

2013 WOMEN & JUSTICE CONFERENCE

State Responsibility for Eliminating Violence Against Women:
The Due Diligence Principle and the Role of Judges

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Fourth Annual Women & Justice Conference Report:

State Responsibility for Eliminating Violence Against Women: The Due Diligence Principle and the Role of Judges

December 10-12, 2013, United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY



Cornell University
Law School
Avon Global Center
for Women and Justice

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The Center would like to thank Professor Rashida Manjoo, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, for her important keynote address and panel presentation, and for her many contributions to the development of the conference program. The Center would like to thank the members of its Steering Committee for their valuable participation in the conference and continual support and guidance throughout the planning process.

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Finally, the Center would like to thank the conference participants, whose thoughtful contributions helped to enrich the experience for all and make the conference a success.

The Center hopes that the ideas and best practices shared and new connections made at the conference will assist participants in their important work to fulfill their states' responsibility to eliminate violence against women.

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Overview

The Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School held its Fourth Annual Women & Justice Conference on December 10-12, 2013 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, NY. More than one hundred senior and distinguished judges, human rights lawyers and activists from over fifteen countries were in attendance. The conference was co-sponsored with the Avon Foundation for Women, the Virtue Foundation, the Dorothea S. Clarke Program in Feminist Jurisprudence at Cornell Law School, the University of Miami School of Law Human Rights Clinic, and the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

This year's conference topic was State Responsibility for Eliminating Violence Against Women: The Due Diligence Principle and the Role of Judges. Under international law, governments have an obligation both to refrain from committing acts of violence against women and to act with due diligence to prevent and respond to violence committed by non-governmental actors. The goal of the conference was to share methods for realizing this obligation with a specific focus on the role of judges in that process.

The conference was launched on Human Rights Day with a panel of experts in the field of women's human rights. The panel discussed how far the movement to eliminate violence against women has come since the adoption of the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action at the landmark World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna twenty years ago, but it also addressed how much work remains to be done. A reception celebrating the Vienna Declaration's 20th Anniversary immediately followed the panel.

The second day of the conference was opened with welcome remarks from Stewart Schwab, the Allan R. Tessler Dean and Professor of Law at Cornell Law School. He also introduced the keynote speaker, Rashida Manjoo, who is the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes, and Consequences. Professor Manjoo's keynote address focused on "State Responsibility to Act with Due Diligence: Practice and Reality" and discussed her recent groundbreaking report that elaborated upon the meaning of the due diligence obligation and evaluated its implementation by countries worldwide. The keynote address was followed by three panel discussions, with presentations from advocates, lawyers, and judges working to end gender-based violence around the world by holding governments accountable to their international obligations. The day ended with closing remarks from Carol Kurzig, President of the Avon Foundation for Women.

An in-depth, closed-door judicial roundtable was held on the final day of the conference with participating judges from countries around the world, including Kenya, South Africa, Nepal, India, Ghana, the Bahamas, Tanzania, Mexico, Taiwan, Canada, and the United States. The judicial roundtable topics were drawn from Rashida Manjoo's 2013 report and included: prevention and protection; the duty to protect women against violence and cultural or religious arguments; investigation, prosecution, punishment and reparations; and resource limitations, political pushback, and strategies to move forward. At lunchtime, Hon. Alyşe Işıl Karakaş of the European Court of Human Rights spoke on the topic of "Positive Obligations of the State on Domestic Violence: Remarks on the Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights." The roundtable gave judges the opportunity to interact and share creative ideas and success stories

drawn from their experiences in adjudicating gender-based violence cases in their own courts and countries.

By bringing together judges and other stakeholders from around the world, the conference facilitated an important discussion on the role of judges in realizing states' responsibility to eliminate violence against women. The Center thanks all conference participants for an extremely valuable exchange of information, energy, and ideas.

Day 1: Tuesday, December 10, 2013

Women's Rights as Human Rights: 20 years after Vienna

Opening Remarks:

- Kim Azzarelli, President, Women in the World Foundation; Founding Partner, Seneca Point Global; and Co-Founder and Steering Committee Chair, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School
- Dr. Joseph Salim, President and Co-Founder, Virtue Foundation

Moderator: Cynthia Grant Bowman, Dorothea S. Clarke Professor of Law, Cornell Law School and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

Panelists:

- Liesl Gertholtz, Executive Director, Women's Rights Division, Human Rights Watch
- Lenora Lapidus, Director, Women's Rights Project, American Civil Liberties Union
- Rashida Manjoo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences and Professor, Department of Public Law, University of Cape Town
- Hon. Ann C. Williams, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

The Fourth Annual Women & Justice Conference began with a video from the Women in the World Foundation and opening remarks from **Kim Azzarelli**. Ms. Azzarelli announced that the Avon Global Center, which began in 2008, was celebrating its fifth anniversary. She explained that the Center's mission was to combat violence against women through work with judges, research, and clinical work, examples of which have included research that was cited in a decision of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh and a report on acid violence in South Asia that contributed to changes to Cambodia's laws. She then stressed the importance of women judges in advancing women's rights, citing United States Supreme Court Justice O'Connor who said "the key to justice is rule of law, the key to rule of law is an impartial judiciary, the key to impartial judiciary is participation of women." After thanking Dean Schwab of Cornell Law School and Center Executive Director, Elizabeth Brundige, she concluded by introducing the next speaker, Dr. Joseph Salim.

Dr. Joseph Salim began his remarks with an explanation of the origins of the Virtue Foundation. The Virtue Foundation, which shares the same goals as the Center, started as a

think tank but subsequently formed an action arm to facilitate volunteer driven projects in the areas of health care, education, and women's empowerment. Larger organizations, including Harvard Medical School, Women in the World, Apple, and the United States Department of State have taken up their pilot programs. Dr. Salim ended by inviting audience members to volunteer with the Virtue Foundation.

Cynthia Bowman framed the panel by offering a brief history of Human Rights Day and the introduction of women's rights as human rights issues twenty years ago at the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna. She introduced the first panelist, Rashida Manjoo.

Rashida Manjoo provided a detailed account of the women's rights movement and the fight to treat women's rights as human rights beginning with Christin de Pizan's book in 1405 and ending with the Vienna Declaration. Professor Manjoo explained how the abolitionist movements of the 18th and 19th centuries informed and inspired the women's suffrage movement. She went on to discuss the struggle to treat women's rights as human rights within the United Nations system at both policy and treaty levels including: a discussion of the United Nations Charter, which affirms the equal rights of men and women; the formation of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946; the role of women in ensuring equality during the passage of the ICCPR and ICESCR conventions; and the passage of the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The movement to include women's rights as human rights culminated with the Vienna Declaration and Program of Action, within which was the first acknowledgement that women's rights are human rights and should not be treated as a social or welfare issues. However, Professor Manjoo concluded by pointing out that there is still much more work to be done, especially when it comes to implementation of these rights.

Liesl Gerntholtz began by discussing how the Women's Rights Division of Human Rights Watch gathers and documents women's rights abuses. The office gathers documentation on these abuses and then uses that information to lobby the government for change. Ms. Gerntholtz stressed that the Vienna Declaration was important because it catalyzed a strong legal framework around women's rights issues and, in particular, violence against women. The inclusion of violence against women in the Vienna Declaration led to the criminalization of domestic violence, the creation of minimum age of marriage laws, the development of rape in conflict as a crime against humanity, and the regulation of sexual violence in the work place. According to Ms. Gerntholtz, current areas where more work needs to be done include addressing violence against women and determining the best strategy for inclusion of men and boys in this process.

Lenora Lapidus discussed the Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) case against the United States in front of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) as an example of using international women's rights laws to make changes within the United States. The case was a huge victory because it was the first time that the IACHR found that the United States violated the human rights of a domestic violence victim. The IACHR gave seven recommendations to the United States government, and the American Civil Liberties Union is now working to ensure that the government follows these recommendations. Within the U.S. context, Ms. Lapidus believes there is work to be done in pushing the United States government to comply with international women's human rights obligations.

Hon. Ann Williams spoke on the role of the judiciary in promoting women's rights. She began by pointing out that only thirty percent of the judiciary worldwide is made-up of women. She then discussed the great effectiveness of orders of protection, specialized domestic violence courts (including integrated domestic violence courts, which were first started in New York), and other judge-led innovations. Hon. Williams ended by calling for more women in the judiciary because women judges are necessary to lead the way towards women's equality.

Several important comments were made in the question and answer session. Professor Manjoo discussed that a big challenge in advancing women's rights is that there is no legally binding document that addresses violence against women as CEDAW does not mention it. Ms. Gertholtz spoke about the importance of U.S. government aid to address violence against women, but highlighted that funding constraints (including the gag rule on abortion) tied with receiving the money are problematic. Hon. Williams pointed out sexism still exists in the United States and that many countries, some of which have quota systems to ensure female participation in politics and government, are ahead of the United States in advancing women's rights.

A reception to celebrate Human Rights Day immediately followed the panel discussion.

Day 2: Wednesday, December 11, 2013

Welcoming Remarks and Keynote Address: State Responsibility to Act with Due Diligence: Practice and Reality

Welcoming Remarks: Stewart J. Schwab, Allan R. Tessler Dean and Professor of Law, Cornell Law School

Keynote Address: Rashida Manjoo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences and Professor, Department of Public Law, University of Cape Town

Rashida Manjoo opened her keynote address by discussing the findings of her 2013 report to the United Nations Human Rights Council on the topic of state responsibility for eliminating violence against women. Outlining a number of forms of gender-based violence worldwide—including feticide, violence towards women due to their sexual orientation, and honor-based killings—Professor Manjoo stated that it is crucial to acknowledge that while violence against women is widespread globally, states generally fail to hold perpetrators accountable for their offences. This leaves victims powerless and sends a message to society that violence against women is acceptable. In contrast, the 2013 report highlights states' responsibility to exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate, and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those actions are perpetrated by the state or by private persons.

Professor Manjoo noted that it is crucial that states fully recognize the scale of gender-based violence so that they can appropriately modify existing law enforcement and legislative structures, ensure accountability, act to punish perpetrators, establish rehabilitation programs,

and where necessary work to modify the law to ensure harmonization with international human rights standards. Despite a number of measures undertaken across a range of countries, violence against women is still pervasive, and no single country can claim that it has eliminated this form of violence.

Professor Manjoo further discussed state obligations under the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women. The due diligence standard requires state action to address violence perpetrated by both state agents and private actors, and responses may include penal, civil, and administrative regulations. It is necessary, she argued, that state actions to eliminate these violations not only include legal reform but also tackle the structural root causes of violence against women.

Where recourse to judicial remedies is necessary, victims must be treated with respect and dignity, and a gender perspective needs to be integrated into the judicial system. It is also important to note that some groups of women, such as minorities, are particularly vulnerable to violence due to intersecting forms of discrimination and to adapt state practices accordingly. In her research, Professor Manjoo found that many states devote insufficient resources to tackling violence against women, and impunity for abusers is widespread. She noted that remedies are also a key element of the due diligence standard. Remedies in this context, as discussed in her 2010 report on the subject, must aim to be transformative.

Professor Manjoo also stated that it is problematic that there exists no legally binding framework on violence against women, despite the widespread acknowledgement that violence against women is severe worldwide. States must understand that the due diligence standard requires them to take action on an individual level, for every victim, and also on a systematic and holistic level to create an effective state structure to address the problem of gender-based violence. In so doing, states should undertake action plans and awareness-raising campaigns on violence against women, ensure adequate training and resources for police, and hold accountable those responsible for violence. States are also responsible for societal transformation to root out gender inequality, as it is the source of violence against women. While useful, legislative approaches will not result in meaningful change if they are not implemented with a holistic approach that highlights the overall empowerment of women. As citizens, women have the right to live lives free of violence, and states have the obligation to ensure this.

Professor Manjoo noted that responses to her call for country experiences on the interpretation, application, and effectiveness of measures taken by states in their efforts to eliminate violence against women were unfortunately sparse and inadequate. A number of states failed to respond, which suggests that they are unwilling to respond to acts of violence or address root causes of gender-based violence. This is even more problematic as violence against women is an increasing trend globally. Professor Manjoo emphasized that inequality needs to be one of the top priorities in the upcoming post-2015 agenda.

Panel 1: State Responsibility to Act with Due Diligence to Eliminate Violence against Women: From Theory to Practice

Moderator: Muna Ndulo, Professor of Law, Cornell Law School and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

Panelists:

- Caroline Bettinger-López, Associate Professor of Clinical Legal Education and Director, Human Rights Clinic, University of Miami School of Law
- Bahaa Ezzelarab, Legal Advisor, North African Litigation Initiative, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
- Robin Phillips, Executive Director, The Advocates for Human Rights
- Mónica Roa, Programs Director, Women's Link Worldwide

Muna Ndulo introduced the panel and thanked the organizers of the conference. He noted that it is important to recognize that the due diligence norm has been accepted in regional courts such as the Inter-American Court of Human Rights in the *Velasquez Rodriguez* case. As a next step, the translation of this international norm into domestic environments is very important so that the norm can effectively bear on the state.

Carrie Bettinger-López turned the discussion towards the case of *Jessica Lenahan (Gonzales) v the United States* in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, as an instance of bridging human rights theory and practice. Beginning with an excerpt from a documentary on the case, Professor Bettinger-Lopez highlighted the importance of listening to the victim's voice when thinking about justice and women's rights. Lenahan experienced domestic violence from her husband for over a decade. Ultimately she obtained a restraining order, but her husband subsequently kidnapped her two daughters. Police were dismissive when she repeatedly asked for their help. Ultimately, following a shoot-out between her ex-husband and police officers, her children were found dead. The U.S. Supreme Court found that Lenahan had no constitutional right to police protection or enforcement of the restraining order. She then brought her case to the Inter-American Commission alleging that the United States had violated her human rights.

Professor Bettinger-López noted that the facts of Lenahan's case are painfully familiar to many people from all of the countries represented at the conference. It is important to think about normative development and the role of the judiciary in addressing the issues discussed in this case and others. There is a running theme developing here, that of the juxtaposition of the existing normative framework versus implementation. In the United States there exists a normative framework on domestic violence, but there continues to be gaps at the domestic and international level, such as the lack of an international treaty on violence against women. On the other hand, as is evident from the Inter-American Commission decision in *Lenahan*, there have been significant normative developments at the regional level in addressing violence against women as a human rights violation. Once we have a normative framework in place, then we can look at issues of enforcement and implementation.

Professor Bettinger-López highlighted the need to address fundamental questions of structural and systemic human rights violations in attempting to implement international norms. Looking at the treatment of the *Lenahan* case in the U.S. Supreme Court and then before the Inter-American Commission, she noted a fundamental contradiction between international and domestic legal framing. The Supreme Court focused on the 14th amendment, which creates a negative right, in contrast to the positive rights provided for international human rights law. Lenahan claimed that her procedural due process rights were violated by police inaction, but in a failure for affirmative rights the Court determined that the government did not have a constitutional duty to protect individuals from private acts of violence.

By contrast, the Inter-American Commission decision held the United States accountable for the police's failure to respond and the Court's failure to provide a remedy. The Commission's landmark decision recognized that a state may incur international responsibility in failing to fulfill its obligation to act with due diligence to prevent, investigate, sanction, and offer reparations for acts of violence against women, a duty that may apply to actions committed by private actors.

Given this judgment by the regional Commission, Professor Bettinger-López discussed what it means to implement this decision. The transnational process can be described in three phases: institutional interactions where global norms are: i) debated; ii) interpreted; and iii) internalized. Laws help translate norms into institutional behavior. In Kenya, in a recent High Court decision regarding systemic failure by the police to prevent child rape, the Court cited the Inter-American Commission's decision in the *Lenahan* case and held the Kenyan police liable for failing to enforce existing child rape laws and creating an environment of impunity. This decision underscores the need to engage with the due diligence obligation in domestic courts.

Bahaa Ezzelarab discussed the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights' (EIPR) litigation in the African human rights system, including its ongoing involvement in litigation before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights regarding Egypt's so-called "virginity testing" of female protesters. In March 2013, the Commission handed down a decision in the *Al Kheir* case brought by EIPR in 2006, which involved attacks – including sexual attacks – on four female complainants at a political protest the previous year. After the case was dismissed at the domestic level, the Commission made a significant ruling which relied on Article 18.3 of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, which prohibits discrimination against women. In this historic ruling, the Commission for the first time noted the connection between sexual violence and discrimination, stating that sexual violence is a form of discrimination against women.

Mr. Ezzelarab highlighted the differential impact on female versus male protesters in this case. Unlike male protesters, female protesters were subjected to sexualized brutality. The social experience of women targeted by violence may also be different; after she filed a complaint, one protester was fired from her job, got divorced, and was disowned by her family.

In its judgment, the Commission strongly stated that Egypt had failed to fulfill its duty of due diligence by failing to properly investigate and prosecute the perpetrators. Mr. Ezzelarab also noted that the Commission made a strong connection between sexual violence and inhuman and degrading treatment. While state agents may not have been directly responsible for the assaults (the attackers were in civilian clothing), the failure to fulfill the duty of due diligence ultimately holds the state responsible for those acts. The Commission also specifically criticized the public prosecutor's office and stated that the prosecutor has a duty to initiate investigations.

Mr. Ezzelarab stated that sexual violence is a significant problem in Egypt as the scale of attacks is increasing dramatically. There has been a shift from general apolitical street harassment of women to planned violence against women who try to occupy public political space as a means of silencing and punishment. In this context, resort to the African human rights system is helpful – it takes a different perspective from the domestic criminal justice system, looking at broader principles and the general duty of the state. Further, the Egyptian criminal justice system is morally charged with regard to violence against women. Where sexual assault is called an assault on "honor" and sexual harassment is framed as an act

against public decency, the harm is assigned not to the woman, but to society and her family. This perspective dismisses the view of the claimant from the case.

Mr. Ezzelarab went on to mention the pending case dealing with forced genital exams of protesters held in detention after participating in a sit-in in Tahrir Square in 2011. The doctor accused of administering these tests was found innocent in domestic courts, and the Commission subsequently found the case admissible. However, while resort to the Commission is important in highlighting the due diligence framework and situating these acts of violence within a larger holistic context, Mr. Ezzelarab noted that there may be issues of implementation in the use of the regional human rights system, where the overall process takes a number of years and the decision is not binding and often not enforced by the state.

Robin Phillips discussed how the Advocates for Human Rights, an international human rights NGO, attempts to move from theory to practice. She noted that the UN Special Rapporteur's 2013 report on state responsibility for the elimination of violence against women showed that while we have made advancements in this area there remains much work to be done. Organizations like Advocates for Human Rights play an important role, working with governments to hold them accountable for violations and helping them meet their due diligence standards and obligations in a continual process of monitoring.

Ms. Phillips stated that human rights monitoring is essential to identify where the system to protect, investigate and punish breaks down. For instance, the criminal procedure code in Bulgaria was structured so as to prevent the state from getting involved in cases of domestic violence unless injuries were severe. It was important to determine that the Code functioned as a barrier, as this opened its way to a conversation about the government obligation to protect female victims of violence. In another example of a gap in the due diligence standard, other jurisdictions have the requirement of a forensic or medical examination before a case of violence against women can be brought forward, but costs of examination may be prohibitive and the examiner's biases can inform their determination of the level of injury suffered. Monitoring allows us to know precisely where the system breaks down and to move from there to changing laws to addresses these issues.

Ms. Phillips also discussed the ways in which police practices can work against the elimination of gender-based violence. In order to improve the system, the monitoring process must look step by step from what happens when the police are first contacted to what happens when the case is brought before a prosecutor. It's also important to monitor judges to ensure that they are following the law and to determine that judicial bias is not a factor. Judicial training can also be effective in highlighting innovative ways in which judges can use general laws to protect women's rights when specific laws against domestic violence are not on the books. It is necessary to give power to judges to identify best practices in treatment of domestic and other forms of violence against women within the region and worldwide.

Ms. Phillips highlighted the importance of awareness-raising in the mission to eliminate violence against women. The Special Rapporteur's report was disturbing in that it revealed limited awareness by respondents of international standards on women's rights, and even domestic state obligations. It is essential that legal professionals know what laws can apply to cases of violence against women. There exists an important role for NGOs in raising awareness and working with the legal system to enforce these laws.

Mónica Roa picked up on the theme of monitoring in her presentation, focusing on the monitoring of judges. She discussed the way in which judges function as the ultimate intermediaries between rights on paper and in reality. Judicial decisions are important to the parties involved in a case, but also because they send messages to communities about the values that a society holds dear. Judicial decisions create the narrative of what is important and valued in a community.

Ms. Roa mentioned two tools Women's Link Worldwide uses to facilitate the work of judges and to hold those judges who do not protect women's rights accountable. Firstly, its Gender Justice Uncovered Gavel Awards are awarded by a jury of former judges and other legal professionals for the promotion of gender equality by judges. Their Bludgeon wards highlight judges who have set back gender equality. Notably, women's groups and activists have used these awards to campaign around positive decisions or in protest to regressive decisions. In Nicaragua, for instance, women's groups rallied together to shame a court for victim blaming in a rape case and garnered national attention around the issue. Judges also use these awards as examples of best practices, and the awards incentivize judges around the world to make more progressive judgments in women's rights. The language of human rights is so globalized today that judges can exchange a number of ideas and find inspiration in each other's work around the world.

Ms. Roa also highlighted Women's Link's database of progressive decisions in women's rights, describing it as a place for judges and legal professionals to find inspiration. The database includes international, regional, and local jurisprudence that identifies cutting edges issues and arguments. Roa also noted that Women's Link engages in strategic litigation and files amicus briefs to further help work with judges around the world.

In the *question and answer session*, conference participant **Sital Kalantry** noted that although there is no UN treaty on violence against women, one exists in the Inter-American system. However, the U.S. and Canada have yet to ratify this treaty. **Ms. Bettinger-López** mentioned that there have been discussions at the State Department on ratifying the Inter-American treaty before CEDAW, which raises the interesting question as to why the United States might consider ratifying a specialized treaty before a generalized treaty. Separately, **Mr. Ezzelarab** was asked about exhaustion of domestic remedies in EIPR's virginity testing case before the African Commission, and spoke in more depth about violence against women in Egypt's current post-revolutionary climate. The issue of violence against women has been extremely politicized in the past few months, with women as the battleground. While the judiciary in general is extremely conservative, one positive sign is that because of the opening of the political system after the revolution, everyone is now discussing the issue of gender-based violence more openly.

Panel 2: State Responsibility to Act with Due Diligence to Eliminate Violence against Women: Victim Care and Services

Moderator: Elizabeth Brundige, Executive Director, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor, Cornell Law School

Panelists:

- Cindy Dyer, Vice President, Human Rights, Vital Voices Global Partnership
- Hon. Swati Chauhan, Family Court, Mumbai, India
- Hon. Virginia Kendall, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- Riet Groenen, Chief, UN Women's Ending Violence Against Women Section

Liz Brundige introduced the panel and highlighted victim care and services as a crucial part of the state obligation to act with due diligence to eliminate violence against women. However, states often fail to protect victims. It is important to note that protection does not take only one form – the duty to act with due diligence includes assistance and victim care. It also involves thinking about court-initiated multi-sectoral responses to gender-based violence.

Riet Groenen noted that violence against women is a pervasive human rights violation, rooted in discrimination, inequality, and unequal power relations between men and women and perpetuated by social norms. She presented World Health Organization data to this end: one in three women have experienced physical and/or sexual violence, usually at the hands of an intimate partner. While intimate partner violence is the most prevalent form of violence against women, she stated that violence also comes in many different forms: sexual assault, trafficking of women, femicide, female genital mutilation, and sexual violence during conflicts.

Ms. Groenen pointed out that sexual violence has devastating consequences for women, their families, and the society at large. This includes the direct physical and mental consequences of the sexual violence itself and the social and economic impacts of victimization, such as isolation and poverty. Further, there is an intergenerational impact when children are exposed to ongoing violence. Ms. Groenen discussed the tremendous cost of violence on societies and economies, noting that in 2009 the cost of violence against women and children in Australia came to 14 billion Australian dollars a year.

Ms. Groenen pointed out that, despite international agreements and various international commitments on violence against women, many women and girls who experience gender-based violence continue to lack access to appropriate services that can help assure their safety, health, and access to justice. These services include: hotlines, post-rape care, crisis counseling, shelter and safe accommodation, police protection, legal aid, and access to the justice system. She asserted that states must ensure that these services are available and accessible by all women in a manner that affords them safety, stability, and recovery from violence. Relevant services must be high quality, coordinated, adequately funded, and properly staffed, and they must employ a rights-based approach.

Ms. Groenen also concluded that one of the lessons UN Women has learned through its global-level work with member states is that there needs to be a holistic, multi-sectoral approach to preventing and eliminating violence against women. Such an approach must ensure that police are in place to prevent and end violence against women. There must also be appropriate prosecution and punishment of perpetrators and proper redress for survivors. Data must be used to inform legislation, and efforts must be accelerated to find the root causes of violence against women. These necessary actions to eliminate violence against women are not only the responsibility of government entities, but the moral responsibility of us all.

Hon. Swati Chauhan began her presentation by noting that serving justice is a two-sided coin – on one side is the prosecution of the perpetrator, while on the other is the protection of the victim. Hon. Chauhan shared a number of her experiences in dealing with victims of violence. She stressed that laws are meant for the protection and benefit of the victim, and therefore must be interpreted, applied, and implemented to this end. Further, the implementation of the law must extend beyond the instant case, because the victim does not cease to be a victim simply because a verdict was reached. She stated that laws must help rehabilitate victims and work to reintegrate them into society as well.

Hon. Chauhan mentioned one case as indicative of the kind of holistic approach that is necessary in tackling issues of violence against women. Proper victim care can and should be learned with proper training. In this case, a teenager who was a victim of violence was taken from a brothel. Hon. Chauhan noticed that the girl had a broken tooth, and although the law did not explicitly state that this victim of violence needed a dental exam, only a medical exam, she determined that the former would benefit the victim as well. Addressing the victim's self-confidence is also an important part of rehabilitation.

Hon. Virginia Kendall began by speaking about the impartiality of judges. She stated that judges often feel a pressure or tension when they preside over a sexual violence case, because they fear there is a line they cannot cross when trying to protect the rights of victims. She noted that in her work overseas, she has also found other judges are hesitant to get heavily involved in protecting victims in their cases due to this fear over impartiality.

Hon. Kendall discussed the ways in which judicial training may help judges with this conundrum. Through sharing creative ideas on how to help victims without being biased, judges can learn from one another. It is important for judges to know every single law and regulation that exists regarding victim protection, and to know every single social service in the area – this is part of protecting the rights of the victim. Judges need not function as an advocate, but they do need to look into available treatment for victims, and to open their minds to the diverse effects of sexual violence and the need for a multilayered response to this trauma.

Cindy Dyer outlined a new initiative that seeks to meet some of the needs mentioned by the other panelists. This initiative is a public-private partnership with the State Department's Bureau of Democracy and Labor, the Avon Foundation for Women and Vital Voices Global Partnership. It focuses on responding to the problem of gender-based violence worldwide and has two main components.

First, this initiative sets up a gender-based violence fund, a collection of funds that can be given directly to survivors of violence against women within 24 hours so that victims can receive emergency services. This fund aims to ensure that victims don't feel compelled to return to their abusers. The fund will work to complement some of existing compensation funds set up by countries around the world, and is available in every country. Second, the new initiative will provide training and technical assistance to communities to help establish the kinds of coordinated responses to gender-based violence highlighted by the other panelists. This training will include work with NGOs, prosecutors, police, judges, and social workers. This training and technical component will first be launched in three countries: South Africa, Nepal, and Mexico.

Ms. Dyer concluded her comments by urging the audience to “not wait to get enraged.” We should be passionate and engaged before violence becomes extreme and aggressively prosecute misdemeanor domestic violence and the violation of protective orders.

In the *question and answer* session, **Ms. Dyer** stated that police officers are the first responders to crises and thus that multidisciplinary responses to gender-based violence must include properly trained law enforcement. **Ms. Groenen** discussed best practices, noting that one of the roles of the UN is to hold global expert meetings and compile, collect, and review shared knowledge. Most of this information is shared online at www.endvawnow.org, which includes many guidelines and best practices.

Panel 3: State Responsibility to Act with Due Diligence to Eliminate Violence against Women: The Role of Judges

Moderator: Hon. Joanna Seybert, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice

Panelists:

- Hon. Desiree Bernard, Caribbean Court of Justice
- Hon. Swati Chauhan, Family Court, Mumbai, India
- Hon. James Aaron Makau, High Court of Kenya at Meru
- Hon. Kantharuby (Kate) Pillay, High Court of South Africa

Hon. Kate Pillay first picked up on one of the comments made by Hon. Kendall in the previous panel, namely the question of judges dispensing justice without prejudice and the way in which this ties into the protection of rights. Hon. Pillay stated that in South Africa this process theoretically is made easy by the progressive constitution. The South African Constitution entrenches the right to life, dignity, freedom, and security of each person. Yet, notwithstanding this progressive constitution, South Africa remains the rape capital of the world, and there is an increasing problem of infant rape in the country.

Hon. Pillay argued that judges must ask themselves what they can do to tackle this profound problem in their roles as judicial officers. She stated that the starting point must be a progressive constitution—for instance, section 39(2) of the South African Constitution creates an obligation for judicial officers to develop the law in line with the spirit and purpose of the Constitution. This implies that all judicial reasoning must be in line with the Constitution’s commitment to substantive, and not just formal, equality. In South Africa, substantive equality must be legally achieved through a specific framework; the equality test requires officers to assess both discrimination against and impact on victims of violence.

Hon. Pillay described one relevant case where a woman had murdered her husband. The Court found that the woman’s husband had previously raped and threatened her with more violence on multiple occasions. The Court held that a long history of abuse allows for a lesser sentence, as the constitutional rights to freedom, security of person, and control over one’s body and fundamental dignity are relevant to such cases, and the state had a duty to protect and promote these rights. Hon. Pillay argued that a court must take into account the experiences of abused

women by putting itself in the position of the woman concerned. Hon. Pillay also highlighted the famous *Carmichele* case, which is similar to the *Lenahan* case in the United States and before the Inter-American Commission. In *Carmichele*, the Constitutional Court found that the state had violated the duty it owed to the petitioner to protect her from violence.

Hon. Pillay mentioned that special courts for victims of sexual violence have been set up in South Africa. In cases of child abuse, another useful courtroom measure undertaken is remote testifying, where the child and intermediary are placed in another room and the court room is set up with a video feed. This intermediary has special training in dealing with victims of child abuse, and this measure takes away the trauma of having to testify in open court before the offender. Speaking of other helpful measures that judges may implement to help victims of gender-based violence, Hon. Pillay argued that it is important to obtain victim impact assessments. South Africa has also implemented one-stop shelters to assist victims of sexual assault, and there is a program in place that distributes items that appear to be lipstick but in fact contain valuable information for victims of violence such as important phone numbers and instructions for post-rape care to prevent the loss of evidence.

Hon. James Aaron Makau stated that the business of the judiciary is to administer justice by being independent and impartial. Hon. Makau presided over the recent and important case, *CK and Others v Commissioner of Police*, at the High Court of Meru in Kenya. This case was filed on behalf of 160 girls between the ages of five and fifteen by an NGO. These girls had all experienced sexual violence by individuals known to them, such as relatives, neighbors and police officers. Police had demanded bribes and refused to take serious action in each of these cases, and a number of girls had run away to be housed in shelters. Their claims were then taken to the High Court, where Hon. Makau issued orders of mandamus compelling the investigation and prosecution of perpetrators and orders for police to be trained further. He noted that, in a positive move, the local media had reported that police recruits are now being trained in human rights.

Hon. Makau discussed the state's obligation to act with due diligence to eliminate violence against women. He noted that the state has an obligation to enact and implement legislation fulfilling international obligations in respect of human rights and freedoms. Violence against women is many-faceted and spans domestic and sexual violence, violence at the workplace, female genital mutilation, dowry violence, forced prostitution and pregnancy, child marriage, denial of contraceptives, and denial of healthcare. Hon. Makau explained that judges play an important role in the realization of the state responsibility to eliminate violence against women. Judges must, for instance, ensure that human rights commitments are implemented and interpret the law to protect women from violence. He further argued that where municipal laws do not provide an effective remedy for victims, courts should have recourse to international instruments.

Hon. Makau discussed the impact of violence against women, stating that in his experience, the failure to punish acts of gender-based violence creates a culture of tolerance and impunity, in which victims and their families live in fear. Victims of violence may be forced to seek asylum away from home at those times when they need the support of family and friends the most. He also focused on special considerations for children, as protecting vulnerable groups is another key role for judges. The duty to protect is heightened for these groups – the Kenyan Constitution creates an obligation on the state to protect vulnerable groups such as children, and the state's

failure to protect vulnerable persons need not be intentional to constitute breach of this provision.

Hon. Makau argued that when courts hold perpetrators accountable it helps prevent violence. The courts have a role in assuring that state organs such as the office of public prosecution perform their role in compliance with the constitution. Ultimately, the role of the judiciary is to ensure that justice is delivered equally to all individuals irrespective of gender, race, and financial status.

Hon. Joanna Seybert followed up on this point, noting that in the United States -between 2000 and 2006 - approximately 6000 American soldiers were killed, but there were 10,000 victims of domestic violence. In most countries merely one quarter of cases of domestic violence are reported. Hon. Seybert stated that there are a number of measures that can be taken to address this issue – for instance, in New York City the current police commissioner has increased the number of specialized officers assigned to domestic violence cases.

Hon. Seybert focused on the role of poverty in violence against women, stating that in many cities geographical areas characterized by poverty will account for a significant proportion of violence against women. She argued that there is a problem of unemployment and disaffected youth, coupled with distrust of the judicial system, corruption, and judges who don't care to address violence or these underlying issues. For this reason, community courts and community justice are invaluable in ensuring that judges do not simply make decisions based on archaic laws, but in the process of dealing with real people and their concerns.

Hon. Swati Chauhan described her judicial experience thus far, discussing how it has given her the knowledge that violence against women arises in different forms. She pointed out that existing laws are insufficient to eliminate violence against women unless they are implemented. The duty of the state to prevent violence entails the creation of a system where violence is stopped at its root. When cases of violence do occur, in turn, the state has a duty to provide shelter and protection to its victims.

In India, news reports in 2012 exposed some of the difficult conditions in one Mumbai shelter, flagging instances of sexual and physical abuse and poor living conditions. The High Court undertook an investigation into the shelter; a monitoring committee headed by Hon. Chauhan was formed to monitor security and living conditions. Hon. Chauhan subsequently brought a report to the Court on the deplorable conditions in the shelter and argued that the state had failed in its duty to provide shelter to these women, many of whom were trafficking victims. Fortunately, this report had real impact and the shelter was subsequently much improved. This example demonstrates how essential it is to carefully monitor and implement laws. In some cases the judiciary must intervene and correct irregularities caused by other non-functioning parts of the government in order to help prevent violence and protect victims.

Hon. Desiree Bernard stated that violence against women needs to be taken very seriously by the judiciary. In 1992 an international Committee of Experts decided that gender-based violence was a topic that had not been considered within the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and that it was now imperative to do something to address this gap. The CEDAW Committee subsequently formulated its General Recommendation 19 and determined that states parties should report incidents of violence against women in all its forms to the committee during their country reports.

Hon. Bernard pointed out that violence against women is a multifaceted crime that has physical, sexual, and psychological elements, a crime that can be committed against girls and women of different ages. Officials of the state at different levels must act to eliminate violence against women. This should begin with the police, as in the Caribbean the first person a battered woman encounters is a police officer. Hon. Bernard said that in her experience officers treated incidents of domestic violence very lightly and would often push for reconciliation. Hence, education of law enforcement is a first and key step in addressing this issue.

Hon. Bernard noted that the next step in tackling this issue was to look at the role of the judge or magistrate in court. In cases of domestic violence, Hon. Bernard argued that both the victim and the perpetrators should receive counseling. Hon. Bernard also stated that in her experience judicial colloquia were useful in discussing domestic violence and developing judicial strategies to tackle the issue. Judges can also discuss how courts can be made more user friendly for victims, as it is essential that the victim not be made to feel by the adversarial system that she is the accused. Defense counsel often cause secondary trauma to victims through their lines of questioning. While judges cannot control defense counsel, it is important to frame rules of evidence to make cross examination less intrusive.

Hon. Bernard also discussed the need for more women judges in the system, stating that it is a question of deeply understanding the problem of violence against women and working to find appropriate solutions in a courtroom setting. She also mentioned that while protection orders can be effective, in some cases she has witnessed problematic results. It is important to look at orders to see where they are effective and where they are flouted with impunity.

Hon. Bernard concluded by stating that although, unfortunately, we can never altogether eliminate violence, it is absolutely vital to reduce its incidence and combat its effects. There have been gains made in the last 20 years, and the problem has been recognized worldwide, rather than continuing in silence, isolation, and secrecy. Violence against women must be strongly opposed for the victims of today and tomorrow, as children of abusers often grow up to become abusers.

Closing Remarks

Elizabeth Brundige, Executive Director, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice and Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor, Cornell Law School

Carol Kurzig, President, Avon Foundation for Women

Liz Brundige ended the day's program by thanking all of the partners, presenters, and participants who made the conference possible. **Carol Kurzig** then spoke and stated that when the Avon Foundation for Women made an initial grant to support the Avon Global Center's launch and the first five years of its work, it could not have imagined the success it would achieve under the supervision of a Steering Committee of women judges and the robust projects that the Center would undertake. She then announced a new, two-year, \$600,000 commitment to support the Center's efforts to combat violence against women around the world.

Day 3: Senior Roundtable on Women in the Judiciary

On the last day of the conference, December 12, 2013, a closed-session Senior Roundtable on Women in the Judiciary was held. The roundtable examined key issues facing judges adjudicating gender-based violence cases and strategies for more effectively handling the cases in their courtrooms. The roundtable included over twenty-four members of the judiciary from around the world. At lunchtime, Hon. Alyşe Işıl Karakaş of the European Court of Human Rights spoke on the topic of “Positive Obligations of the State on Domestic Violence: Remarks on the Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights.”

Protection and Prevention

This session focused on the roles of judges in preventing violence against women and protecting victims. Much of the discussion was on protection orders and the issues that judges encounter when administering them. For example, police frequently do not enforce the orders and the victims often remain living with the perpetrator because they do not have anywhere else to go. The judges also discussed integrated domestic violence courts that allow judges to address both criminal and matrimonial matters involving the same people all at once. The importance of gathering statistics regarding domestic violence, both in court cases and generally, was also stressed.

Key recommendations from this session include:

- Governments should create specialized courts to handle gender-based violence cases. Criminal and civil proceedings that involve the same parties should be combined in one courtroom before one judge to help make the adjudication of cases more efficient and fair.
- Judicial monitoring should be implemented to track the progress of offenders who are sentenced to treatment.
- Research should be conducted that studies the causes of domestic violence and the effectiveness of counseling and treatment on the abuser.
- Judges should ensure that courts compile and analyze relevant statistics from gender-based violence cases.
- Judges should consider forming a coordinating council for domestic violence cases that includes judges, the police, and other parties, such as the faith and education communities, to help make protection/restraining orders work better on the ground.
- Protection orders are a proven effective tool for addressing domestic violence. However, judges should consistently monitor the implementation of protection orders to ensure that they do not expose the victim to increased abuse.

Duty to Protect Women against Violence and Cultural and Religious Arguments

This session began by discussing how the causes of gender-based violence are deeply rooted in cultural norms of gender inequality and discrimination. Cultural and religious justifications are often used as justifications for gender-based violence. Some examples that were discussed include religious leaders reinforcing violence against women, police not taking violence against cultural minority women in the U.S. seriously, and women being fearful of reporting violence because their culture and religions dictate that they should keep quiet. An additional point was made that it is important to keep in mind that state imposition and interpretation of a certain culture is not a reflection of a static culture, but a choice by the state to side with a particular dominant cultural strain. When dealing with culture, we must keep in mind that the judicial narrative can work to promote a particular cultural view.

Key recommendations from this session include:

- In order to eliminate violence against women, the cultural roots of violence need to be addressed. The solution is to transform social and cultural norms through awareness-raising so that the community understands that there is a need for change. Judges can play an important role in raising awareness, for example, through engagement with schools and colleges and implementing training programs for judicial and law officers.
- Judges can play the role of intermediaries in cases of sexual violence by religious leaders. They must inform victims that, contrary to the claims of these leaders, the actions of these abusers were wrong. In the case of minors, judges should appoint social workers to determine the best interests of minors.
- Judges can help to ensure that social workers and law enforcement officials work to ensure equal protection for foreign brides, and appoint these women counsel and translators where needed.
- Judges should insist on implementing progressive laws even in the face of adverse cultural barriers.
- Judges should participate in training programs – and lead trainings for other justice system actors – on gender equality jurisprudence and international conventions on human rights.

Lunchtime Address: Positive Obligations of the State on Domestic Violence: Remarks on the Case Law of the European Court of Human Rights by Hon. Ayşe Işıl Karakaş, European Court of Human Rights

Hon. Ayşe Işıl Karakaş gave a lunchtime address on her experience working on the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR). She discussed state responsibility to eliminate violence against women, the due diligence principle, and the role of judges. Under *Opuz v. Turkey*, which was the first ECtHR case that dealt with domestic violence and the due diligence principle, the Court found that the State has a positive obligation to take measures in those situations where authorities knew or should have known about a situation of ill treatment (in this case the ill treatment was domestic violence). The right to life and the right to be free from

torture extend to degrading treatments or punishments administered by private individuals. Therefore, there is a procedural obligation for the State to investigate even when the violence occurs at the hands of private or unknown persons.

Investigation, Prosecution, Punishment, and Reparations

The aim of this session was to discuss the role of judges throughout legal proceedings. Among other things, the judges discussed the importance of appropriate sentencing as a deterrent for future violence, the ill effects of trial continuances on the victim, the lack of support services for victims such as counseling, childcare, and transportation to get to court, and how mostly male law enforcement officers can make it difficult for the victim to feel comfortable discussing her issues. Another topic was the sometimes archaic approaches of their fellow judicial officers who do not understand gender discrimination.

Key recommendations from this session include:

- Judges should issue strongly reasoned opinions that highlight gender equality and issue sentences that reflect the seriousness of the offense.
- Judges should hold government entities accountable for failing to prevent and respond effectively to violence against women.
- In making decisions, judges should be clear in pointing out errors made in the course of investigations.
- Judges should ensure that victims receive damages from the perpetrator. In the absence of this remedy, the state should compensate the victim.
- Judges should consider meeting with NGOs to determine what services are available in the area.
- Judges can hold pre-trial conferences and create a timeline so that there is no option for an application for adjournment unless for extreme circumstances. If a continuance seems appropriate, judges should make it a requirement that the defendant and his family have no contact with the victim during this time, in order to avoid harassment and intimidation.
- Judges should exclude expert testimony that suggests the victim behaved inappropriately (e.g. “behaved like a prostitute”).
- Judges should receive regular training on gender bias to ensure that they are not inadvertently applying it in their cases. Judicial training may also be useful in informing judges of how damaging delays can be to victims of violence against women.
- Lower court judges should receive training on procedural issues so that appeal judges are not forced to dismiss cases on procedural grounds.
- Women’s bar associations can play an important role in the monitoring of judges and in cases of clear bias by judges, associations and other women’s organizations can rally around the issue to raise awareness through the media.

- Having more women on the bench and in law enforcement can also help to challenge biased attitudes. Women judges can engage in informal dialogue with other judges to provide a different perspective and push back against biased attitudes.

Resource Limitations, Political Pushback: Strategies to Move Forward

This conversation addressed how judges can handle resource limitations and political pushback while maintaining their neutrality. Judges brought experiences and suggestions from their own courts, many of which involved acting as leaders in their communities to mobilize and coordinate support and resources for gender-based violence victims. The judges also discussed ways in which engaging with the political process would be appropriate, including writing letters and speaking on issues that improve the administration of justice.

Key recommendations from this session include:

- Judges should network and make connections with people who may have access to resources that the judge can rely on in her courtroom (e.g. the director of a domestic violence shelter).
- In some instances, judges may be able to engage in the political process in appropriate ways. For example, in the United States, judges are allowed to advocate with the legislatures on matters that would improve the administration of justice.
- Discussing cases with colleagues may illuminate useful strategies and lead to a better outcome.
- Judges can reach out to local organizations that may be able to create brochures and handbooks, which can be made available at the court's help desk.
- Judges can develop proactive solutions to problems. For example, to address serious overcrowding of prisons, one court appointed a judicial liaison to respond to individual complaints, rather than waiting for individual lawsuits.
- Judges are able to use their convening authority to gather stakeholders and discuss how to share resources and strategies in order to more effectively address violence against women.

Insights and Recommendations from Roundtable Sessions and Closing Remarks

The day ended with a review of insights and recommendations from the roundtable sessions and closing remarks from Liz Brundige, Executive Director of the Avon Global Center for Women and Justice.

Appendix: List of Presenters and Participating Judges

Judicial Presenters, Moderators, and Roundtable Participants

- Hon. Abena Oppong Adjin-Doku, Circuit Court, Ghana
- Hon. Anita Allen, President, Court of Appeal, Bahamas
- Hon. Janet Arterton, U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut
- Hon. Josselyne Béjar, Criminal Court, Mexico
- Hon. Desiree Bernard, Caribbean Court of Justice, Guyana
- Hon. Cristina Camiña, Criminal Court, Argentina
- Hon. Swati Chauhan, Family Court, Mumbai, India
- Hon. Joan Churchill, Immigration Court (ret.); former President of the U.S. National Association of Women Judges
- Hon. Ellen Gesmer, Supreme Court, Civil Branch, New York
- Hon. Mel Flanagan, Milwaukee County Circuit Court, Wisconsin
- Hon. Laura Jacobson, Kings County Supreme Court, New York
- Hon. Marcy Kahn, New York County Supreme Court, New York
- Hon. Ayşe Işıl Karakaş, European Court of Human Rights
- Hon. Virginia Kendall, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois
- Hon. Judy Harris Kluger, Chief of Policy and Planning for the NY State Courts
- Hon. Martha Koome, Court of Appeal, Kenya
- Hon. Lucie LaVigne, Court of Queen's Bench, New Brunswick, Canada
- Hon. Liling Lee, Taipei Family Court, Taiwan
- Hon. Avril Lovelace-Johnson, Court of Appeal, Ghana
- Hon. James Aaron Makau, High Court at Meru, Kenya
- Hon. Kantharuby (Kate) Pillay, High Court of South Africa
- Hon. Sauda Mjasiri, Court of Appeal, Tanzania
- Hon. Barbara Rothstein, U.S. District Court for the District of Washington and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice
- Hon. Joanna Seybert, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice
- Hon. Barbara Naadja Tetteh-Charway, High Court, Ghana
- Hon. Ann C. Williams, U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit and Steering Committee Member, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice
- Hon. Claire (Chia-hua) Wu, Taipei District Court, Taiwan

Non-Judicial Presenters and Moderators:

- Kim Azzarelli, President, Women in the World Foundation; Founding Partner, Seneca Point Global; and Co-Founder and Steering Committee Chair, Avon Global Center for Women and Justice at Cornell Law School
- Carrie Bettinger-López, Associate Professor of Clinical Legal Education and Director of the Human Rights Clinic, University of Miami School of Law

- Cynthia Bowman, Dorothea Clarke Professor of Feminist Jurisprudence, Cornell Law School
- Elizabeth Brundige, Executive Director of the Avon Global Center and Visiting Assistant Clinical Professor of Law, Cornell Law School
- Cindy Dyer, Vice President, Human Rights, Vital Voices Global Partnership
- Bahaa Ezzelarab, Legal Advisor, North African Litigation Initiative, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights
- Riet Groenen, Chief, UN Women's Ending Violence Against Women Section
- Carol Kurzig, President, Avon Foundation for Women
- Rashida Manjoo, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against Women, its Causes and Consequences and Professor, Department of Public Law, University of Cape Town
- Muna Ndulo, Professor of Law and Director of the Institute for African Development, Cornell Law School
- Mónica Roa, Program Director, Women's Link Worldwide
- Robin Phillips, Executive Director, The Advocates for Human Rights
- Dr. Joseph Salim, President and Co-Founder, Virtue Foundation
- Stewart Schwab, Allan R. Tessler Dean and Professor of Law, Cornell Law School