THE WOMEN’S CONVENTION TURNED 30
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Achievements, Setbacks, and Prospects

Edited by

Ingrid Westendorp

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Ingrid Westendorp (ed.)

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PREFACE

On 8 March 2010, International Women’s Day, many of the authors of this book attended a one-day seminar organized by the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights of the Maastricht University. It was a most inspiring event on which new ideas were launched and thorough discussions were held. The seminar was not only attended by legal scholars from the Netherlands and abroad, but also by Non-Governmental Organisations’ representatives, civil servants and students.

The 27 contributors of this book have different national and cultural backgrounds; some have just started their (academic) careers whilst others already are well-established in their particular field of work. They all had to write their particular contribution on top of a busy daytime job. As is not uncommon in projects such as this, some of the authors have managed to submit their Chapters in a very short period of time whilst others were facing unexpected challenges. It is never easy to get 27 individuals on the same page, but in the end every single chapter shows enthusiasm and dedication to the cause of equality for women. I am genuinely grateful to every single one of them.

I would also like to express my gratitude to the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights and the Faculty of Law’s Research Fund for their (financial) support to organize this seminar, and to Intersentia for making the publication of this book possible.

Special thanks go to Chantal Kuypers who, on top of organizing the seminar, has always been my prop and stay with whatever problem I encountered during the compilation of this book.

Finally, my gratitude goes to three enthusiastic and hard-working student assistants who did research, looked up references and gave support to whoever needed it: Laura Visser, Samira Sakhi and Antonia Waltermann.
SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1. Introduction
  Ingrid Westendorp .......................................................... 1

Chapter 2. The United Nations and the Promotion and Protection of Women’s Human Rights: A Work in Progress
  Fleur van Leeuwen ............................................................. 13

Chapter 3. The Essence of Discrimination Against Women: An Interpretation by CEDAW and the European Union
  Ingrid Westendorp and Antonia Waltermann ........................ 33

Chapter 4. The Principle of Equality
  Rolanda Oostland ............................................................. 67

Chapter 5. Temporary Special Measures under the Women’s Convention and Positive Action under EU Law: Mutually Compatible or Irreconcilable?
  Lisa Waddington and Laura Visser ..................................... 95

Chapter 6. Using Culture to Achieve Equality
  Ingrid Westendorp ............................................................. 111

Chapter 7. ‘Because to me, a Woman Who Speaks in Public is a Public Woman’: 30 Years Women’s Convention and the Struggle to Eliminate Discrimination of Women in the Field of Trafficking and Prostitution
  Marjolein van den Brink and Marjan Wijers .......................... 135

Chapter 8. Articles 7 and 8: The Added Value of the Women’s Convention and the Dutch Case of the Christian Party
  Margreet de Boer ............................................................... 163

Chapter 9. Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Nationality Law
  Gerard-René de Groot ......................................................... 187

Chapter 10. Barriers to Girls’ Right to Education in Afghanistan
  Fons Coomans and Samira Sakhi .......................................... 205

Intersentia
Summary of Contents

Chapter 11. Equal Employment Opportunities and Equal Pay: Measuring EU Law against the Standards of the Women's Convention
Anja Wiesbrock ................................................................. 227

Chapter 12. Women's Right to Health and International Trade – Special Reference to the GATS and the TRIPS Agreement
Jennifer Sellin and Nishara Mendis ................................... 249

Chapter 13. Eradicating Female Circumcision: Changing a Harmful Social Norm through the Women's Convention
Phyllis Livaha ................................................................. 279

Chapter 14. Equality and Economic and Social Life Including Implications for the European Union
Dagmar Schiek and Jule Mulder ......................................... 303

Chapter 15. Rural Women's Right to Land and Housing in Times of Urbanization
Ingrid Westendorp .......................................................... 325

Chapter 16. Equality of Men and Women before the Law: Towards a New Dutch Law on Names
Tilly Draaisma ................................................................. 343

Chapter 17. Article 16 of the Women's Convention and the Status of Muslim Women at Divorce
Pauline Kruiniger ............................................................. 363

Chapter 18. CEDAW: A Full Human Rights Treaty Body?
Cees Flinterman .............................................................. 395

Chapter 19. Due Diligence Mania
Menno T. Kamminga ....................................................... 407

Chapter 20. Reservations to the Women's Convention: A Muslim Problem Ill-addressed?
Zoé Luca ................................................................. 417

Chapter 21. The Optional Protocol to the Women's Convention: An Assessment of Its Effectiveness in Protecting Women's Rights
Sille Jansen ................................................................. 435
Chapter 22. Emerging from the Shadows: Violence Against Women and the Women’s Convention
   Kate Rose-Sender ............................................. 453

Chapter 23. The Impact of Corruption upon Women’s Rights: A Neglected Area?
   Martine Boersma ............................................. 467

Chapter 24. The Impact and Effectiveness of State Reporting under the Women’s Convention: The Case of the Netherlands
   Jasper Krommendijk ......................................... 487
CONTENTS

Preface ........................................ v
Summary of Contents ................................ vii
List of Abbreviations ................................ xxiii
About the Contributors ............................ xxv

Chapter 1. Introduction
Ingrid Westendorp ................................ 1

Chapter 2. The United Nations and the Promotion and Protection of Women’s Human Rights: A Work in Progress
Fleur van Leeuwen .............................. 13

1. Introduction .................................... 13
2. The First Step: Same Rights .................. 15
   2.1. The UN Human Rights System .......... 15
   2.2. The Commission on the Status of Women 18
3. The Second Step: Special Rights ............ 21
4. The Third Step: Transformation of the Mainstream . 24
5. Final Remarks .................................... 28

Chapter 3. The Essence of Discrimination Against Women:
An Interpretation by CEDAW and the European Union
Ingrid Westendorp and Antonia Waltermann .... 33

1. Introduction .................................... 33
2. Defining Discrimination ....................... 35
   2.1. The Drafting History of Article 1 ...... 35
   2.2. A Comparison with other Definitions of Discrimination 36
3. CEDAW’s Interpretation of Discrimination Against Women 39
   3.1. CEDAW’s Concluding Observations and Article 1 39
   3.2. General Recommendations ................. 41
   3.3. Decisions .................................. 44
   3.4. Inquiry .................................... 47
4. The Principle of Non-Discrimination under EU Law 48
   4.1. Primary Sources of EU Law ............... 49
   4.2. Secondary Sources of EU Law ............ 50
# Contents

4.3. Case Law .................................................. 53  
4.4. Other Instruments ........................................ 57  
   4.4.1. The Daphne Programme: Violence Against Women .... 57  
   4.4.2. Instruments Regarding Gender Equality and Gender  
       Mainstreaming ........................................... 58  
4.5. Limitations .............................................. 59  
5. Analysis .................................................. 60  
6. Conclusion ................................................. 63  

Chapter 4. The Principle of Equality  
Rolanda Oostland ............................................. 67  
1. Introduction ............................................... 67  
2. The Principles of Equality and Non-Discrimination .......... 68  
   2.1. Formal and Substantive Equality .......................... 68  
   2.2. Direct and Indirect Discrimination ....................... 71  
   2.3. The Relation Between the Principles of Equality and Non- 
       Discrimination ........................................... 73  
3. Articles 2 and 3 of the Women's Convention .................. 75  
   3.1. Article 2 ............................................... 75  
       3.1.1. General and Specific Obligations .................... 75  
       3.1.2. Equality Clause in National Legislation ............ 76  
       3.1.3. Non-State Actors .................................. 78  
       3.1.4. Modify Discriminatory Laws, Customs and Practices .. 80  
   3.2. Article 3 ............................................... 82  
       3.2.1. All Appropriate Measures ............................ 82  
       3.2.2. On a Basis of Equality with Men ..................... 84  
       3.2.3. Not Temporary and in All Fields .................... 84  
4. Article 3 ICCPR ............................................ 85  
   4.1. General Comment No. 28 ............................... 85  
   4.2. Formal and Substantive Equality ........................ 86  
   4.3. Non-State Actors ...................................... 89  
   4.4. Culture, Traditions and Religion ........................ 89  
5. Conclusions ............................................... 91  

Chapter 5. Temporary Special Measures under the Women's Convention  
and Positive Action under EU Law: Mutually Compatible or Irreconcilable?  
Lisa Waddington and Laura Visser ................................ 95  
1. Introduction ............................................... 95  
2. Formal Equality, Substantive Equality and Temporary Special  
   Measures/Positive Action ................................... 97  
3. Obligations to Adopt Temporary Special Measures under Article 4(1)  
   of the Convention .......................................... 98  

xii  

Intersentia
4. Limitations to the Adoption of Positive Action Measures under EU Law  
5. A Comparison: The Obligation to Adopt Temporary Special Measures 
   under the Convention and the Limits to Positive Action under EU Law .

Chapter 6. Using Culture to Achieve Equality
   Ingrid Westendorp

1. Introduction
2. Content and Meaning of Article 5: Introduction
3. Implementation on the Domestic Level
   3.1. Appropriate Measures According to CEDAW
   3.2. Some Comments on CEDAW’s Concluding Observations
4. The Two Faces of Culture
   4.1. Culture as a Barrier
   4.2. Culture as an Instrument of Change
   4.3. Relevant Actors
5. Conclusion

Chapter 7. 'Because to me, a Woman Who Speaks in Public is a Public Woman: 30 Years Women's Convention and the Struggle to Eliminate 
   Discrimination of Women in the Field of Trafficking and Prostitution
   Marjolein van den Brink and Marjan Wijers

1. Introduction
2. International Legal Framework in a Historical Perspective
   2.1. From Regulation to Eradication of Prostitution
   2.2. The First Treaties
   2.3. Sex Workers Raise Their Voices
   2.4. The UN Trafficking Protocol
3. Drafting Article 6
4. CEDAW’s Observations on Trafficking and Prostitution
   4.1. Introduction
   4.2. Trafficking
      4.2.1. Perception of the Problem
      4.2.2. Causes of Trafficking
      4.2.3. A Comprehensive Approach
      4.2.4. The Legal Framework
   4.3. Exploitation of Prostitution
      4.3.1. Defining the Problem
      4.3.2. Causes
      4.3.3. Measures
      4.3.4. Legal Measures
4.3.4.1. Measures to be taken in prohibitionist and abolitionist States ........................................ 153
4.3.4.2. Measures to be taken in States which (partly) decriminalized the sex sector .................. 154
5. Analysis and Conclusion ......................................................... 155

Chapter 8. Articles 7 and 8: The Added Value of the Women's Convention and the Dutch Case of the Christian Party
Margreet de Boer ................................................................. 163
1. Introduction ................................................................. 163
2. Historical Background ..................................................... 163
3. Political Participation and the Women's Convention ......................................................... 165
   3.1. General Recommendations ........................................ 165
   3.2. Decisions under the Optional Protocol .......................... 167
   3.3. Concluding Comments ............................................... 167
4. What Does the Women's Convention Add to Other Human Rights Obligations? ................. 167
   4.1. The Scope .............................................................. 168
   4.2. Substantive Equality .................................................. 168
5. Measures ................................................................. 169
   5.1. Measures in General Recommendation No. 23 ................ 170
   5.2. Measures in Concluding Observations ........................... 171
   5.3. Temporary Special Measures: Quota, Numeric Goals and Time Frames .......................... 172
   5.4. Awareness Raising Campaigns ................................. 173
   5.5. Training and Assisting Women Candidates ..................... 173
   5.6. The Voice of Women .................................................. 174
   5.7. Participation of Women in NGOs and Associations Concerned with the Public and Political Life ......................................................... 174
   5.8. Measures and the Freedom of Political Parties and Associations .................. 175
6. Case Study: The Case of the Dutch Christian Party that Excludes Women ......................... 175
   6.1. The SGP and 'The Women's Issue' .............................. 177
   6.3. The Proceedings in the SGP-Case: The District Court .......... 178
   6.4. Intermezzo: CEDAW Concluding Observations 2007 ........ 179
   6.5. The Proceedings in the SGP-Case: The Appeal ................ 179
   6.6. Intermezzo: CEDAW Concluding Observations 2010 ........... 180
   6.7. The Proceedings in the SGP-Case: The Verdict of the Supreme Court .......................... 180
6.8. The Direct Effect of Article 7 Women’s Convention and the Key Role of Political Parties in the Enforcement of the Right to Stand for Election ........................................ 181


6.10. The Role of the State: Responsibilities and Measures ........................................ 183

7. Conclusion ....................................................................................................................... 183

Chapter 9. Equal Treatment of Women and Men in Nationality Law
Gerard-René de Groot .......................................................................................................... 187

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 187

2. Treaty Provisions ........................................................................................................... 187

3. Historical Background: From Système Unitaire to Système Dualiste .......... 190

4. From Ius Sanguinis a Patre to Ius Sanguinis a Patre et a Matre .................. 195

5. Reservations to Article 9 of the Women’s Convention ................................. 196
   5.1. Reservations to the Whole of Article 9 ......................................................... 196
   5.2. Reservations to Article 9(2) ........................................................................ 198

5. Transitory Provisions .................................................................................................... 200

6. Conclusions ..................................................................................................................... 202

Chapter 10. Barriers to Girls’ Right to Education in Afghanistan
Fons Coomans and Samira Sakhi ...................................................................................... 205

1. Introduction ...................................................................................................................... 205

2. The Human Rights Framework ................................................................................... 206
   2.1. The Purpose of Article 10 Women’s Convention ........................................ 206
   2.2. Obligations Resulting from Article 10 Women’s Convention .................. 207
   2.3. Other Relevant International Instruments .................................................... 208

3. Gender Related Aspects of Education ......................................................................... 209

4. Short Overview of Afghanistan’s Educational Situation under Taliban Rule and after Transition to Democratic Governance .................................................................................................................. 212

5. Barriers to Girls’ Right to Education in Afghanistan ............................................. 214
   5.1. Insecurity ............................................................................................................ 214
   5.2. Poverty ............................................................................................................... 215
   5.3. Early Marriages .................................................................................................. 216
   5.4. Other Barriers .................................................................................................... 217


7. Towards Universalising the Right to Education in Afghanistan? ..................... 219
   7.1. The Value of Education in Islamic Societies ............................................... 219
   7.2. Universalising the Right to Education ............................................................ 221

8. Concluding Remarks .................................................................................................... 223
Chapter 11. Equal Employment Opportunities and Equal Pay: Measuring EU Law against the Standards of the Women's Convention
   Anja Wiesbrock ............................................................... 227
   1. Introduction ............................................................... 227
   2. The Right to Equal Employment Opportunities and Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value .............................................. 229
      2.1. Article 11 Women's Convention .................................. 229
      2.2. EU Law .................................................................. 231
   3. Challenges in the Application of Employment Rights .......... 233
      3.1. Non-Standard Forms of Employment ............................ 235
      3.2. Deep-Rooted Causes of Inequality and a Male Standard of Worker .............................................................. 238
   4. Implementation and Enforcement ..................................... 242
   5. Conclusion ................................................................... 244

Chapter 12. Women's Right to Health and International Trade – Special Reference to the GATS and the TRIPS Agreement
   Jennifer Sellin and Nishara Mendis ..................................... 249
   1. Introduction ............................................................... 249
   2. A Brief Background to the Right to Health ........................ 251
   3. The Right to Health under the ICESCR and the Women's Convention .......................................................... 254
   4. TRIPS: Patents and Access to Medicines from the Perspective of a Woman's Right to Health ................................. 267
   5. GATS: Liberalization of Health Services and a Women's Right to Health ......................................................... 271
   6. Conclusion ................................................................... 277

Chapter 13. Eradicating Female Circumcision: Changing a Harmful Social Norm through the Women's Convention
   Phyllis Livaha ................................................................. 279
   1. Introduction ............................................................... 279
   2. FC Procedure .............................................................. 280
   3. Cultural Relativism ........................................................ 282
   4. Female Circumcision and Its Complications and Effects .... 285
   5. CEDAW General Recommendation No. 14 and other International Instruments .................................................. 286
   6. Is Legislation Enough? The Enforcement of the Women's Convention .......................................................... 289
   7. Conclusion ................................................................... 298
Chapter 14. Equality and Economic and Social Life Including Implications for the European Union
Dagmar Schiek and Jule Mulder ........................................ 303

1. Introduction ....................................................... 303
2. Broader Context of Article 13 within the UN. ..................... 304
3. Article 13 Analysed .............................................. 306
   3.1. Article 13(a) (Family Benefits) ............................ 306
   3.2. Article 13(b) (Financial Credit) ............................ 309
   3.3. Article 13(c) (Recreational Activities, Sports, Cultural Life) ... 315
4. EU Law and Article 13 ........................................... 316
   4.1. Article 13(a) (Family Benefits) ............................ 317
   4.2. Article 13(b) and (c) (Financial Services and Recreational and Cultural Activities) ............................ 318
      4.2.1. Financial Services .................................... 318
      4.2.2. Recreational Activities and Cultural Life .......... 320
5. Conclusion .................................................. 321

Chapter 15. Rural Women’s Right to Land and Housing in Times of Urbanization
Ingrid Westendorp .................................................... 325

1. Introduction ....................................................... 325
2. Historical Development of Article 14 ............................. 326
3. Urban vs. Rural ................................................. 328
4. The Importance of Land .......................................... 330
   4.1. Barriers to Obtain and Control Land ..................... 331
   4.2. Consequences of Lack of Land ............................ 334
   4.3. CEDAW’s Attention for Land in Article 14 ............. 335
5. Rural Women’s Future ........................................... 337
6. Concluding Remarks ........................................... 339

Chapter 16. Equality of Men and Women before the Law: Towards a New Dutch Law on Names
Tilly Draaisma .......................................................... 343

1. Introduction ....................................................... 343
2. Historical Context .............................................. 343
   2.1. Charter of the United Nations ............................ 344
   2.2. Universal Declaration on Human Rights .................. 344
   2.3. International Covenants on Human Rights ............. 344
   2.4. Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women 345
Chapter 18. CEDAW: A Full Human Rights Treaty Body?

Cees Flinterman ............................................. 395

1. Introduction .............................................. 395
2. Composition of CEDAW ................................. 396
3. Mandate .................................................... 398
4. Working Methods ........................................ 399
5. CEDAW and NGOs. ...................................... 401
6. Concluding Remarks ..................................... 403

Chapter 19. Due Diligence Mania

Menno T. Kamminga ......................................... 407

1. Introduction .............................................. 407
2. International Law ......................................... 409
3. Domestic Law ............................................. 410
4. Women’s Rights .......................................... 411
5. European Court of Human Rights ..................... 411
6. Conclusions .............................................. 413

Chapter 20. Reservations to the Women’s Convention: A Muslim Problem Ill-addressed?

Zoé Luca ...................................................... 417

1. Introduction .............................................. 417
2. Background .............................................. 418
   2.1. Types of Reservations ............................... 420
   2.2. The Evolving State of Reservations ............... 421
3. CEDAW’s Response Outside the Reporting Mechanism .............. 423
4. CEDAW and Muslim States in the Reporting Mechanism ............ 427
   4.1. Assessing the Practice of Muslim States Since 2004 ........ 427
   4.2. CEDAW’s Reaction within the Reporting Mechanism ....... 430
5. Objections by States Parties ................................ 432
6. Conclusions .............................................. 433

Chapter 21. The Optional Protocol to the Women’s Convention: An Assessment of Its Effectiveness in Protecting Women’s Rights

Sille Jansen .................................................... 435

1. Introduction .............................................. 435
2. The Evolution of the Procedures of the Protocol ................. 436
3. The Terms of the Protocol and Its Case Law .................... 438
   3.1. The Individual Complaints Procedure ............... 438

Intersentia xix
3.1.1. Introduction ........................................ 438
3.1.2. Admissibility .................................. 439
  3.1.2.1. Exhaustion of Domestic Remedies ........ 439
  3.1.2.2. Admissibility Ratione Materiae .......... 440
  3.1.2.3. Admissibility Ratione Temporis ....... 440
3.1.3. Justiciability and the Margin of Discretion .... 442
3.1.4. Interim Measures .............................. 444
3.1.5. Due Diligence .................................. 446
3.1.6. Follow-up ....................................... 448
3.2. Conclusion ........................................ 449
4. The Inquiry Procedure ............................... 450
5. Conclusion ........................................... 451

Chapter 22. Emerging from the Shadows: Violence Against Women and the Women's Convention
Kate Rose-Sender ........................................ 453
1. Introduction ......................................... 453
2. Formulation – The Drafting Process ............... 454
3. Raising Awareness ................................... 458
4. Function – The Work of the Committee ........... 462
5. Summary and Conclusions .......................... 465

Chapter 23. The Impact of Corruption upon Women's Rights: A Neglected Area?
Martine Boersma ......................................... 467
1. Introduction ......................................... 467
  1.1. Background ...................................... 467
  1.2. Structure and Methodology .................... 468
2. Defining 'Corruption' ................................ 469
  2.1. Public vs. Private Sector Corruption .......... 469
  2.2. Grand vs. Petty Corruption .................... 471
2.3. Taxonomy .......................................... 471
  2.3.1. Bribery ....................................... 471
  2.3.2. Trading in Influence .......................... 472
  2.3.3. Embezzlement ................................ 473
  2.3.4. Abuse of Functions ........................... 473
  2.3.5. Illicit Enrichment ............................. 474
3. Corruption as a Women's Rights Issue ........... 474
  3.1. Introduction ...................................... 474
  3.2. The Political Dimension: Access to Decision-Making Power .... 475
  3.3. The Law Enforcement Dimension: Protection of Women's Rights ... 476
Contents

3.3.1. The Justice System ........................................... 476
3.3.2. Human Trafficking .......................................... 477
3.4. The Socio-economic Dimension: Access to Resources ........ 478
  3.4.1. Health .................................................... 478
  3.4.2. Education .................................................. 480
4. Practice of the UN Treaty Bodies ................................. 481
  4.1. CEDAW ....................................................... 482
  4.2. Other Treaty Bodies .......................................... 483
5. Conclusions and Recommendations ............................... 484

Chapter 24. The Impact and Effectiveness of State Reporting under the
Women’s Convention: The Case of the Netherlands
Jasper Krommendiijk .................................................. 487

1. Introduction ....................................................... 487
2. Impact and Attention at the Domestic Level ..................... 488
  2.1. Governmental Informing of Parliament .................... 489
  2.2. National Reports and In-depth Studies ................. 490
  2.3. Parliamentary Scrutiny ..................................... 492
  2.4. Media Coverage ............................................... 495
  2.5. Courts and Legal Practice ................................ 496
3. Factors at the State Level ......................................... 498
4. Factors Related to CEDAW ........................................ 503
5. Differing Views about the Nature of the Obligations .......... 505
6. Conclusion ......................................................... 508
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEDAW Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CERD Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
CESCR Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
CHR Commission on Human Rights
CMW Committee on Migrant Workers
CO/COs Concluding Observation(s)
CRC Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSO/CSOs Civil society organization(s)
CSW Commission on the Status of Women
DEDAW Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
ECJ European Court of Justice
ECN European Convention on Nationality
ECOSOC Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
EU European Union
FC Female circumcision
GA General Assembly of the United Nations
GATS General Agreement on Trade in Services
HRC Human Rights Committee
ICCPR International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICERD International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination
ICESCR International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICMW International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
IGO/IGOs Intergovernmental organization(s)
ILO International Labour Organization
NGO/NGOs Non-governmental organization(s)
UDHR Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UN United Nations
SRVAW Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women
TFEU Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TRIPS Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
VAW Violence Against Women
WHO World Health Organization
WTO World Trade Organization
Ms Margreet de Boer studied Dutch Law and Criminology (1982–1986). For her thesis she developed a complaint procedure on sexual harassment for the Free University. In 1989, Margreet de Boer started her career as a women’s lawyer: she became partner in a law firm, and provided legal aid to women on family law, the legal position of victims of domestic and sexual violence, social security and equal treatment. She handled several cases on sex-discrimination for the equal treatment commission and the court.

In 2000, Margreet de Boer became a senior consultant with the Clara Wichmann Instituut, the expertise Centre for Women and Law, where she worked as senior consultant and director. Since 2004 she has her own consultancy firm on Women’s Rights. In these positions she focussed on the analysis and research of the gender aspects of laws and their implementation. She was co-author of the Dutch Shadow Report on the implementation of CEDAW in the Netherlands (2006), and advisor for the Dutch Audit Committee on Gender mainstreaming (2005–2006). She developed several trainings, on gender aware legislation, on CEDAW and on the legal aspects of domestic violence. Margreet de Boer is partner in Rights 4 Change, a project organisation which focuses on human rights impact assessment.

Margreet de Boer is also an active member of the political party GroenLinks (GreenLeft). She was member of the local council in Amsterdam-West (from 2006–2011), and from June 2011 she is member of the Senate of the Dutch Parliament.

Ms Martine Boersma studied Law at Maastricht University (cum laude), where she specialized in company and commercial law, as well as in labour and health law. Subsequently, she started her PhD research in September 2007 with the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights. The dissertation addresses the possibilities for combating corruption in the public sector by making use of the systems of international human rights law and international criminal law. Martine also teaches various courses in the field of international and European law at Maastricht University. Since 2011 Martine Boersma works as a solicitor.

Dr Marjolein van den Brink has lectured at Utrecht Law School since 2000. Between 2001 and 2010 she combined this with a commissionership of the Dutch national Equality Body. Previously, she worked for the national advisory council
to the government on matters of women’s equality and empowerment, for a Dutch NGO focusing on international developments relevant to women in the Netherlands, and for the University of Leiden. In 2006 she defended her Ph.D. thesis, a gender analysis of the work of the UN Children’s Rights Committee, focusing in particular on the effects of the Committee’s recommendations on the position of parents in terms of gender. She has published on a variety of topics, ranging from human rights, and the (ir)relevance of sex as a legal category, to issues of multiculturalism, and gender bias in the international law concept of state sovereignty.

Prof. Dr Fons Coomans holds the UNESCO Chair in Human Rights and Peace. He is also the coordinator of the Maastricht Centre for Human Rights, and Senior Researcher at the Netherlands School of Human Rights Research. His fields of research include the international protection of economic, social and cultural rights in general and the right to education and food in particular, as well as international supervisory mechanisms in the field of human rights. He is the coordinator of the courses on economic, social and cultural rights of the Advanced European Masters Degree in Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice.

Dr M.C.E.M. (Tilly) Draaisma studied Dutch law (Utrecht University, 1980) and fiscal law (Tilburg University, 1991) and made her doctorate at the Free University, Amsterdam (2001). The title of her doctoral thesis was: De stiefouder: stiefkind van het recht. Een onderzoek naar de juridische plaatsbepaling van de stiefouder (Stepparent: Stepchild of Law. A study into the Legal position of the stepparent). She was a solicitor till 1985. Currently, she is senior lecturer international law in the department of law at the Dutch Open University, Heerlen.

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Ms Phyllis Livaha joined the Faculty of Law at Maastricht University in 2008, where she teaches both international law and international relations. She holds a Juris Doctor from Michigan State University College of Law and a B.A. (honours) in Political Science from Bennett College. Before joining the faculty at Maastricht, she was a volunteer researcher for International Rights Advocates, a litigation project of the International Labor Rights Fund that provides legal support to victims of human rights abuses around the world. She has also worked as a Client Support Specialist at EVE, Inc. (End Violent Encounters). She externed at Legal Services of South Central Michigan, volunteered as a Women’s Program Assistant at Refugee Services, and interned at Amnesty International.

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