

Intergovernmental Organisations

About:

Global 50/50 is an independent think tank that informs, inspires and incites action and accountability for gender justice. Global Justice 50/50 is part of this mission, assessing organisations' public commitments, workplace policies, leadership representation, and data reporting practices through a gender justice lens.

The full 2026 Global Justice 50/50 Report examines 171 global and regional law and justice organisations across 30 countries. Here we report on 11 intergovernmental organisations in the sample (see page 13 for full list).

Prayer and in war zones

Iran. 2007.

Ahmad Khatiri

A mother and daughter kneel beside the rusted remains of a destroyed tank in southern Iran, heads bowed in mourning. A quiet image of war's aftermath and the gendered burden of remembrance.

At a glance

Our research reveals that decision-making remains concentrated among a narrow set of actors, constraining whose perspectives shape policies that affect global justice. To uphold principles of fairness and equity, the multilateral system must ensure its own structures are as inclusive as the commitments it promotes externally.

Widespread commitments:

Intergovernmental organisations broadly recognise the importance of gender equality, but room remains for more organisations to formalise commitments.

While most publicly support gender equality, some still make no formal commitments.

Among 11 Intergovernmental organisations



9 have a public commitment to gender equality

Partial policies:

More than half of intergovernmental organisations have gender equality, fairness and equity policies with specific measures.

Commitments alone are not enough; specific measures are needed to drive progress. Yet many organisations still lack detailed workplace policies needed to make equality real. Many intergovernmental organisations publish workplace policies on gender equality, and half have public policies on fairness and equity. Room remains however for a more standardised approach across organisations.

Among 11 Intergovernmental organisations



8 have gender equality workplace policies



6 have fairness and equity workplace policies

Concentration of power:

Leadership is concentrated among nationals of high-income countries, and women from low- and middle-income countries are underrepresented in top roles.

Even where gender balance exists in senior management, geographic inequities persist, highlighting ongoing barriers to inclusive leadership.

Among 11 holders of highest office



1 is a woman from an MIC

Data deficits:

While half of international organisations recognise the importance of sex-disaggregated data, many still lack policies or commitments to regularly report such data or undertake gender analysis.

Without consistent collection, reporting, and analysis, it remains difficult to track who participates in programmes, who benefits, and where gender gaps persist, limiting accountability and the ability to address gendered outcomes effectively.

Among 11 Intergovernmental organisations



5 have a commitment to report sex-disaggregated data or undertake gender analysis

Gender parity in the law and justice sector benefits everyone by:



Assessing intergovernmental organisations

Intergovernmental organisations play a central role in the global justice system, setting international standards, providing technical guidance, facilitating cross-border cooperation, and implementing programmes that support justice, human rights, and rule of law initiatives. They conduct research on legal systems, monitor compliance, and advise states and other organisations on best practices. They shape global policy agendas, influence national and regional decision-making, and support capacity building in justice systems worldwide, wielding significant soft power to advance accountability and equitable legal frameworks.

Intergovernmental organisations are created by treaties or agreements among sovereign states and possess their own legal personality, enabling them to operate independently of their member states. This legal status distinguishes intergovernmental organisations from other entities such as global campaigns or networks, allowing them to enter agreements, implement programmes, and hold responsibilities in their own right.

The organisations in our sample were selected for their transnational reach and active engagement in the global law and justice sector. Assessing these organisations provides insight into the structures, practices, and leadership dynamics that shape legal and justice agendas.

Global 50/50 only assesses publicly available information, a method that promotes transparency but is not without its limitations. Public commitments and policies do not always reflect internal practice, just as their absence does not necessarily indicate a lack of internal action, particularly in the context of the current global anti-gender backlash. The value of our approach, however, lies in offering a clear, comparative snapshot of how organisations publicly present their commitments and policies at a given moment in time.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS












Table 1. Variables reviewed: Intergovernmental organisations

	  		
<p>Does the organisation make a public commitment to gender equality?</p>	<p>Are workplace gender equality and/or fairness and equity policies publicly available?</p> <p>Are policies on board representation and inclusion publicly available?</p>	<p>What is the gender and nationality of leaders,</p> <p>INCLUDING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secretaries-general Senior managers Board chairs Board members 	<p>Are policies available on reporting data disaggregated by sex or on undertaking gender analysis?</p>








INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Box 1.

What we measure for each variable and how we assess the findings.
We assessed organisations' websites for publicly available information on the following:

1 Public statement of commitment to gender equality	<div>  Commits to gender equality/equity, gender justice, or gender mainstreaming in policy and planning. </div> <div>  Works on women's rights, social justice, human rights, and/or access to justice, but no formal commitment to gender equality. </div> <div>  No mention of gender or social justice. </div>
2 Policies with specific measures to promote gender equality in the workplace	<div>  Policy with specific measure(s) to improve gender equality and/or support women's careers. </div> <div>  Stated commitment to gender equality and/or diversity in the workplace (above the legal requirement) but no specific measures to carry out commitments; and/or reports on gender distribution of staff. </div> <div>  Policy is compliant with law but no more = "we do not discriminate". </div> <div>  No reference to gender equality or non-discrimination in the workplace found. </div>
3 Policies with specific measures to promote fairness and equity in the workplace	<div>  Policy with specific measure(s) to improve diversity, inclusion, fairness and/or equality. </div> <div>  Commitment to promoting fairness and equity evidenced by a) aspirational comments and b) listing protected characteristics; and/or some reporting on characteristics among staff. </div> <div>  Policy is compliant with law but no more = "we do not discriminate". </div> <div>  No reference to equality or non-discrimination in the workplace found. </div>

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

4	Gender parity in senior management		56-100% women represented.
			45-55% women represented; or difference of one individual.
			35-44% women represented.
			0-34% women represented.
5	Gender and nationality of the head of the organisation		There is no traffic light scoring for this variable; we only report on the aggregate numbers.
6	Policy on sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis		Policy or organisational commitment found to regularly report sex-disaggregated data or to undertake gender analysis.
			Project-specific commitments to report sex-disaggregated data or to undertake gender analysis.
			No policy or commitment found.

Finding 1. A majority of intergovernmental organisations recognise gender equality as a priority

Public commitments to gender equality signal institutional recognition of its importance and provide a foundation for accountability in practice. We reviewed whether intergovernmental organisations had stated such a commitment on their websites. Nine (9/11; 82%) intergovernmental organisations had a public commitment to gender equality.

Figure 1. Public commitments to gender equality found, intergovernmental organisations (n=11)



Box 2. Organisational examples

Example of intergovernmental organisation commitment to gender equality

[The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights] works to strengthen gender-equality institutions, identify discriminatory laws and policies, and increase women's participation in politics and electoral processes. Through gender equality training for parliamentarians, civil society and security sector personnel, and by encouraging women's recruitment and promotion within the security ranks, ODIHR supports effective institutions, policies and programmes that reflect the needs and interests of both men and women.

Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)¹

9/11
organisations have a public commitment to gender equality

Finding 2. Most intergovernmental organisations publish workplace policies on gender equality, and half do so on fairness and equity in the workplace

Workplace policies on gender equality, fairness and equity with specific measures set clear standards and translate commitments into concrete, accountable actions. 8/11 (73%) intergovernmental organisations had published policies on gender equality with specific measures, and 6/11 (55%) had published policies on fairness and equity with specific measures.

Specific measures for promoting gender equality included: gender-responsive recruitment and hiring processes; mentoring, training, and leadership programmes; targets for women's participation at senior levels; gender analysis and action in staff performance reviews and staff surveys; regular reviews of organisational efforts towards gender equality; and/or reporting back to all staff.

Specific measures for advancing fairness and equity included: inclusive recruitment processes; mentoring, training, and leadership programmes; targets for representation; fairness and equity analysis and action in staff performance reviews; regular reviews of organisational efforts towards fairness and equity; and/or employee resource groups.

Figure 2. Gender equality and fairness and equity policies found, intergovernmental organisations (n=11)



8/11

organisations have publicly available gender equality policies

6/11

organisations have publicly available fairness and equity policies

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Box 3. Organisational examples

Examples of intergovernmental organisation gender equality, fairness and equity policies



GENDER EQUALITY POLICY WITH SPECIFIC MEASURES:

1. This policy supplements efforts on equality of opportunity and treatment for women in the International Labour Office, and is a crucial step towards implementation of gender equality and equity throughout the Organization.

4. An Office-wide target has been set of 50 per cent of Professional posts to be filled by women, with particular care to be given to gender balance in senior posts. Career development opportunities for General Service staff will be expanded and specific measures will be taken to create a family-friendly and enabling working environment for all staff, both men and women.

**International Labour
Organization (ILO)²**



FAIRNESS AND EQUITY POLICY WITH SPECIFIC MEASURES:

In order to strengthen geographical diversity amongst [UN Office on Drugs and Crime] staff, the office has implemented the UN Secretariat's Geographical Diversity Strategy and an organisation-specific Geography Action Plan. In line with Article 101.3 of the UN Charter, "the paramount consideration in the employment of the staff and in the determination of the conditions of service shall be the necessity of securing the highest standards of efficiency, competence, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of recruiting the staff on as wide a geographical basis as possible."

To improve accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities, the organization follows the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy as well as a tailored UNODC Disability Inclusion Action Plan. UNODC is committed to providing reasonable accommodation. When prompted to indicate their disability status in the online application form, candidates are invited to provide information on the need for reasonable accommodation.

**United Nations Office
on Drugs and Crime
(UNODC)³**

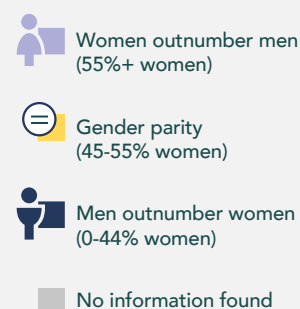
Finding 3. Gender parity masks the under-representation of women from low- and middle-income countries in leadership roles

Across 11 intergovernmental organisations, five (5/11; 45%) highest offices were held by women.

We collected gender data on 92 senior managers across eight intergovernmental organisations. Three (3/11; 27%) intergovernmental organisations have more women than men in senior management (55%+ women) and four (4/11; 36%) are at gender parity (45-55% women).

Leadership remains heavily skewed by geography. Most holders of highest office (9/11; 82%) are nationals of high-income countries (HICs). One (1/11; 9%) is a woman from a middle-income country (MIC), with no representation of women from low-income countries (LICs).

Figure 3. Proportion of intergovernmental organisations with gender parity in senior management (n=11)



5/11

of top leaders were women

Box 4.

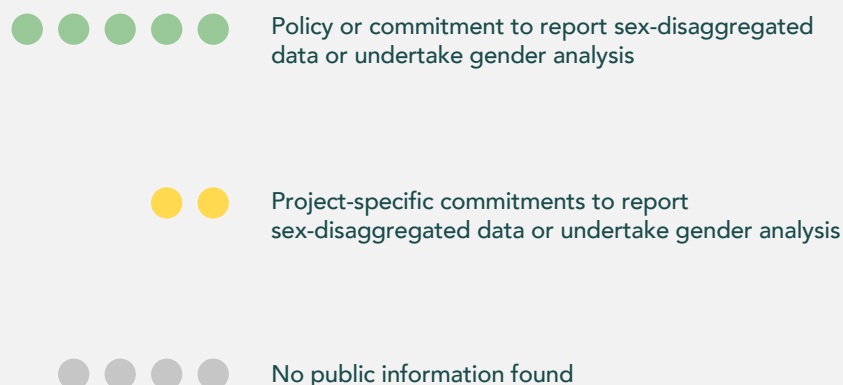
We attempted to collect data on board members of intergovernmental organisations. However, we were able to identify board chairs for only four organisations and board members for four organisations. For this reason, we have not reported this data.

Finding 4. Half of intergovernmental organisations recognise the importance of sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis, but commitments to regularly report are not universal

Sex-disaggregated data and gender analysis is essential for understanding who benefits from programmes, who participates in initiatives, and where gender gaps persist. For intergovernmental organisations, disaggregation of programmatic data by sex enables tracking of whether resources, support, and opportunities reach women and men equitably, supports accountability to gender equality commitments, and informs more effective, inclusive programming. Without such data, assessing the gendered impacts of interventions remains largely speculative.

Across 11 intergovernmental organisations, half (5/11; 45%) had a public commitment or policy to disaggregate programmatic data by sex or to undertake gender analysis.

Figure 4. Policies or commitments to report sex-disaggregated data or undertake gender analysis found, intergovernmental organisations (n=11)



5/11

organisations have a commitment to publicly report sex-disaggregated data or undertake gender analysis

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

Box 5. Organisational examples

Example of international organisation policy to sex-disaggregate data or undertake gender analysis

In line with the UN strategy of mainstreaming as a means towards gender equality, UNICRI integrates a gender perspective into its programmes so that women and men benefit equally, or as equally as possible, from its activities, tools, and approaches. UNICRI does so by making the concerns and experiences of women and men an integral dimension of the research, design, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of its programme cycle architecture.

UNICRI does this by: 1: Systematically producing, analysing, and using gender statistics and sex-disaggregated data. Gender statistics, sex-disaggregated data, and gender analysis tools are integrated into the UNICRI programme cycle to sharpen its understanding and responsiveness to the different needs, experiences, and circumstances of women and men. This, in turn, facilitates better-tailored interventions that drive improved development outcomes and entry points for change by ensuring gendered dimensions are fully considered in programme actions, activities, and impacts.

United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)⁴

Mulago school for the deaf
Kampala, Uganda. 2023.
Marijn Fidler

With over 160 pupils, many with multiple disabilities, the Mulago School for the Deaf represents both a sanctuary and a challenge to educational inequities.

Towards a gender-equal global law and justice sector

Achieving gender justice in the law and justice sector demands more than incremental improvements. It requires a fundamental shift in how institutions confront power, accountability, and inclusion. As this chapter shows, progress is possible, but only when organisations commit to transparency, embed equity in workplace culture, and ensure leadership that reflects the diversity of the communities they seek to serve. The path forward

calls for bold action: adopting and publishing robust gender equality, fairness and equity policies, investing in disaggregated data, and putting commitments into practice.

Global 50/50 provides tools, evidence, and guidance to help organisations move beyond rhetoric towards systemic, sustained change. The moment for decisive action is now, and the sector has both the responsibility and the opportunity to lead.

**EXPLORE RESOURCES
TO HELP YOU TAKE ACTION**



Intergovernmental Organisations in the Global Justice 50/50 sample

- European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)
- Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)
- International Development Law Organization (IDLO)
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)
- International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) – Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR)
- United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)
- United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (OLA)
- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Endnotes

- 1 Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. (nd). Gender Equality. <https://www.osce.org/odihr/gender-equality>
- 2 International Labour Organization. (2022). Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40dgreports/%40dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_856240.pdf
- 3 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. (nd). UNODC Careers. <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/employment-opportunities.html>
- 4 United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute. (2023). UNICRI Programmes Gender Strategy. https://unicri.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/Unicri_Gender_strategy_web.pdf