**Advisory Committee of the Human Rights Council**

**Questionnaire on current levels of representation of women in human rights organs and mechanisms**

1. **Do current processes in the State allow for, or encourage, a consideration of gender balance when nominating, electing and appointing** **experts for human rights organs such as the Advisory Committee and treaty bodies? Do these processes ensure publicity, transparency, and participation by civil society organizations and/or other actors?**

Switzerland considers diversity in the composition of any committee or body (regarding sex, gender, professional background, geographical and/or linguistic affiliation) as an added value and a source of enrichment for the work of the body concerned. One of the fundamental goals of promoting equal opportunities is to reach a balanced representation of women and men in all functions and across all levels. Thus, Switzerland does encourage and consider gender balance when nominating, electing and appointing experts for human rights organs.

1. **Does the State take into account the gender composition of the treaty bodies or the Advisory Committee at the time of nomination or election?**

Whilst Switzerland does consider the gender composition of a body, the sex or gender of potential Swiss candidates is not the main criterion in Switzerland’s decision to support a candidature or not. Switzerland supports the most competent and qualified person for the job. However, Switzerland strongly advocates gender balanced teams and gender equality in nomination or selection processes. Thus, as long as women are underrepresented, Switzerland will make an extra effort to find a qualified candidate of the underrepresented gender and, in case of two potential candidates with the same qualifications, will opt for the female candidate.

1. **Does the State have any good national practices related to the nomination, election and appointing processes for human rights organs such as the Advisory Committee and treaty bodies? Do these processes take into account gender when nominating, electing, or appointing?**

Yes, Switzerland has a process in place. Coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a wide range of competent offices is consulted before any candidate is nominated. The same consultation process applies to the election of members of the Advisory Committee. This makes sure that gender is taken into account as outlined under question 2.

1. **How does the State take into consideration its obligations concerning non-discrimination and women’s right to equal access to participation, as well as its obligations under Article 8 of CEDAW to ensure women’s equal participation in the work of human rights organs when nominating or appointing candidates for those organs and mechanisms?**

See answers to questions 2 and 3.

1. **How many women has the State nominated to human rights organs and mechanisms in the last five years (such as the Advisory Committee or treaty bodies)?**

Switzerland nominated four women in the last five years:

* Patricia Schulz for the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). She served two consequent terms as a member (2011-2014; 2015-2018).
* Laurence Boillat, member of the International Humanitarian Fact-Finding Commission (IHFFC), 2017–2019
* Dorothea Winkler, member of the Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (GRETA), 2017–2020
* Marie-Claude Hofner, member of the Group of Experts on Action against Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (GREVIO), 2019–2023

We are not aware of any women that have been nominated by Switzerland to human rights organs and mechanisms, but not elected or appointed.

1. **Does the State take any action to publicize and encourage women to apply for the special procedures mandate-holders vacancies?**

These positions are publicized to the general public and therefore open for applications by women and men alike. If a government body implicated in the nominating process knows of a qualified female candidate it will reach out to her and encourage her to stand as a candidate.

1. **What are the main challenges within your country in tackling the issue of gender balance when nominating and electing candidates for human rights organs and mechanisms such as the Advisory Committee, treaty bodies and the special procedures?**

As outlined above, Switzerland, in case of two potential candidates with the same qualifications, will opt for the female candidate, as long as women are underrepresented. So far, Switzerland has not achieved gender parity in nominating experts for human rights organs and mechanism.

1. **Are there good practices by the State or other stakeholders that ensure gender parity? If yes, could you please share these practices?**
2. **Are there recommendations directed to States, international bodies, or other entities, that you wish to make in order to strengthen and inform this report?**