, emphasising the significant role of the IGC Vienna Hub in putting the topic high on the agenda.

In the lead-up to COP28, several Champions stressed the linkages between gender (in) equality and climate change. In a conversation on promoting women's and girls' bodily autonomy, Monica Ferro, (former) Director of the UN Population Fund's (UNFPA) Geneva Office, and Mohinder Watson, founder of Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage, shared new evidence that links climate change and environmental degradation with increases in child marriage. Roger Yates of Plan International's Regional Office for East and Southern Africa and the Middle East, together with Elsie Masava, Youth Advocacy Advisor at Plan International, provided an overview of the specific challenges young women and girls face in the region, and discussed how **climate change amplifies pre-existing inequalities**. Elise Buckle, Co-Founder of SHE Changes Climate, provided insights on the Climate-Gender Nexus and the disproportionate impact of climate disasters on women, girls and marginalised communities.

The year ended with an episode with Alexandra Bilak, Director of the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). She explained how displacement often exacerbates pre-existing gender inequalities and advocated for systematic collection of **gender disaggregated data**. She also highlighted the importance of engaging local women leaders in designing more effective policies and programmes for displaced populations.

## IGC 2023 Podcasts with International Gender Champions

- The Urgency of Intersectionality – A Podcast with Ambassador Matthew Wilson, Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, and Risée Chaderton-Charles, Barbadian equality activist and photographer
- Amplifying the Voices of Women and Girls in the Human Rights Conversations – A Podcast with Ambassador Michèle Taylor, Permanent Representative to the UN Human Rights Council, and Naomi Kikoler of the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide
- Highlights from the 2023 Geneva Gender Debate
- Removing Roadblocks, Cultivating Female Talent – A Podcast with Dr. Robert Floyd, Executive Secretary of CTBTO
- Gender Equality in Our Big and Small Worlds – A Podcast with Corinne Momal-Vanian, Executive Director and Karen Zambia, Programme Officer, at the Kofi Annan Foundation
- Gender and Disarmament: Why It Matters – A Podcast with Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and UN High Representative for Disarmament Affairs
- Empowered Choices: Promoting Women's and Girls' Bodily Autonomy – A Podcast with Monica Ferro, Director of the UNFPA Geneva Office, and Mohinder Watson, Founder of Action on Child, Early and Forced Marriage
- Youth Power: Driving Gender Equality Forward – A Podcast with Roger Yates, Regional Director, and Elsie Masava, Youth Advocacy Officer, of Plan International Nairobi
- Highlights from the *'I Say No To Sexism Online'* campaign launch
- Gender and Climate Change: Unveiling the Intersections – A Podcast with Elise Buckle, Co-founder of SHE Changes Climate
- Nuclear Diplomacy: Bridging the Gender Gap for a Safer World – A Podcast with Elena Sokova, Executive Director of the VCDNP
- Gender Dimensions in Internal Displacement – A Podcast with Alexandra Bilak, Director of the IDMC

## CHAPTER III

# OUR HUBS

### Geneva

The IGC's Geneva Hub kicked off the year with a **Champions meeting** on 26 January, hosted by Geneva Steering Group member Sameer Chauhan, Director of the UNICC. Over 40 Champions attended the meeting. In her keynote speech, Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of the ITU, emphasised the importance of closing the digital gender divide and building an inclusive digital future for all. As the first woman elected to lead the ITU in the organisation's history, she also highlighted the many hurdles she, alongside other women in her position, continue to face throughout their careers.

*Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary-General of ITU, delivering the keynote speech at the Geneva Champions Meeting, 26 January*



On International Women's Day, the IGC Secretariat, in partnership with the Geneva Graduate Institute, hosted the **2023 Geneva Gender Debate**. Moderated by Darius Farman, Co-Director of foraus, speakers debated the motion: **'This house believes that countries which prioritise gender equality should adopt a feminist foreign policy'**. Margot Wallström, former Swedish Foreign Minister who pioneered the world's first feminist foreign policy, delivered opening remarks. This was followed by a thought-provoking, nuanced discussion featuring the following debaters: Ambassador Marc Bichler, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, Jagan Chapagain, Secretary-General of the IFRC, and Ambassador Claudia Fuentes Julio, Permanent Representative of Chile to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva and Căcilia Riederer, student at the Geneva Graduate Institute and member of the Institute's Feminist Collective.

The [full recording](#) of the debate, as well as a [summary video](#) highlighting the main arguments, are available on the IGC's YouTube channel.

Throughout the year, the IGC Secretariat held five hybrid **'Lunch and Learn' events**, which delved into key issues related to gender equality, including intersectionality, the transnational anti-gender backlash and gender mainstreaming. Made possible by a grant from the US Permanent Mission in Geneva, the 'Lunch and Learn' series aims to facilitate encounters between the IGC community and leading experts, academics and activists, as well as to build the collective capacity to promote gender-responsive policy and practice. The events also furthered the IGC's strategic priorities, including promoting a zero-tolerance approach to GBV. This series will continue in 2024.

Ahead of **World Health Day** on 7 April, the IGC Secretariat interviewed Shirin Heidari – Senior Researcher at the Global Health Centre of the Geneva Graduate Institute, Senior Technical Consultant on Gender to the World Health Organization (WHO) and Founder of GENDRO – on the gendered dimensions of global health, featured on the IGC [website](#).

In July, the IGC Secretariat had the pleasure of speaking to Ambassador Tine Mørch Smith, former Permanent Representative of Norway to the UN and other International Organisations.



*Speakers at the Geneva Gender Debate, 8 March*

tions in Geneva, and Ambassador Erik Brøgger Rasmussen, former Permanent Representative of Denmark to the UN and other International Organisations in Geneva, about the **importance of prioritising a healthy work-life balance** in Geneva and beyond. They highlighted the responsibility held by Champions to role model this within their organisations.

November was an eventful month for the IGC's Geneva Hub. The initiative was on the **front page of UN Today** which featured several articles including an op-ed written by Martin Chungong, Secretary General of the IPU and Chair of the IGC Global Board, and a UN Memories piece with IGC Co-founder and former Director-General of UNOG, Michael Møller. Champions also gathered for the **second bi-annual Champions meeting** on 3 November, this time hosted by Daren Tang, Director General of WIPO. On this occasion, keynote speaker Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, expressed grave concern regarding the global pushback against women's rights and the increase in attacks and violence against women both online and offline. Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the High Commissioner reminded Champions of the remarkable women who shaped the text. The meeting also featured several updates on emerging Impact Groups in Geneva, including the Climate Impact Group officially launching in 2024, as well as a Women, Peace and Security Impact Group. A proposal was also made to form an Impact Group focused on the collection and exchange of gender disaggregated data.

Finally, on 16 November, the IGC Secretariat and International Development Law Organization (IDLO) hosted an in-person and online **Panel Discussion on 'Rule of Law Solutions to Catalyse Feminist Climate Action'**. Panelists included Jean-Pierre Reymond, Executive Director of 2050Today, Mayte Gonzalez, Head of Human Rights in Conservation at the IUCN, Nupur Prakash, Gender and Law Analyst at the IDLO, and Adenike Oladosu, Youth Climate Justice Activist, Founder of ILeadClimate Action Initiative. The discussion was moderated by Ambassador Mark Cassayre, Permanent Observer of the IDLO to the UN and International Organisations in Geneva.



Volker Türk, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, delivering the keynote speech at the second Geneva Champions Meeting, 3 November



UN Today's November edition featuring the International Gender Champions

## New York

The New York Hub started the year 2023 with a high-level reception, hosted by Alain Berset, former President of the Swiss Confederation, on the eve of the **67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**. On this occasion, Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN in New York, had the honour of welcoming Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein, President and Chief Executive Officer of the International Peace Institute (IPI) as a Champion to the New York Hub. Also in March, in the margins of the CSW, Switzerland, together with the IPI and the IGC network, organised a [high-level event](#) on the topic **'Using innovation and technology to advance gender equality'**. UN Tech Envoy Amandeep Gill, Prof. Iris Bohnet of Harvard University, Annabella Bassler of EqualVoice, and Sophie Achermann of Alliance F/Stop Hate Speech, used examples from the public, private, academic and civil society fields to show how gender equality can be improved through innovative and technological approaches.

In May, on World Press Freedom Day, Champion and Permanent Representative of Greece to the UN in New York, Ambassador Evangelos Sekeris, [shared his work](#) on the **protection of women journalists** in an interview with the IGC Secretariat. In July, Ambassador Baeriswyl had the honour of welcoming the **new President of the 78th General Assembly of the UN**, Ambassador Dennis Francis, as a Champion to the New York Hub.

In the context of the Women, Peace and Security month, the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the UN in New York, together with the IGC network and the support of the UN Office of the Victims' Rights Advocate, UNICEF and UN Women, organised a high-level event presenting the **interactive theatre 'FIT FOR PSEAH?'**, followed by a reception. This theatre raised awareness of the **prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and sexual harassment**



**(PSEAH)**. The performers presented SEAH situations from everyday working life and explored questions and avenues of action in this context together with the audience. The active participation of the President of the UNGA, the Executive Director of UN Women, Gender Champions and Permanent Representatives underlined the relevance and urgency of the topic. The theatre helped address a sensitive topic in an innovative way and stimulated lively discussions.

*High-level event presenting the interactive theatre 'FIT FOR PSEAH?' to raise awareness for prevention and action regarding sexual exploitation, 9 October*

## Vienna

2023 marked the year of working for gender equality and women's empowerment in multilateral diplomacy by the IGC Vienna Hub.

Ambassador Raphael Nägeli, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN, OSCE and other International Organisations in Vienna, hosted a **reception at the Swiss Residence** on 21 March for Vienna-based Champions to exchange and celebrate shared achievements in the context of the IGC's 2022 Annual Report. In the ensuing panel discussion, Champions and a national expert from the Swiss FDFA spoke about challenges and best practices in the context of innovation and technology for gender equality. The panel also deliberated innovative ways to make the digital world safer, more inclusive and equitable.

On 13 July, the Vienna Hub held its **first bi-annual Champions meeting**, chaired by Ambassador Barbara Žvokelj, Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the UN, OSCE and other International Organisations in Vienna. The event was an opportunity for Champions to provide updates on their personal commitments. Additionally, Champions and Observers addressed two themes: the Climate-Gender Nexus and men's engagement in promoting gender equality. Ambassador Paul Bekkers, Permanent Representative of the Netherlands to the UN and other International Organisations



*Pinning of Dennis Francis, President of the 78th session of the UN General Assembly, by Ambassador Pascale Baeriswyl, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the UN in New York, 28 July*



in Geneva, emphasised the critical role of men in advancing gender equality commitments and aspirations. Presenting the example of the 'Men Engage' initiative he started in Geneva, Ambassador Bekkers noted the importance of creating an inclusive environment for men to proactively participate and contribute to gender equality. Highlighting the unequal impact of climate change on women and men, Luther Bois Anukur of the IUCN stressed the importance of (i) expanding opportunities for women with diverse backgrounds to be heard; (ii) investing in gender-responsive climate change policies; and (iii) prioritising the Climate-Gender Nexus in gender strategies.

Co-sponsored by the IGC Vienna Hub for the second time, and organised by the Permanent Missions of Norway, Finland and Sweden together with the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the **Vienna Discussion Forum 2023** explored the nexus between gender, corruption and the green economy. Under the title 'More diversity, less corruption? – Seeking efficient and just solutions for a green economy', the event convened decision-makers, practitioners and experts from governments, International Organisations and civil society. They discussed challenges, lessons learned and promising practices on addressing gender equality and corruption for an efficient, sustainable, inclusive and just transition to a green economy that encourages innovation. To this end, speakers provided examples of how anti-corruption initiatives can go hand in hand with efforts to advance gender equality and social inclusion within the green economy.

The year concluded with a Champions meeting on 7 December at the Vienna International Centre, chaired by Verónica García Gutiérrez, Chargé d'Affaires of the Permanent Mission of Costa Rica to the UN, OSCE and other Inter-

national Organisations in Vienna. Held during the **16 Days of Activism on the Elimination of Gender-Based Violence**, Federica Dall'Arche, Senior Research Associate at the VCDNP, highlighted the relationship between sexual and gender-based violence and nuclear non-proliferation. Champions discussed challenges and achievements regarding their commitments and exchanged suggestions and priorities for the new year. They also engaged in-depth with the second focus topic of the meeting: recent developments regarding gender-related language in intergovernmental resolutions and decisions. This debate was kicked off by a keynote speech by Madeleine Rees, Secretary General of WILPF, who shared her views on the perceived pushback on gender-related language and stressed the need to further strengthen efforts to ensure the rights of women and girls in conflict, post-conflict settings and beyond.

The IGC Vienna Hub continues to explore avenues to secure sustainable resources to fund a full-time Hub Coordinator position. In 2023, the coordinator position was shared by UNODC and UNIDO who each held it for one semester, and it will continue being a rotational role filled by the Vienna-based Steering Group entities until a permanent solution is found.

*Thematic reception at the Swiss Residence in Vienna, 21 March*

*2023 Vienna Discussion Forum, 8 November*



Nairobi Champions and Focal Points at the Champions meeting, 5 December



## Nairobi

First established in 2018, the IGC Nairobi Hub promotes positive change towards local and regional gender equality targets through collaboration and Champion-driven action. Being the only IGC hub on the African continent, Champions in Nairobi seek to leverage their combined experience and understanding of barriers to **achieving gender equality in Kenya and the wider Eastern and Southern Africa region** (many of the Champions are heads of regional offices and have a mandate that covers a variety of countries).

Since the end of 2021, an official Steering Group, initially composed of Inger Andersen, Executive Director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP); Maimunah Mohd-Sharif, Executive Director of UN-Habitat; former Ambassador Fionnuala Quinlan of Ireland to Kenya, Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea; Alice Ruhweza, former Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF); and Ambassador Valentin Zellweger of Switzerland to Kenya, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia and Uganda and Permanent Representative to UNON, has provided guidance on the hub's activities. A Hub Coordinator position provides the necessary administrative support to manage hub activities and Champions' engagement. As of July 2023, Plan International took over as host of the Nairobi Hub Coordinator position from UNEP, which had previously hosted the role and played an integral role in building a strong Nairobi Hub.

In 2023, the Steering Group convened two meetings, dedicating its discussions to strategic initiatives for elevating the hub's impact across the country and the wider region by expanding and diversifying membership, strengthening Champions' engagement with local feminist civil society, and enhancing communications around Nairobi-based activities. Over the summer, the Steering Group saw changes in its composition due to the departures of Ambassador Quinlan and for-

mer WWF Regional Director Ruhweza. Roger Yates, Plan International's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa and the Middle East, has joined the group as new hosting Champion of the Hub Coordinator position. The Nairobi Steering Group welcomes expressions of interest among Nairobi-based Champions for joining the group as an additional member.

To conclude a year of transition, Champions gathered for an end-of-year meeting in December, hosted by Ambassador Zellweger on the premises of the Swiss Embassy. The meeting was attended by 10 Champions, who deliberated on **building and boosting the hub**, brainstorming strategies for engaging fellow leaders and local partners to amplify the network's impact. Initiatives planned for 2024 will focus on engaging men and religious leaders as agents of change for gender equality and raising awareness about the violence faced by women political leaders. Champions also discussed the creation of a Climate Impact Group, in line with IGC's strategic objective of strengthening the Climate-Gender Nexus.

## The Hague

The Hague Hub kicked off the year 2023 with a Focal Point meeting to mark International Women's Day. Focal Points gathered at the Embassy of Switzerland to watch a [live screening](#) of the **Geneva Gender Debate on Feminist Foreign Policy**. The points raised during this debate were also addressed later in the year, when the Netherlands organised the **second international conference on Shaping Feminist Foreign Policy** in The Hague. Many Champions of The Hague Hub participated in this conference that focused on rights, representation, and resources, as well as a reality check on existing approaches.

The second Focal Point meeting in September offered a live screening of the **'I Say No To Sexism Online'** campaign launch event at the

Swiss Embassy, followed by a lively exchange. Afterwards, The Hague Champions successfully [kickstarted the campaign #LogIntoEquality](#).

Throughout 2023, the hub saw a variety of Champion-led events and initiatives. Africa Legal Aid (AFLA) launched '[Hague Girls - The Podcast](#)', hosted by its Executive Director Evelyn A. Ankumah, on women's experiences and perspectives on human rights and international justice. AFLA further convened gatherings in its [gender-sensitive judging series](#) including on 'The Use of Artificial Intelligence in International Criminal Courts' and convened with partners a [symposium](#) on 'Preventing GBV in Southern Africa'. The IDLO Branch Office in The Hague, together with the Embassies of Cyprus and Switzerland organised a panel discussion on 'Gender and Artificial Intelligence in Justice, Peace and Security – why we need to address equality, diversity and inclusion in the context of AI'. The Embassy of Israel supported, among other events focusing on gender equality and supporting vulnerable minorities and communities, a **round table discussion with young female legal scholars** in the fields of space and maritime law.

Hosted at the Official Residence of Canada, the Canadian and Swiss Embassies co-organised a panel discussion on 'Learning from Best Practices in Gender Mainstreaming in International Organisations', in which panellists shared experiences and engaged in an interactive discussion with the audience. In context of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV, the Embassy of Canada organised, together with the John Adams Institute, a **Fireside Chat with Miriam Toews**, an award-winning Canadian author. The discussion touched on women's advocacy through culture. In line with this campaign, women ambassadors to the OPCW's Conference of States Parties in The Hague united to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls **#NoExcuse**.

Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice organised initiatives to enhance awareness and accountability in the realm of gender justice, such as a **Training of Trainers on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence in Ukraine** in collaboration with the Ukrainian Legal Advisory Group, and a **training focused on survivor-centred documentation of SGBV in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea**, in partnership with Korea Future. In addition, Women's Initiatives launched their report on '*Judicial Approaches on SGBV at the International Criminal Court*' during the 2023 Assembly of States Parties in New York.

Additionally, [#Mentoring4Future](#), a **mentoring programme for young female professionals** in the field of international law and diplomacy, entered its second round, matching 13 mentees with an experienced female leader for regular mentoring sessions over the course of an academic year.



Towards the end of the year, the hub's **Steering Committee** crystallised and held its first meeting in December. It is now composed of Ambassador Hugh Adsett of Canada to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW; Ambassador Corinne Cicerón Bühler of Switzerland to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW; Fabrizio Guariglia, Director of the IDLO The Hague Office; Ambassador Carolina Olarte-Bácares of Colombia to the Netherlands and Permanent Representative to the OPCW; and Alix Vuillemin, Executive Director of the Women's Initiative for Gender Justice.

*Top photo:  
Women Ambassadors to the  
OPCW in The Hague united for  
the 16 Days of Activism  
Against GBV*

*Bottom photo:  
Meeting of the new The Hague  
Steering Committee,  
12 December*

## Paris

In 2023, UNESCO took over the coordination of the IGC Paris Hub Steering Group, following the leadership of the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) which had first established the network in Paris. Through capacity-building, knowledge production and advocacy, Paris Champions promoted gender equality through various platforms. UNESCO's Global Forum against Racism and Discrimination in 2023 invited global leaders and thinkers to share promising practices for women's empowerment, resilience, engaging men for gender equality and advancing LGBTQIA+ rights. With view to planning next steps in this pivotal moment for the Paris Hub, UNESCO held a successful meeting with the IGC Secretariat in December.

## CHAPTER IV

# LOOKING FORWARD: COMMITMENT, CREATIVITY, COURAGE

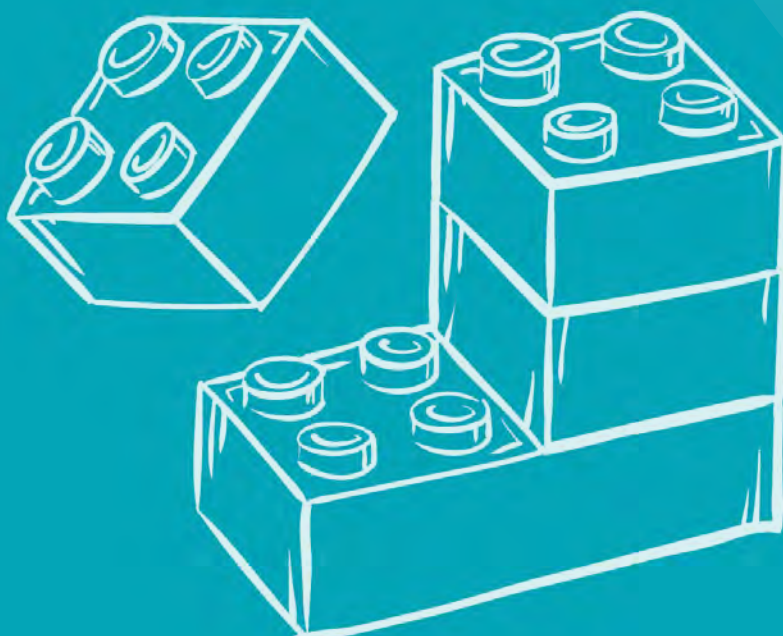
As the world has passed the halfway mark of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, global efforts towards promoting gender equality have reached an inflection point. “In 2024, we must see long-view leadership”, Mary Robinson, Chair of The Elders, wrote recently. Whether we can tip the scales towards positive change, now more than ever, depends on our ability to inspire, unite and mobilise for the vision of an equal and inclusive future.

Faced with increasing resistance and anti-gender rhetoric, many of us may feel cornered into having to make a choice: strategy or principle, business case or moral appeal, pragmatism or idealism. The reality is more complex than that. Restricting ourselves to one or the other will inevitably limit our capacity to drive progress for gender equality. Addressing the current backlash calls for creative, multifaceted solutions. Value-based leadership that is rooted in empathy and tuned into the varied needs of diverse groups of people can play a critical role in dissecting the anger and anxiety surrounding gender-related topics.

As we see hard-won gains for gender equality erode, demonstrating our unwavering dedication to dismantling inequalities is key. This commitment must extend beyond mere rhetoric; it demands tangible action. Actively modelling the change we want to see will make calls for social transformation all the more credible, be it through renewed vigilance in implementing the Panel Parity Pledge or embedding gender equality into the fabric of our institutions via personal commitments that are translated into institutional mandates, structures and capacity.

In 2024, we hope to see further exchange among Champions to refine and expand our toolbox in the pursuit of gender equality. Existing and emerging Impact Groups across the six IGC hubs, Champion-led initiatives, and regular community learning events such as the ‘Lunch and Learn’ series offer a platform for collaboration across a wide variety of topics. Partnerships across organisations, sectors and hubs are critical to breaking down silos and driving meaningful progress. Through its advocacy work and events, the IGC Secretariat will continue stimulating conversations to help connect the dots, ask important questions, and challenge preconceived notions.

From navigating the ecological transition to emerging technologies, we find ourselves at the precipice of unprecedented opportunities and challenges for gender equality. Long-view leadership requires the courage to conceive audacious solutions and venture into uncharted territory. As we enter 2024, we hope to encourage bold and resolute action towards making gender equality a reality. Thank you for joining us in building a more equitable and inclusive world and inspiring others to do the same.



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