

**REMARKS BY THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE SPANISH
CONSTITUTIONAL COURT AT SESSION E OF THE 6TH
CONGRESS OF THE WCCJ**

H.E. Ms. Inmaculada Montalbán Huertas

Ladies and gentlemen,

Distinguished speakers,

We are now beginning the **fifth and final session** of the 6th Congress of the World Conference on Constitutional Justice.

It is an honour for me **to chair** this panel, which brings to **a close** the lively and enlightening debate we have had on the role of constitutional justice in protecting the rights of future generations.

The speeches over the past few days have emphasised one key point: Every generation has an inescapable duty to safeguard the rights of future generations, rather than acting solely in the interests of the present.

This obligation follows, in a coherent and logical manner, from the rights already enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

I would like to emphasise the importance of passing on to future generations the legacy and contribution of women to the advancement of human rights –which are often overlooked– and also to addressing the challenges we have discussed.

These challenges have affected and continue to affect women particularly severely; however, they have generally been excluded from the decision-making processes aimed at resolving them, given the minor, informal or immaterial status historically attributed to the spheres of activity to which they were relegated.

When it comes to preserving the planet's natural resources and the environment, it must be borne in mind that women have made, and continue to make, a decisive contribution to the maintenance of ecosystems and biological diversity. Let us recall their long-standing involvement in the informal economy and in carrying out tasks that are typically unpaid, such as care work, waste sorting, and the recovery, recycling or reuse of materials. In this way, they offer a model for living that must be taken into account in order to ensure their survival, as the UN recently highlighted on World Environment Day¹. For this reason, and given the links between women and the environment, it is essential to apply a gender perspective to the conservation and management of land, water and biodiversity.

¹ World Environment Day 2025: towards a pact for life that recognises those who care for it (in Spanish)

<https://lac.unwomen.org/es/stories/noticia/2025/06/dia-del-medio-ambiente-2025-hacia-un-pacto-por-la-vida-que-reconozca-a-quienes-cuidan>

Women have also played a vital role in the preservation of cultural heritage, as UNESCO has pointed out, and this recognition is an invaluable means of ensuring equality. Designated as part of the world's cultural heritage by the 2001 UNESCO Universal² Declaration on Cultural Diversity –cultural heritage is defined as an intangible, immaterial and living heritage that includes practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills– together with the instruments, objects, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them, in accordance with the 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage³.

At times, the common tendency to reduce cultural heritage to real estate or, more generally, to products of scientific, technological and artistic knowledge –to which women had restricted or no access– has prevented their role in this field from being fully appreciated and recognised.

It is therefore crucial and necessary, in this forum for constitutional justice, to recognise **the achievement of women's rights as one of the most significant social and political developments in contemporary history, which has enabled millions of women today to gain access to education, employment, political participation and personal autonomy.**

² The 2001 UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. [UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity - Legal Affairs](#)

³ UNESCO, Article 2 of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>

These achievements were not the result of chance, but of centuries of struggle, resistance and collective effort. Passing on this legacy to future generations is essential to ensuring equality and social harmony.

In the same way, we must continue to ensure that women have access to, and are promoted within and take leadership roles in, scientific knowledge and new technologies, **as well as in formal and academic fields such as the STEM** disciplines (namely science, technology, engineering and mathematics), the arts and humanities, and the social and legal sciences.

Ultimately, it is a matter of ensuring our involvement in the development and upkeep of our communities, as well as in the decision-making processes that affect them, as members of the human race, by extending and ensuring our equal participation in both the public and private spheres.

I shall conclude my remarks with the following thought: This equality, for which we women have fought so hard and which is only just beginning to be achieved, is in itself a precious legacy, and any challenge to it, delay in its progress or loss will have a negative impact on humanity's chances of survival.

And now, at this **wrap-up session**, we will listen to the Venice Commission and the rapporteurs from the various working groups,

who will present the final reports from their respective sessions, enabling us to summarise the key messages that this Congress has left us with.

Allow me, therefore, to introduce those who will be speaking next:

First of all, we will listen to Ms Simona Granata, Director and Secretary of the Venice Commission.

- *The Director of the Venice Commission takes the floor-*

Thank you very much.

Next, Ms Lucinda Jacinta Prazeres, President of the Constitutional Court of Angola, will present the conclusions of Session A, which focused on “The preservation of natural resources and the environment”.

- *Speech by the Angolan President –*

Thank you very much.

Next, Mr Héctor Mery, Justice of the Constitutional Court of Chile, will present his conclusions as rapporteur for Session B, which is devoted to “The preservation of the cultural heritage of humanity”.

- *Speech by the Chilean judge—*

Thank you very much.

Next, we will listen to Mr Hyungdu Kim, Justice of the Constitutional Court of Korea, who will speak as rapporteur for Session C on “Access to scientific knowledge and new technologies”.

- *Speech by the Korean judge –*

Thank you very much.

Finally, Ms Miriam Meßling, Judge at the German Federal Constitutional Court, will speak about Session D, which examined the state of play regarding the “Independence of constitutional courts”.

- *Speech by the German judge—*

A BIG THANK YOU to all the speakers for their valuable contributions. I note that your contributions clearly reflect the **scale of the challenges we face**; but also the tools at our disposal to address them through the lens of constitutional justice.

As representatives of constitutional courts, we agree that the rights of future generations must **guide the actions of our institutions in the face of the major global challenges of our time**—such as climate change, biodiversity loss and the profound transformations driven by the technological revolution— so that future generations may enjoy a just environment in which the principles of the rule of law are upheld.

We also see how the need to **strengthen the role of constitutional courts has been highlighted**. Their decisions not only correct violations of fundamental rights, but also help to guide public policies, limit the excesses of power and chart the course towards a more equitable and sustainable development.

Above all, this conference **has highlighted the immense value of international judicial dialogue**. Sharing experiences, best practices and perspectives between courts in different countries enriches us and enables us to develop more effective and innovative solutions to common challenges.

This is a task that also concerns women, whose growing presence in these bodies contributes to their pluralism and, consequently, to the greater democratic legitimacy of their decisions.

In this context, it is worth recalling the words of the sadly recently deceased Jane Goodall, UN Messenger of Peace and well-

known advocate for the interests of future generations, who reminded us that: “You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make”. **A reflection that directly** challenges us —as judges, as institutions, and also as citizens— to carry out our work with a forward-looking approach, a sense of responsibility and ethical commitment.

In that spirit, I declare this session closed. Thank you very much to everyone for your attention, your commitment and your contribution to this conference. It has been a privilege to spend these days with you.