

From Howard University to The Hague: Changing the Picture of Women in International Justice



Caption 1: Participants at the GQUAL Conference, The Hague, Netherlands

Dr. Josephine Jarpa Dawuni, Assistant Professor of Political Science and Co-Founder of the [Women and Gender Studies Collective](#) at Howard University took part in an international conference from October 3-5 2017, in The Hague, Netherlands. The conference, organized by the [GQUAL Campaign](#), was held under the theme “Changing the Picture of International Justice.” GQUAL is a body founded in 2015 at the UN Headquarters consisting of representatives of UN member-states, leading feminist scholars, gender activists, international lawyers and jurists.

The conference, held at The Hague Institute for Global Justice drew participants from across the globe to engage in presentations and workshops aimed at identifying actionable plans to move the agenda for gender parity forward. Dr. Dawuni’s panel discussed ways to fix the underrepresentation of women in international bodies. [David Tolbert](#), in introducing Dr. Dawuni, mentioned Howard University’s role in the civil rights fight in the US, while mentioning [Ta-Nahesi Coates’ reference of Howard University as “The Mecca.”](#)

In her presentation, Dr. Dawuni noted the success that has been made with African women judges currently accounting for the highest number of judges on the [International Criminal Court](#) (ICC). She also noted that at present, [the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights](#) (ACtHPR) is the most gender-balanced court in the world. Dr. Dawuni was however quick to point out that these achievements are not even within the African continent, as sub-regional courts such as the [ECOWAS Court of Justice](#) and the [East African Court of Justice](#) are still struggling to achieve parity. Nonetheless, being optimistic of the gains at the ACtHPR, Dr. Dawuni argued the case of the ACtHPR as a [roadmap for achieving gender parity](#) in other international courts.



Caption 2: Dr. Dawuni standing next to the picture of the International Court of Justice judges at the Peace Palace, The Hague.





Caption 3: Dr. Dawuni with Her Excellency Judge Silvia Fernández de Gurmendi (President of the International Criminal Court)

invited to sign the [pledge](#) as we push for gender parity on international courts and tribunals--- because it is the human thing to do!

While acknowledging the importance and timeliness of campaigns such as GQUAL, Dr. Dawuni stressed the critical role supply-side variables play in the pipeline argument. Dr. Dawuni suggested the essential role of awareness raising among judges and law students of international judicial position. She also noted, the need for sustained mentoring programs. Awareness raising can be enhanced through research that aims to highlight success stories, such as those contained in the forthcoming book on [International Courts and the African Woman Judge: Unveiled Narratives](#). The GQUAL Campaign is open to all, and everyone is

invited to sign the [pledge](#) as we push for gender parity on international courts and tribunals---

