



the global voice of  
the legal profession®

# 50:50 by 2030: A longitudinal study into gender disparity in law



## REPUBLIC OF KOREA RESULTS REPORT

International Bar Association  
Legal Policy & Research Unit  
with the support of the  
LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation



KOREAN BAR ASSOCIATION



The International Bar Association (IBA), established in 1947, is the world's leading international organisation of legal practitioners, bar associations, law societies, law firms and in-house legal teams. The IBA influences the development of international law reform and shapes the future of the legal profession throughout the world. It has a membership of more than 80,000 lawyers, 190 bar associations and law societies and 200 group member law firms, spanning over 170 countries. The IBA is headquartered in London, with offices in São Paulo, Seoul, The Hague and Washington, DC.

The IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit (LPRU) undertakes research and develops initiatives that are relevant to the rule of law, the legal profession and the broader global community. The LPRU engages with legal professionals, law firms, law societies and bar associations, governments, non-governmental organisations and international institutions to ensure innovative, collaborative and effective outcomes.

© 2024

International Bar Association  
Chancery House  
53-64 Chancery Lane  
London WC2A 1QS  
United Kingdom  
[www.ibanet.org](http://www.ibanet.org)

All reasonable efforts have been made to verify the accuracy of the information contained in this report. The International Bar Association accepts no responsibility for reliance on its content. This report does not constitute legal advice. Material contained in this report may be quoted or reprinted, provided credit is given to the International Bar Association.

# Contents

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Forewords</b>  | <b>4</b>  |
| <b>Young Hoon Kim</b>   |           |
| President of the Korean Bar Association   | 4         |
| <b>Sung Hee Kwon</b>  |           |
| General Manager of the KBA's Gender Equality Centre   | 5         |
| <b>Main findings: Republic of Korea</b>   | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Country context</b>  | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Legal professional training system in Korea</b>  | <b>10</b> |
| <b>The legal profession in Korea</b>  | <b>11</b> |
| <b>Methodology and results analysis</b>   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>Comparison with Chile, England and Wales, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain and Uganda</b> | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Conclusion</b>   | <b>25</b> |
| <b>Acknowledgements</b>   | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Appendix 1: Survey results</b>   | <b>27</b> |
| <b>Appendix 2: Korean judicial procedures diagram</b>                                       | <b>36</b> |
| <b>Appendix 3: Population and legal profession trends in the Republic of Korea</b>          | <b>37</b> |

# Republic of Korea Legal Profession Gender Equality Initiative: Outcomes Report by the International Bar Association's Legal Policy & Research Unit, in collaboration with the LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation

## Forewords

The IBA and the LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation have launched '50:50 by 2030', a gender equality project aimed at achieving gender parity. The project's goals are to discover the issues of gender disparity at senior levels of the legal profession and their root-causes, to boost gender equality. The nine-year global project will be undertaken across Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America. Reports on England and Wales, Uganda and Spain were published in 2022. Reports on Nigeria, the Netherlands and Chile in 2023. And now, on behalf of the Republic of Korea, the Gender Equality Centre of the Korean Bar Association (KBA) has released their report.

In Korea, although there has been a rapid surge in the number of female lawyers since the 1990s, and they have been achieving remarkable success across diverse fields, the findings of this survey reveal that women still remain underrepresented in senior positions within the legal profession. Male-dominated cultures and glass ceilings continue to exist in the legal field. Women find it difficult to reach senior positions due to job insecurity after childbirth and childcare.

Thanks to the report from the Republic of Korea as well as the long-term global project being carried out by the IBA, we expect to see those working in the Korean legal sector address issues of gender disparity more seriously and offer better support to women. With gender equality being the fifth goal of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN, we look forward to the Republic of Korea being able to achieve gender equality in senior levels of the legal profession by 2030.

In an effort to encourage gender equality in the legal field, the KBA has opened the Gender Equality Centre which is currently conducting various projects including research on gender equality status and awareness training. Even before this report, as part of the aforementioned gender equality projects, the Gender Equality Centre conducted a survey in 2022 titled 'Research on Gender Equality in the Workplace and Employment of Lawyers', and held a presentation on the results of the survey.

The KBA is committed to advancing the legal profession by fostering an environment where lawyers are empowered to reach their highest aspirations without the threat of gender-based discrimination.

Thank you.

**Young Hoon Kim**

President of the Korean Bar Association

I greatly appreciate the fact that the IBA and the LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation launched the '50:50 by 2030 Gender Equality Project' to achieve gender equality at senior levels of the legal profession. I am also glad to know that the Republic of Korea has joined the project. Joining this project not only means that our country will be able to witness the gender equality level at senior positions of the legal profession, but also gives us the opportunity to seek guidance on where the country must be heading in the future by analysing data collected from England and Wales, Uganda, Spain, Nigeria, the Netherlands and Chile.

Since 2009, when the system of selecting candidates for the legal profession changed from judiciary exam to law schools, the Republic of Korea has not only seen a rise in the number of legal professions but also an increase in the number of female lawyers. On top of existing issues in related professions such as judicial scriveners and licensed administrative agents, the sudden influx of new lawyers has affected employment in general, and reduced the number of cases individual lawyers take on. This problem might potentially have contributed to a lack of awareness of gender equality in senior positions in the legal profession.

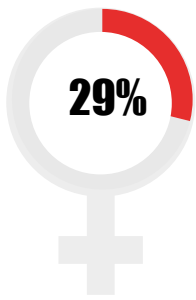
So far, no women have ever held the positions of Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, President of the Constitutional Court and Prosecutor General in Korea. Women make up about 35 per cent of the workforce in the courts and the Public Prosecutors' Office, with 20 per cent being in senior positions. This sector has benefitted from the Korean government's policy to improve female representation. The statistics from law firms and in-house counsel show a much gloomier picture, with lower female representation in the legal profession and less women holding senior positions. All the figures urge the country to do more. According to the Global Gender Gap Report by the World Economic Forum in 2022, the Republic of Korea remains almost at the bottom.

As the country is facing severe disputes between men and women over feminism, there won't be an easy option to take to correct the issues in the foreseeable future. I believe all these factors explain why the Republic of Korea has the lowest fertility rate in the world. Compared to the survey data from other jurisdictions, it is evident that there is a notable lack of awareness and understanding of flexible working arrangements in the Republic of Korea. In the near future, I hope to see significant change in views about patriarchal legacies as well as the burden imposed on women who go through pregnancy and childbirth.

**Sung Hee Kwon**

General Manager of the KBA's Gender Equality Centre

## ..... Main findings: Republic of Korea .....



Gender representation across the legal profession: **29 per cent** of all lawyers are female.



Within law firms, women make up **25 per cent** of lawyers and **13 per cent** of lawyers in positions of seniority.



In the **corporate sector**, women make up **28 per cent** of all in-house lawyers and **12 per cent** of lawyers in senior positions.

In the **public sector**, women make up **35 per cent** of lawyers and **29 per cent** of lawyers in positions of responsibility.



Within the **judiciary**, women make up **35 per cent** of all judges, and hold **27 per cent** of senior role positions.

### Gender monitoring

Only **44 per cent** of law firms monitor gender equality within their workforce. **60 per cent** of companies, almost all public bodies, and the judiciary monitor gender balance internally.



**12 per cent** of law firms surveyed employ part time lawyers, compared with **14 per cent** of companies. In the public sector and the judiciary, **zero per cent** of respondents had part time working lawyers or judges.

**Flexible working** was the most popular initiative in law firms, whereas gender-sensitive education & training for male and female lawyers was the most popular initiative in public bodies and companies.



The IBA and the LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation (LNROLF) are undertaking a global research project, spanning more than 15 jurisdictions, on gender equality in the legal profession. This project is led by the IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit (LPRU) and Diversity and Inclusion Council, with the support and input from the Women Lawyers' Committee. To date (April 2024), six reports have been published. The following report covers the Republic of Korea.

Due to the limited capacity of the LPRU, the IBA is open to partnering with other member bars and stakeholders in each of the participating jurisdictions. For the Republic of Korea report, the LPRU contacted the IBA office in Seoul, who introduced the IBA project team to the Korean Bar Association (KBA). The KBA was eager to be involved, and they created the Gender Disparity Project Subcommittee (Project Subcommittee) within the Bar, to undertake this study. The working group gathered data and drafted the report in Korean, which was subsequently translated into English, through an external provider. As a result, it is acknowledged that this report may not look exactly the same as previous '50:50 by 2030' Gender Reports.

We are extremely grateful to the KBA, especially the Project Subcommittee Chair, Kwon Sung-hee, and the rest of the members of the Project Subcommittee, Cho Dong-sun, Han Joo-hyun, Lee Keun-ok and Park Ji-ae, for having undertaken this very valuable study reflecting gender disparity in the Republic of Korea and for contributing to the wider aim of equality in the legal profession, globally.

## Country context

The Republic of Korea (ROK or Korea), also known as South Korea, is a nation in East Asia. It borders North Korea (officially the Democratic People's Republic of Korea) in the Korean Peninsula. As of 2023, the Republic of Korea's population is estimated to be around 51.40 million, of which 25.61 million are men and 25.78 million women.<sup>1</sup>

The Republic of Korea adopts a presidential system with parliamentary elements, and has developed into a successful democracy. In the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2022, it has been categorised as a 'full democracy' for the third consecutive year. The Republic of Korea is ranked 23rd out of 167 nations, third in Asia after Taiwan and Japan.<sup>2</sup>

Article 11(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Korea states 'All citizens shall be equal before the law and there shall be no discrimination in political, economic, social, or cultural life on account of sex, religion, or social status,' declaring that discrimination on account of gender is prohibited. Article 34(3) of the Constitution states that 'The State shall endeavour to promote the welfare and rights of women', while Article 36(2) states that 'The State shall endeavour to protect mothers'. To fulfil the constitutional ideology of gender equality, the 'Framework Act on Women's Development' was approved in 1996, and in 2015 was amended and enforced as the Framework Act on Gender Equality.

In 2001, the government of the Republic of Korea established the Ministry of Gender Equality, to oversee and coordinate women's policy as well as improve women's status through the laws and regulations banning gender discrimination. The Ministry has been rearranged to become the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF) with additional responsibilities of overseeing young people and families. Despite the MOGEF's successful efforts in promoting gender equality over the past two decades by addressing discrimination and violence against the vulnerable, ongoing gender antagonism in Korean society has led to continuous calls for the Ministry's abolition. The current government promised to abolish the Ministry as a presidential election pledge, so although it still exists it is unclear whether or not the MOGEF is going to be removed.

In the Republic of Korea, as of 2022, the percentage of those enrolling in higher education institutes is slightly higher for women (73.8 per cent) than for men (70 per cent).<sup>3</sup> There is therefore no disparity between men and women at an educational level. However, problems still exist in the form of lower social status and unequal incomes for women. According to the *Economist's* 2021 glass-ceiling index, which measures discrimination against women in the workforce across OECD member countries, Korea was ranked 29th out of the 29 countries. Among a range of data, the country scored poorly on gender pay gap, female representation in senior jobs and proportion of women on boards. Most notably, the gender pay gap is 31.5 per cent in Korea, more than double the OECD average (13.5 per cent). According to the World Economic Forum's 'Global Gender Gap Report for 2022', the Republic of Korea was ranked 99th out of 146 nations on their Gender Gap Index (GGI). In the same report, the country was ranked among the lowest participating countries on gender parity in senior jobs and managerial roles, and on the gender pay

---

1 Statistics Korea, population census.

2 EIU (The Economist Intelligence Unit), Democracy Index 2022 (Frontline democracy and the Battle for Ukraine).

3 Korean Educational Development Institute, Brief Statistics on Korean Education.



gap (125th and 120th respectively).<sup>4</sup> These issues of lower social status and unequal incomes for women are familiar in the legal profession.

The Republic of Korea has had the lowest fertility rate among OECD member countries since 2013.<sup>5</sup> As of 2022, the Republic of Korea's total fertility rate is 0.78.<sup>6</sup> The reason behind this most rapid fertility decline in recorded human history may be found from gender disparity in the society. In particular, its patriarchal culture hinders efforts to solve issues such as women interrupting their career after childbirth and the disproportionate childcare burden placed on women. Many therefore determine that it will be difficult for Korea to resolve this low fertility rate problem. The Republic of Korea now finds itself in a crucial moment when it comes to achieving gender equality and solving the low birth rate problem.

---

4 KBA, Human Rights Report 2022, 208-210.

5 The number of children expected to be born to a woman throughout her childbearing years (age 15–49).

6 Statistics Korea, population census.

# Legal professional training system in Korea

As of 2023, the training system requires candidates to complete law school before taking the Bar exam to be licensed to practise law in the Republic of Korea. Up until 2010, the country had relied on a judicial exam to select candidates for the legal profession. The old judicial exam did not systematically link training legal professions with legal training at law schools. With no restrictions on educational background, anyone could apply for the exam. Successful candidates had to then complete the compulsory two-year training courses at the Judicial Research & Training Institute (JRTI) in order to join the Bar.

The first batch of students was accepted under the current law school system in 2009, with the 15th batch of students having now enrolled for 2023. Those who hold bachelor's degrees can apply for law school (three-year and six-year semester programmes) and graduates can then take the Bar exam. To become a legal professional, a candidate has to complete law school courses and pass the Bar exam.

There are 25 law schools nationwide, each of which specialises in certain areas including international law, environment, tax, public interest and human rights. By area, 15 law schools are located in Seoul and Gyeonggi, with ten law schools located outside of Seoul and the Gyeonggi area. The maximum admissions are 2,000 candidates per year.

As of 30 June 2023, there are 33,955 lawyers in the Republic of Korea (including those working for law firms, the public sector and corporates, etc). Among these lawyers, 25,639 are licensed to practise law in Seoul alone and 8,316 are located outside Seoul in metropolitan cities such as Gyeonggi-do and Incheon.

# The legal profession in Korea

Those who pass the Bar exam may choose to work at courts and constitutional courts where civil, criminal, domestic and administrative cases are judged, at public prosecutors' offices where crimes are investigated and laws are enforced, at law firms and corporations where various legal affairs are handled, or at central and local governments involving litigation work.

## Courts

In accordance with the Constitution, the courts hear all kinds of legal disputes. As an exception, the Constitutional Court deals with part of constitutional disputes, and the National Assembly deals with qualification screening and disciplinary actions for its members.

The court system in Korea is based on a tiered judicial style similar to those in other nations. Broadly, it is a three-tiered system composed of the district courts, the high courts and the Supreme Court. Courts include the Supreme Court, high courts, district courts, Patent Court, family courts, Administrative Court and bankruptcy courts. But the Supreme Court, high courts and district courts are the three general courts that make up the three-tiered system. Among the four specialised courts, the Patent Court is positioned on the same level as the high courts, while the family courts, the Administrative Court and the bankruptcy courts are positioned on the same level as the district courts.

### *The Supreme Court*

The Supreme Court is the highest ordinary court in the judicial branch of the Republic of Korea, and is the final court of appeal for all civil, criminal, administrative, patent and domestic cases originating from high courts, the Patent Court, district courts, family courts and military courts. The Court also hears re-appeals against judgments or rulings. Under special circumstances, the Court hears extraordinary appeals against the first trial judgments. It also has exclusive jurisdiction over the validity of the presidential or parliamentary election.

### *High courts*

High courts hear appeals from judgments, rulings or orders rendered by district courts, family courts or the Administrative Court of first instance. The jurisdiction of high courts is exercised by a panel of three judges. High court judges are appointed among legal professionals who apply for the position with substantial legal experience, a dual system which is intended for improving the appeal cases by boosting the careers of the judges as well as by strengthening their expertise.

All courts under high courts are distributed across the country in order to enhance judicial accessibility for civil, criminal and domestic cases. Additionally, there is a patent court as a special court. High courts are located in the six major cities of the Republic of Korea. District courts are established under each high court.

## *The Patent Court*

The Patent Court, which is at the high court level, has first jurisdiction regarding appeals from the decision of the Intellectual Property Trial and Appeal Board. Appeals from the Patent Court's decision go directly to the Supreme Court. The Patent Court has technical examiners who have degrees in various fields of natural science, technology and other professionally related fields to assist judges on the technical matters of patent and utility model cases by providing consultation and expertise to judges.

## *District courts*

The district courts and their branch courts are the first courts level for most civil and criminal cases. The first courts level cases are heard by a single judge in principle. However, cases deemed as more crucial by law are ruled by a panel.

There are 30 district courts (including family courts, bankruptcy courts and the Administrative Court) throughout the country. The district courts are concentrated around the capital city of the Republic of Korea, with 15 of 30 district courts being stationed in the region.

## *Family courts*

Having exclusive jurisdiction over domestic relations and juvenile offence cases, a family court, which is on the same level as a district court, was first established in 1963. For regions where a family court or a family branch court is not established, relevant district courts or branch courts play the equivalent role. Domestic cases are heard either by a panel of three judges or by a single judge. Juvenile offences, domestic violence cases and child protection cases are heard by a single judge.

## *The Administrative Court*

The first and only Administrative Court was established in Seoul in 1998. The relevant district court performs the function of the Administrative Court in a region where such a court has not been established. The Seoul Administrative Court hears tax, eminent domain, employment and other administrative cases.

## *Bankruptcy courts*

Bankruptcy courts have jurisdiction over various bankruptcy cases including corporate rehabilitation, corporate bankruptcy, general rehabilitation, personal rehabilitation, personal insolvency, cross-border insolvency cases, and other relevant cases. The Seoul Bankruptcy Court was established in 2017 and the relevant district court hears rehabilitation and bankruptcy cases in a region where a bankruptcy court has not been established.

## Organisational chart<sup>7</sup>

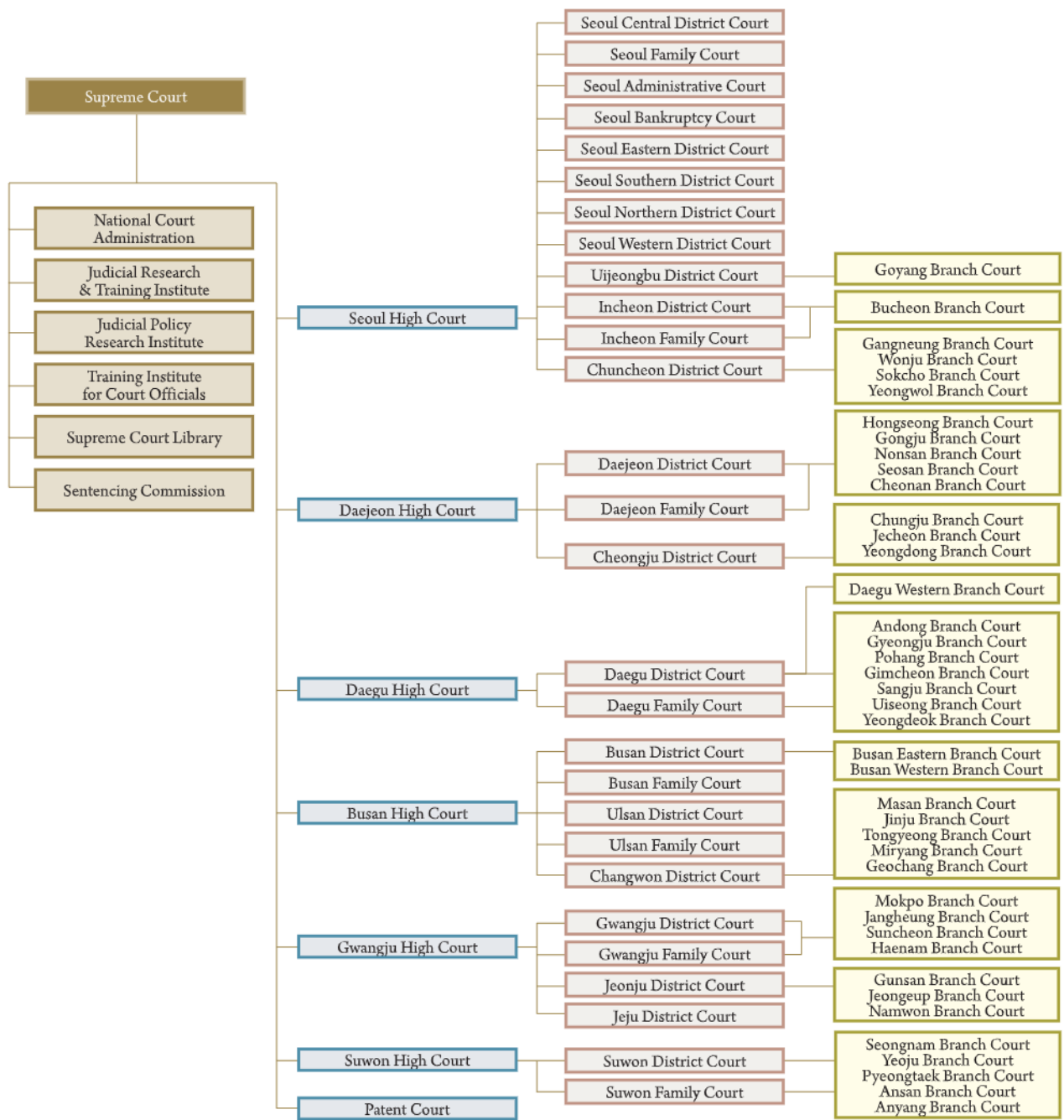


Figure 1: organisational chart of the judicial system in the Republic of Korea.

<sup>7</sup> National Atlas (2019) 'Judiciary'. Available at [http://nationalatlas.ngii.go.kr/pages/page\\_1883.php](http://nationalatlas.ngii.go.kr/pages/page_1883.php). Accessed 21 February 2024.

## Court litigation procedure

Cases are heard by a single judge or by a panel of three judges. Hearing and ruling of cases are open to the public in principle. However, when a certain case is deemed to be harmful to safety, wellbeing, order and morality of the nation, its hearing is held in private. Even in this instance its ruling shall be open to the public.

## The appeals process

In the Republic of Korea, the party who is dissatisfied with a judgment rendered by the court of first instance (district court or branch court) can appeal the judgment to a court of second instance (high court or collegiate panels of the district court). If there is an important matter of law at dispute in a court of second instance, the party may appeal to the Supreme Court, the court of last resort. As an exception, patent cases and election litigations are heard in a two-tier court system and a single trial system. As the Supreme Court only hears matters of law, an appeal cannot be lodged with the Supreme Court unless there are grounds to do so, as stipulated in the Civil Procedure Act and the Criminal Procedure Act.

## The Constitutional Court of Korea

### *Constitutional grounds*

Both the Constitution of the Republic of Korea, which was revised on 29 October 1987, and the Constitutional Court Act, which was passed on 5 August 1988, state the principle rules of the Constitutional Court.

### *Composition, procedure and organisation*

In accordance to these rules, the Constitutional Court shall consist of nine justices, all of whom shall be appointed by the President of the Republic of Korea. The National Assembly and the Chief Justice shall nominate three justices each. The remaining three are nominated and appointed by the president of the Republic of Korea after obtaining the approval of the National Assembly. The President of the Constitutional Court who represents the Constitutional Court and becomes the Chief Justice is appointed by the president of the Republic of Korea with the consent of the National Assembly.

Rapporteur Judges of the Constitutional Court conduct research for the review and adjudication of cases, prepare memoranda and draft decisions. The Constitutional Research Institute is the Constitutional Court's own institute, established to supervise the Court's affairs and conduct long-term research on the Office of Court Administration's constitutions and constitutional trials.

### *Jurisdiction/authority*

Article 111(1) of the Republic of Korea Constitution and Article 2 of the Constitutional Court Act specifies the following five cases to be exclusively reviewed by the Constitutional Court: (1) the constitutionality of a law (created by the legislature) upon the request of the ordinary courts (a court other than the Constitutional Court); (2) impeachment of high ranking officials (including the President of the Republic

of Korea); (3) dissolution of political parties (if its objectives or activities are deemed by the Court to be in opposition to the basic free and democratic order); (4) competence disputes between state agencies and between local governments; and (5) constitutional complaints raised by an individual who claims his or her basic right is infringed by action or omission by any public authorities.

### *Decision and effect*

The Court's decision regarding the constitutionality of statutes, competence disputes and constitutional complaints shall bind all of the state agencies and local governments. Any statute or provision decided as unconstitutional by the Court shall lose its effect from the day on which the decision is made. However, the statutes or their provisions relating to criminal penalties shall lose effect retroactively.

If the impeachment is upheld, the Constitutional Court shall pronounce a decision that the respondent be removed from office. The decision of impeachment does not excuse the official from civil or criminal liability. When the Constitutional Court renders a decision ordering the political party concerned be dissolved, the party shall be dissolved.

## **The Prosecutors' Office**

### *Overview*

The Prosecutors' Office is a national law enforcement agency with power to punish, investigate crimes and enforce law. Prosecutors oversee criminal investigations, supervise and command judicial police officers, initiate and maintain indictment and supervise enforcement of given sentences.

### *Structure*

The Prosecutors' Office consists of the Supreme Prosecutors' Office (SPO), the High Prosecutors' Office and the District Prosecutors' Office. The Supreme Prosecutors' Office was established to respond to the Supreme Court, the High Prosecutors' Office was established to respond to the high courts, the District Prosecutors' Office was established to respond to the district courts, and the Branch Prosecutors' Office was established to respond to the branch courts.

### *Types of Prosecutors' Office*

#### **SUPREME PROSECUTORS' OFFICE**

Its main duty is to direct and supervise the Prosecutors' Offices nationwide, including their investigations. The Prosecutor General is responsible for the SPO's work, checks the affairs of the Prosecution Service as a whole, and directs all public officials in the Prosecutors' Offices.

#### **HIGH PROSECUTORS' OFFICE**

The High Prosecutors' Office handles and maintains appellate cases. It also leads state and administrative litigations.

The District Prosecutors' Offices are located within their respective jurisdiction in order to better handle responsibilities of their respective district courts.

### Law firms

There are three main types of law firm in the Republic of Korea: law firms, law firms (limited) and law offices. As of 17 July 2023, there are 1,513 law firms (including law firms limited) that practise law nationwide in Korea. Law firms vary in size between large, medium and small firms but all should employ a minimum of three lawyers, at least one of whom should have more than five years' of experience. Law offices can practise law with only one lawyer.

The six largest law firms (limited) in Korea are Kim & Chang (998 lawyers), Lee & Ko (568 lawyers), Shin & Kim (517 lawyers), Bae Kim & Lee (497 lawyers), Yulchon (430 lawyers) and Hwawoo (322 lawyers) respectively.



# Methodology and results analysis

## Methodology

Between 18 May and 5 July 2023, as part of the IBA and LNROLF Gender Equality in Law Project, the KBA's Gender Equality Centre conducted a survey on female representation in senior positions within participating legal workplaces including the top 49 law firms (based on the number of lawyers), 69 companies (legal & HR team), five public bodies (National Tax Service, Ministry of Justice, Seoul Metropolitan Government, Korea Legal Aid Corporation and Korea Government Legal Service), the Constitutional Court (HR team at Administration Management Bureau), the judiciary (Director General for Personnel Affairs under the Supreme Court's Administration Office), and the Prosecutors' Office (Prosecution Bureau under Ministry of Justice).

Examples of senior positions include:

- Law firms – managing partners, executives (management), partners (members) or equivalent;
- In-house counsel – department heads, directors or equivalent;
- Public sector entities – head of legal departments, mid-level managers in charge of operation and management or equivalent;
- Judiciary – Supreme Court justices, high court judges, presiding judges of district courts, senior research judges of each level of court or judges and judicial researchers of the same level; and
- Prosecutors' Office – Chief Prosecutor.

## Survey response rate

| Organisation         | Number of participants | Number of completed responses | Response rate |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| Law firms            | 49                     | 16                            | 33%           |
| In-house counsel     | 69                     | 10                            | 14%           |
| Public sector        | 5                      | 5                             | 100%          |
| Judiciary            | 1                      | 1                             | 100%          |
| Constitutional Court | 1                      | 1                             | 100%          |
| Prosecutors' Office  | 1                      | 1                             | 100%          |

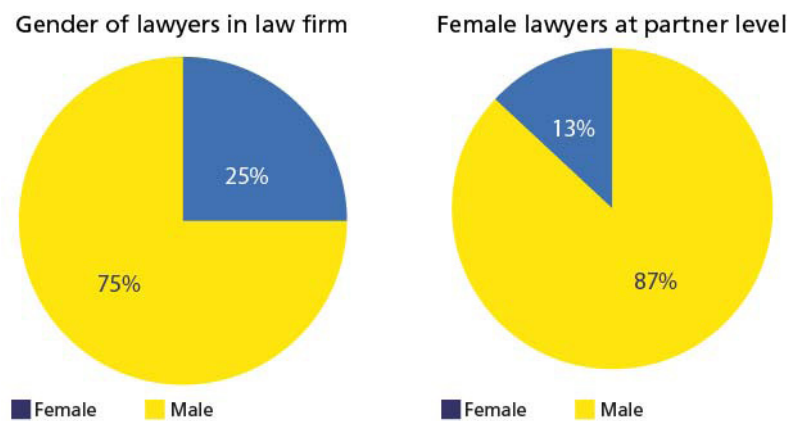
Figure 2: response rate of groups asked to partake in this survey.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> Please refer to Appendix 1 for the full report of survey results.

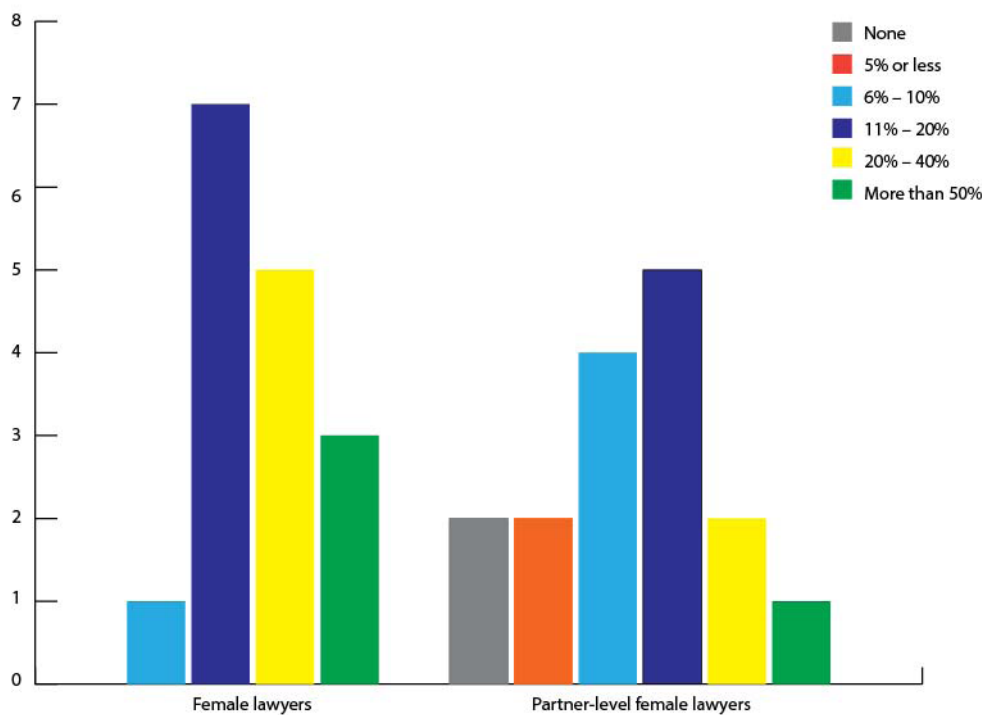
## Law firms

Women make up 25 per cent of lawyers and hold 13 per cent of senior positions in law firms who completed the survey.



More specifically, among 16 law firms who completed the survey, seven of them answered 11–20 per cent as the proportion of their female lawyers, which was the most frequent response. When asked about the proportion of partner-level female lawyers, seven of them said six-to-ten per cent, which was also the most frequent response.

Percentage of female lawyers (in 16 law firms)



As of 2023, the number of those who practise law in the Republic of Korea is 28,118, of which 8,269 are women (29.4 per cent). This means that the ratio of female lawyers in law firms mirrors that of women among the overall legal profession.

The female representation among senior position holders (partners) is as low as 13 per cent (149 women among 1,139 senior lawyers). Meanwhile, the rate of female students who enrolled in law schools in 2023

is 52.46 per cent. These two contrasting figures demonstrate that the number of female legal professionals will significantly increase in the future.

The average percentage of partners among female lawyers in law firms is 31 per cent (the rate of partners among all female lawyers). From these figures, we may possibly conclude that about 70 per cent of female lawyers at law firms were unable to gain promotion to partner due to reasons including changing to another institution. Among the 16 law firms that completed the survey, four have no female lawyers in their management committees, which are composed of senior lawyers to manage the firms.

Seven out of 16 law firms who completed the survey indicated that they monitored gender equality in their workforce. When asked what incentives the firm has for employment stability and the promotion of female lawyers, seven answered 'None available', which was the most frequent response. And the next most frequent response came from six firms which said they had flexible working as an incentive for employment stability and the promotion of female lawyers.

In 2020, the KBA conducted a gender equality survey of the top 20 law firms,<sup>9</sup> the results of which are presented below.

All of the firms that completed the 2020 survey said that they gave *no preferential treatment to male lawyers* during partner selection. When asked why female lawyers found it difficult to gain promotions, the most frequent response was that *being a woman itself was not the obstacle*. Other frequent answers included *business development discrepancies, lower number of female lawyers in promotion stage, possibility of pregnancy, leave of absence, and resignation*.

Based on the above responses, there are several possible reasons for the low rate of female partners. *The major role of an equity partner is to find new clients, but only a small number of women are playing the role*. A promotion requires approximately ten years of experience, however women made up only ten per cent of lawyers in 2009 (and so the number of female lawyers was far too small). Their career may have been interrupted by childbirth and childcare.

Also, in the same 2020 survey, female lawyers expressed similar views about what the firms should do for their promotion. The most frequent responses called for law firms to *come up with measures that compliment pregnancy and childcare vacancies and offer training and mentoring for business development skills*.

There were positive answers from the same survey too. In the 2020 survey, 80 per cent of respondents said that their firms endeavoured to employ and promote female lawyers. 70 per cent of the respondents said that their firms were well equipped with tools and systems for women.

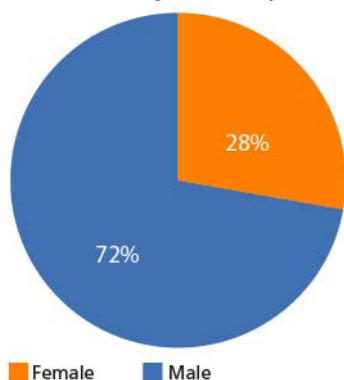
---

9 Presentation materials of the Symposium on Law Firm Management & Gender Equality, KBA, 11 November 2020.

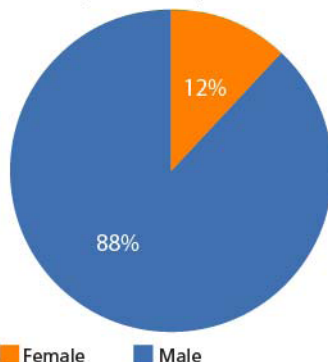
## In-house counsel

The survey shows that women make up 28 per cent of in-house counsel, which is similar to the rate of female lawyers in general. Female representation in senior positions is 12 per cent which is also similar to that of law firms (13 per cent).

Gender of lawyers in corporation

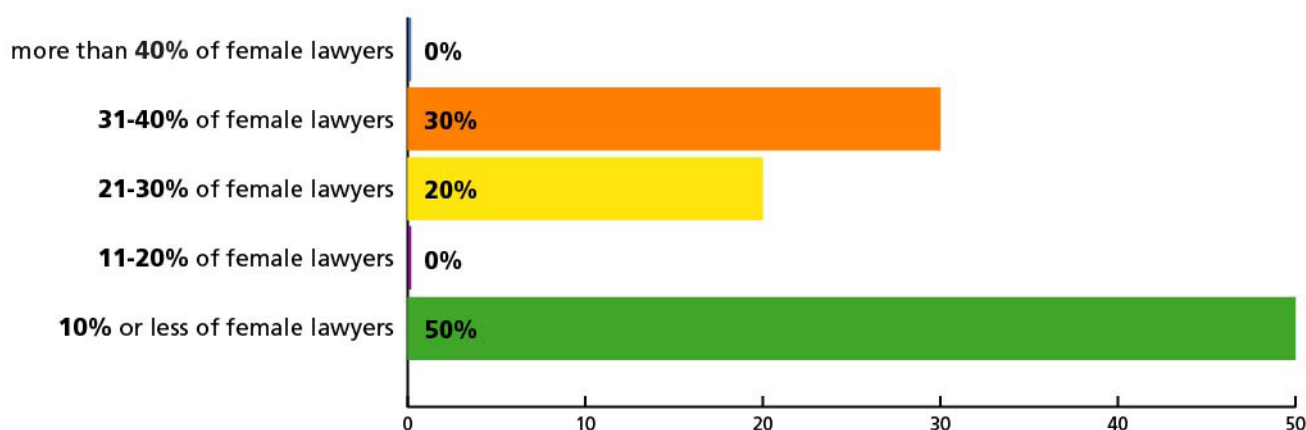


Gender of partner-level lawyers in corporation



Interestingly, 58 per cent of the in-house counsel are at the level of executives or higher positions, suggesting that those in the legal profession are more likely to gain promotions to senior positions in companies than their non-lawyer colleagues. *However, women make up only 12 per cent of lawyers in senior positions (executives). Also, five of the ten companies that completed the survey indicated that female representation in their in-house counsel stood at ten per cent or lower. It is therefore reasonable to say that female lawyers find it more difficult to enter the business and gain promotions in comparison with their male counterparts.*

Percentage of female in-house counsels (in 10 companies)



According to the research on female executives in companies by the MOGEF in 2020, women make up 4.5 per cent of executives in listed companies while men account for 95.5 per cent. This means that although female lawyers are more likely to get promoted to senior positions than non-lawyer female colleagues, female representation in senior positions is still lower than that of male counterparts. But when it comes to non-standing officers, female representation is 100 per cent. This figure reflects the newly legislated law of February 2020. It bans the listed corporations with total assets of KRW 2tn or more from filling the board with single-gender members. As a result, an increasing number of businesses are appointing one female lawyer as a 'non-executive director'.

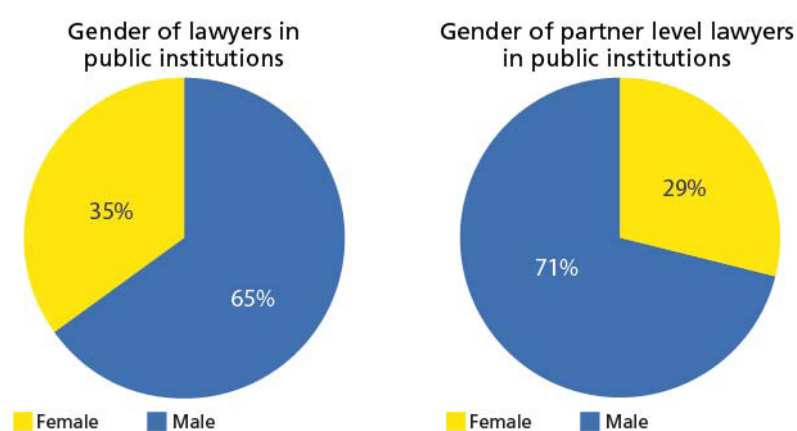
Regarding gender equality monitoring, six out of ten companies that completed the survey said they monitored gender equality in in-house counsel. As for incentives for employment stability and promotion of female lawyers, seven out of ten companies that completed the survey responded with 'None available'. For other questions, meanwhile, ten companies said that they conducted 'gender-sensitive education and training for lawyers of both genders'. One company said they had a flexible working scheme.

## Public sector

The Korean government has been working on a five-year plan to improve female representation in the public sector between 2017 and 2022. Using the plan, the government aims to achieve the ratio targets of female executives and female managers in the public sector and to monitor whether the public organisations meet these targets. Additionally, various regulations and policies on the management of public sector entities recommend that the public sector should appoint women to senior positions to meet targets.

Women make up 29 per cent of senior lawyers in the public sector, which is the highest figure among other entities that responded. This reflects the fact that various policies and regulations encouraged them to have more women in executive positions.

The rate of female lawyers in public organisations is 35 per cent, which surpasses the overall rate of female lawyers (29.4 per cent). This result possibly comes from the fact that female lawyers prefer to work in the public sector where they can get childcare leave more easily than they would at law firms.



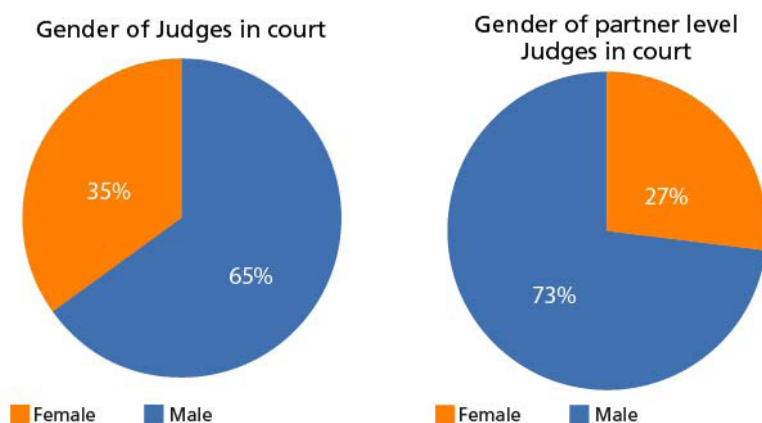
The Act on the Management of Public Institutions advises state-owned companies and quasi-governmental organisations to set the ratio targets of female executives based on the nature of their business. The Guidelines on Management of State-Owned Companies and Quasi-Governmental organisations state that state-owned companies and quasi-governmental organisations should make efforts to maintain female representation in senior positions at 20 per cent or above.

Four out of five public sector entities who completed the survey said they monitored gender equality. As for incentives for employment stability and the promotion of female lawyers, two out of five organisations that completed the survey said 'None available'. Three respondents said they conducted 'gender-sensitive education and training for lawyers of both genders'.

## Judiciary (courts)

The survey results show that women make up 35 per cent and men 65 per cent of judges in the judiciary. Senior positions such as Supreme Court justices, presiding judges of high courts, high court judges, presiding judges of district courts, and senior judicial researchers have 27 per cent female representation. The judiciary has relatively higher female representation in senior positions, compared to female representation in law firms and in-house counsel at 13 per cent and 12 per cent respectively. This means that the judiciary is generally more accommodating than law firms and other corporates.

It has been revealed that gender equality in general and gender equality among senior positions are all monitored in the judiciary. Its results are reported to the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the most senior position in the judiciary.



According to research by the Korean Women's Development Institute, the proportion of female judges was 32.3 per cent in 2021, with 964 women among 2,988 judges. This percentage of female judges is slightly higher than that of female lawyers in general (29.4 per cent in 2023).

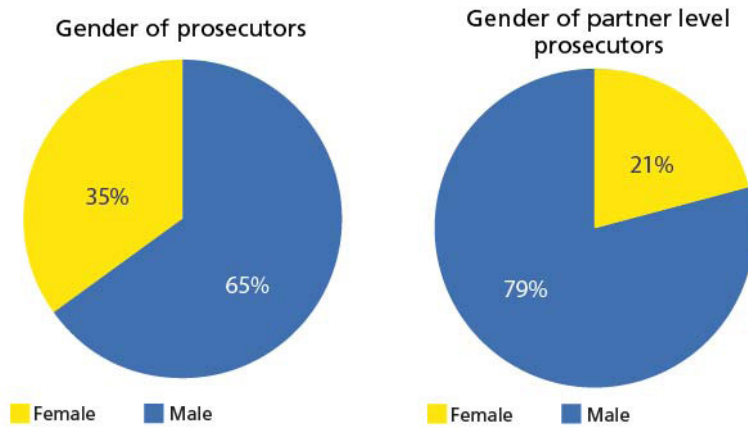
## Constitutional Court

The female representation of Constitutional Court justices is 33 per cent and the female representation of Rapporteur Judges is 59 per cent. With the combined female ratio of Constitutional Court Justices and Rapporteur Judges being 57 per cent, the Constitutional Court is the only organisation with higher female representation than men in the legal profession. Understandably, there are more men (six) than women (three) among the Constitutional Court justices who require relatively more legal experience.

Like the judiciary, the Constitutional Court monitors gender equality in its workforce. Its results are then reported to the President of the Constitutional Court. Also, in an effort to promote diversity in the workplace, as well as gender, the Constitutional Court gives preferential treatment to disabled candidates in the recruitment of Rapporteur Judges. They also promised to give notice of preferential treatment for the disabled in future recruitment of Rapporteur Judges.

## Prosecutors' Office

The proportion of female prosecutors is 35 per cent, which is the same as that of judiciary and higher than that of law firms and other corporations. However, the percentage of females in senior positions (chief prosecutors) is 21 per cent, which is lower than that of the judiciary (27 per cent) but higher than that of law firms (13 per cent) and corporations (12 per cent).



Although gender equality is monitored in the Prosecutors' Office, it is not monitored among senior prosecutors.



# Comparison with Chile, England and Wales, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain and Uganda

The 50:50 by 2030 Gender Project has surveyed the following jurisdictions to date: Chile, England and Wales, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain and Uganda.

Compared to these jurisdictions, the Republic of Korea's ratio of female lawyers is relatively low at 29 per cent. Meanwhile, the Netherlands has a 57 per cent ratio, approximately 56 per cent in Chile, 54 per cent in Spain, 51 per cent in England and Wales, 49 per cent in Uganda, and approximately 40 per cent in Nigeria.

Among the four groups that participated in the survey, the proportion of senior positions among in-house lawyers was the lowest. The data produced from the KBA's Gender Equality Centre survey revealed that women in law firms make up 25 per cent of all lawyers and 13 per cent of lawyers in senior positions. The same pattern and suggested reasoning appear to apply to in-house female senior lawyers, where they occupy 12 per cent of senior positions. The remaining countries surveyed feature female representation at senior levels in the 18–43 per cent range, outnumbering Korea.

In the public sector and judiciary, the figures are more encouraging, with 35 per cent of the legal workforce being female in both sectors, compared to the overall rate of 29 per cent. The higher representation of women in public institutions and the judiciary can be attributed to the implementation of the women executive quota system and the nature of work and work arrangements preferred by female legal professionals, including relatively flexible parental leave and shorter working hours compared to law firms.

Nonetheless, the ratio is still low when compared to Chile, England and Wales, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain and Uganda. At the senior level in the Korean judiciary, the representation of women is only marginally higher at 27 per cent, ranking just ahead of England and Wales, which stands at 26 per cent, the lowest among the surveyed countries. This compares to 33 per cent in Nigeria, 37 per cent in Spain, 45 per cent in Uganda, 46 per cent in Chile and 54 per cent in the Netherlands. In Korea, only 35 per cent of lawyers in the public sector are women, comparing with England and Wales, Uganda, Spain, Nigeria and the Netherlands where the representation of female lawyers in the public sector ranges from 57 to 68 per cent.

Meanwhile, the combined ratio of female Constitutional Court justices and Rapporteur Judges is 57 per cent, due to the specific monitoring of gender equality in this sector. In the Prosecution Office, 35 per cent of prosecutors are female. The proportion of women in the Constitutional Court appears to be relatively high.

Flexible working is the most popular initiative in law firms in Korea to promote women's advancement, whereas gender-sensitive education and training for male and female lawyers is the most popular initiative in public sector entities and companies. In Chile, England and Wales, and Spain, flexible working is the most popular initiative. In the Netherlands, Nigeria and Uganda, this initiative is the second or third most popular.



## Conclusion

The Constitution of the Republic of Korea bans discrimination in political, economic, social and cultural life based on gender, religion and social status. In 2007, the Act on Equal Employment Opportunity and Work–Family Balance Assistance was enacted, providing detailed provisions.

However, it was not until 2015 that the government finalised its first basic gender equality policy plan, the ‘Framework Act on Gender Equality’, which stipulates the duties of the state and local governments. The framework has undergone several revisions in line with government policies and global trends.

In other words, Korea is aligning with the global trend of gender equality, but the progress is still relatively slow. Recent data shows an increase in numbers, but the representation of women in the legal profession remains lower compared to other countries participating in the 50:50 by 2030 Gender project.

There are various reasons for the low number of female legal professionals, one being the preference of many women for humanities and language arts majors. Historically, most Korean legal professionals majored in law before the introduction of the law school system, leading to fewer women entering the legal profession. However, with the implementation of the law school system, there has been an increase in women studying law. In 2023, 53 per cent of law school admissions were women, and the pass rate for the bar exam among women was 46.6 per cent, indicating a growing pool of talented female professionals.

The data produced from the KBA’s Gender Equality Centre survey revealed that women make up 25 per cent of lawyers and 13 per cent of senior positions in law firms. The same pattern and suggested reasoning appear to apply to in-house female senior lawyers, where they occupy 12 per cent of senior positions.

Challenges remain for women to advance into senior positions within the Korean legal profession, primarily due to the demanding work hours and workload. To address this issue and foster a more inclusive environment for female legal professionals, the introduction of flexible work arrangements, the establishment and implementation of parental leave policies, and the expansion of childcare facilities, both public and private, are essential steps.

Recognising the need for gender equality within the legal industry, the KBA has actively pursued initiatives in this regard. In 2013, the KBA established a committee dedicated to work-life balance, aiming to address gender disparities. Additionally, in 2019, the KBA took a significant step by inaugurating a Gender Equality Centre, demonstrating its ongoing commitment to fostering a culture of gender equality within the legal profession.

The KBA will continue its efforts to improve gender equality in the legal field of Korea, using the publication of this report as an opportunity to do so.

# Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Almudena Arpón de Mendivil, IBA President who has made the ‘50:50 by 2030’ Gender Project one of the key focuses of her presidency. Her ongoing support is much appreciated.

Our thanks must now go to the primary author of this report, the Korean Bar Association. We extend our appreciation to President Young Hoon Kim of the KBA and Sung Hee Kwon, Chair of the KBA Gender Disparity Project Subcommittee. Additionally, we express our gratitude to the following members of the Subcommittee: Cho Dong-sun, Han Joo-hyun, Lee Keun-ok and Park Ji-ae.

We would also like to thank members of the IBA Legal Policy & Research Unit for their work, supervision, and coordination of this report, notably IBA LPRU Director, Sara Carnegie, IBA LPRU Project Lawyer Beatriz Martinez and IBA LPRU Project Coordinators, Daniel Collins and Helen Ugwu. We also thank IBA LPRU interns Grace Bennetts, Cindy Rojas, Kriti Mahajan and Anna Shao for their work.

Additional thanks go to the LexisNexis Rule of Law Foundation whose partnership with the IBA on the ‘50:50 by 2030’ Gender Project is crucial. Particular recognition goes to Nigel Roberts, Joanna Weller and Steve Carroll.

Thanks are also due to Juni Son, from the IBA Seoul office, as well as to the following IBA staff for their ongoing support of the Gender Project: Simon Fuller, Chloe Woodhall, Joanna Budzowska-Gawlak, Penny Newton and Romana St Matthew-Daniel.

Finally, our sincere gratitude to all those law firms, companies, public sector institutions and courts in the Republic of Korea who participated in the project. They have brought this report to life.

# Appendix 1: Survey results

| Organisation         | Women in workforce (%) | Women in senior positions (%) | Discrepancy (%) |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| Law firms            | 25 (568/2315)          | 13 (149/1139)                 | -12             |
| In-house counsel     | 28 (60/212)            | 12 (15/123)                   | -16             |
| Public sector        | 35 (82/232)            | 29 (21/73)                    | -6              |
| Judiciary            | 35 (1136/3240)         | 27 (423/1550)                 | -8              |
| Constitutional Court | 57 (47/83)             | *                             | *               |
| Prosecutors' Office  | 35 (749/2171)          | 21 (72/337)                   | -14             |
| Total                | 23 (1928/8253)         | 21(680/3222)                  | -2              |

\* The Constitutional Court has only two categories of Constitutional Court Justices and Rapporteur Judges, so it is difficult to analyse the female percentage of these senior positions.

## Law firms

### 1. Number of lawyers

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| 401+         | 2 firms  |
| 301-400      | None     |
| 201-300      | 2 firms  |
| 101-200      | 3 firms  |
| 51-100       | 3 firms  |
| 50 and below | 6 firms  |
| Total        | 16 firms |

### 2. Percentage of partners or those in higher positions

|                  |          |
|------------------|----------|
| Greater than 80% | 1 firm   |
| 71%-80%          | None     |
| 61%-70%          | 3 firms  |
| 51%-60%          | 2 firms  |
| 41%-50%          | 5 firms  |
| 31%-40%          | 2 firms  |
| 30% and lower    | 3 firms  |
| Total            | 16 firms |

### 3. Percentage of female lawyers

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| 31%-40%       | 3 firms  |
| 21%-30%       | 5 firms  |
| 11%-20%       | 7 firms  |
| 10% and lower | 1 firm   |
| Total         | 16 firms |

#### 4. Percentage of female partners

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| More than 50% | 1 firm   |
| 21%-40%       | 2 firms  |
| 11%-20%       | 5 firms  |
| 6%-10%        | 4 firms  |
| 5% and lower  | 2 firms  |
| None          | 2 firms  |
| Total         | 16 firms |

##### 4-1. Percentage of part-time lawyers in law firms

Only two out of 16 law firms have part-time lawyers. The percentages in each firm are four per cent (two out of 48) and 19 per cent (57 out of 299) respectively.

##### 4-2. Percentage of partners among part-time lawyers

The percentage of partners among part-time lawyers is much higher than that of partners among full-time lawyers. Given the work conditions of law firms in Korea, the above percentage may stem from renowned lawyers being employed as legal advisors, or equity partners over a certain age working part-time.

The percentages of part-time lawyers in each firm are 50 per cent (one out of two) and 100 per cent (57 out of 57) respectively.

##### 4-3. Percentage of women among part-time lawyers

None

#### 5. Percentage of partners among female lawyers

|               |          |
|---------------|----------|
| 51%-100%      | 2 firms  |
| 26%-50%       | 5 firms  |
| 11%-25%       | 5 firms  |
| 10% and lower | 4 firms  |
| Total         | 16 firms |

#### 6. Number of female lawyers who join management committees (two firms do not have a management committee)

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| 31%-40%      | 1 firm   |
| 21%-30%      | 1 firm   |
| 11%-20%      | 4 firms  |
| 6%-10%       | 2 firms  |
| 5% and lower | 2 firms  |
| None         | 4 firms  |
| Total        | 14 firms |

#### 7. Does your firm monitor gender equality in the workforce?

|     |               |
|-----|---------------|
| Yes | 7 firms (44%) |
| No  | 9 firms (56%) |

#### 8. Does your firm monitor gender equality among partner lawyers?

|     |                |
|-----|----------------|
| Yes | 5 firms (31%)  |
| No  | 11 firms (69%) |

9. Does your firm report the monitoring results to your managing partner?

|     |                |
|-----|----------------|
| Yes | 6 firms (38%)  |
| No  | 10 firms (62%) |

10. What kind of incentives does your firm have for promotion of female employees? (responses may overlap)

|   |         |
|---|---------|
| None available  | 7 firms |
| Flexible working scheme   | 6 firms |
| Quota systems for partners (members)/senior positions                   | 1 firm  |
| Coaching and mentoring programmes for women                             | 2 firms |
| Others (online training for all members of the staff including lawyers) | 1 firm  |

10-1. In which year did your firm carry out incentives for promotion of female employees?

|      |         |
|------|---------|
| 2020 | 2 firms |
| 2019 | 1 firm  |
| 2018 | 1 firm  |
| 2017 | 1 firm  |
| 2016 | 1 firm  |
| 2015 | 1 firm  |
| 2014 | 1 firm  |

10-2. Effectiveness of incentives for promotion of female employees

|                    |         |
|--------------------|---------|
| Very effective     | 1 firm  |
| Somewhat effective | 8 firms |
| Ineffective        | 3 firms |

11. Does your firm promote diversity in the workplace?

|     |                |
|-----|----------------|
| Yes | 1 firm (8%)    |
| No  | 11 firms (82%) |

11-1. Tell us more about diversity in your workplace.

None

12. What incentives does your firm plan to implement in future?

None

## In-house counsel

1. Number of lawyers

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 101+         | 1 company    |
| 31-100       | None         |
| 11-30        | 4 companies  |
| 10 and below | 5 companies  |
| Total        | 10 companies |

## 2. Percentage of lawyers among executives or those in higher positions

|                  |              |
|------------------|--------------|
| Greater than 80% | 4 companies  |
| 71%-80%          | None         |
| 61%-70%          | 3 companies  |
| 51%-60%          | None         |
| 41%-50%          | 1 company    |
| 31%-40%          | None         |
| 30% and lower    | 2 companies  |
| Total            | 10 companies |

## 3. Percentage of females in in-house counsel

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| 31%-40%       | 3 companies  |
| 21%-30%       | 2 companies  |
| 11%-20%       | None         |
| 10% and lower | 5 companies  |
| Total         | 10 companies |

## 4. Percentage of female lawyers at executive level in in-house counsel

|              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 21%-30%      | 2 companies  |
| 11%-20%      | 2 companies  |
| 6%-10%       | None         |
| 5% and lower | 1 company    |
| None         | 5 companies  |
| Total        | 10 companies |

### 4-1. Percentage of part-time lawyers among in-house counsel

Only two out of ten companies have part-time in-house counsel. The percentage of part-time in-house counsel is 6.1 per cent, accounting for 13 out of a total of 212 in-house counsel.

### 4-2. Percentage of executives among part-time in-house counsel

The percentage of executives among part-time lawyers is 7.7 per cent, with one male among the 13 individuals in this category.

### 4-3. Percentage of women among part-time in-house counsel

The percentage of women among part-time in-house counsel is 92.3 per cent (12 out of 13).

### 4-4. Percentage of female lawyers at the executive level among part-time in-house counsel

None

## 5. Does your company monitor gender equality in the workforce?

|     |                   |
|-----|-------------------|
| Yes | 6 companies (60%) |
| No  | 4 companies (40%) |

**6. Does your company monitor gender equality among executive-level lawyers?**

|     |                   |
|-----|-------------------|
| Yes | 6 companies (60%) |
| No  | 4 companies (40%) |

**7. Does your company report the monitoring results to your executives?**

|     |                   |
|-----|-------------------|
| Yes | 6 companies (60%) |
| No  | 4 companies (40%) |

**8. What kind of incentives does your company have for the promotion of female employees? (responses may overlap)**

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| None available  | 7 companies |
| Gender-sensitive education and training for male and female lawyers | 2 companies |
| Flexible working scheme   | 1 company   |

**8-1. In which year did your company carry out incentives for promotion of female employees?**

|      |           |
|------|-----------|
| 2020 | 1 company |
| 2018 | 1 company |
| 2015 | 1 company |

**8-2. Effectiveness of incentives for promotion of female employees**

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Somewhat effective | 3 companies |
| Ineffective        | 2 companies |

**9. Does your company promote diversity in the workplace?**

|     |                    |
|-----|--------------------|
| Yes | None               |
| No  | 9 companies (100%) |

(non-responses excluded)

**9-1. Tell us more about diversity in your workplace.**

None

**10. What incentives does your company plan to implement in future?**

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Offline gender equality education for all members of staff | 1 company |
|--|-----------|

## Public sector

**1. Number of lawyers**

|              |                          |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| 50+          | 2 public sector entities |
| 41-49        | 2 public sector entities |
| 31-40        | 1 public sector entity   |
| 21-30        | None                     |
| 11-20        | None                     |
| 10 and below | None                     |
| Total        | 5 public sector entities |

## 2. Percentage of lawyers in senior positions

|               |                           |
|---------------|---------------------------|
| 51%-60%       | 1 public sector entity    |
| 41%-50%       | None                      |
| 31%-40%       | 2 public sector entities  |
| 21%-30%       | 1 public sector entity    |
| 11%-20%       | None                      |
| 10% and lower | 1 public sector entity    |
| Total         | 5 public sectors entities |

## 3. Percentage of female lawyers in public sector

|               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 71%-80%       | 1 public sector entity   |
| 61%-70%       | None                     |
| 51%-60%       | None                     |
| 41%-50%       | None                     |
| 31%-40%       | 1 public sector entity   |
| 21%-30%       | 3 public sector entities |
| 11%-20%       | None                     |
| 10% and lower | None                     |
| Total         | 5 public sector entities |

## 4. Percentage of female senior lawyers in public sector

|               |                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| 100%          | 1 public sector entity   |
| 31%-40%       | 2 public sector entities |
| 21%-30%       | None                     |
| 11%-20%       | 2 public sector entities |
| 10% and lower | None                     |
| Total         | 5 public sector entities |

### 4-1. Percentage of part-time lawyers in public sector

There are no public sector entities with part-time lawyers.

## 5. Does your organisation monitor gender equality in the workforce?

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| Yes | 4 public sector entities (80%) |
| No  | 1 public sector entity (20%)   |

## 6. Does your organisation monitor gender equality among senior lawyers?

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| Yes | 4 public sector entities (80%) |
| No  | 1 public sector entity (20%)   |

## 7. Does your organisation report the monitoring results to the head of your organisation?

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| Yes | 4 public sector entities (80%) |
| No  | 1 public sector entity (20%)   |



## 8. What kind of incentives does your organisation have for promotion of female employees? (responses may overlap)

|   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| None available  | 2 public sector entities |
| Gender-sensitive education and training for male and female lawyers | 3 public sector entities |

### 8-1. Tell us more about incentives for the promotion of female employees in your workplace.

|  |                        |
|--|------------------------|
| Annual programmes including online training for all members of the staff and group training for management | 1 public sector entity |
| Offline training   | 1 public sector entity |

### 8-2. In which year did your firm carry out incentives for promotion of female employees?

|      |                        |
|------|------------------------|
| 2020 | 1 public sector entity |
| 2014 | 1 public sector entity |

### 8-3. Effectiveness of incentives for promotion of female employees

|                    |                          |
|--------------------|--------------------------|
| Somewhat effective | 2 public sector entities |
|--------------------|--------------------------|

## 9. Does your organisation promote diversity in the workplace?

|     |                                |
|-----|--------------------------------|
| Yes | 1 public sector entity (20%)   |
| No  | 4 public sector entities (80%) |

### 9-1. Tell us more about incentives in your workplace.

None

## 10. What incentives does your organisation plan to implement in future?

None

# Judiciary

## 1. Number of judges and judicial researchers

|                                   |       |
|-----------------------------------|-------|
| Judges                            | 3,122 |
| Judicial researchers (judges)     | 99    |
| Judicial researchers (non-judges) | 19    |
| Total                             | 3,240 |

### 1-1. Number of part-time judges and judicial researchers in the judiciary

There are no part-time judges or judicial researchers.

## 2. Number of Supreme Court justices, presiding judges, high court judges and senior judicial researchers of each court

|   |       |
|---|-------|
| Supreme Court justices                      | 13    |
| Presiding judges working at high courts     | 73    |
| High court judges working at high courts    | 277   |
| Presiding judges working at district courts | 1,143 |
| Senior judicial researchers                 | 44    |
| Total                                       | 1,550 |

### 3. Number of female judges and female judicial researchers in the judiciary

35 per cent of judges in the judiciary are female, and the percentage of female judicial researchers is 32 per cent.

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| Female judges                            | 1,098 |
| Female judicial researchers (judges)     | 27    |
| Female judicial researchers (non-judges) | 11    |
| Total                                    | 1,136 |

### 4. Number of females among Supreme Court justices, presiding judges, high court judges and senior judicial researchers of each court

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Female Supreme Court justices                      | 4 (31%)   |
| Female presiding judges working at high courts     | 4 (5%)    |
| Female high court judges working at high courts    | 71 (26%)  |
| Female presiding judges working at district courts | 334 (29%) |
| Female senior judicial researchers                 | 10 (23%)  |
| Total  | 423       |

### 5. Does your organisation monitor gender equality in the workforce?

Yes

### 6. Does your organisation monitor gender equality among senior judges and senior justices?

Yes

### 7. Does your organisation report the monitoring results to the Chief Justice?

Yes

### 8. What kind of incentives does your organisation have for the promotion of female employees? (responses may overlap)

None available

### 9. Does your organisation promote diversity in the workplace?

|    |                       |
|----|-----------------------|
| No | 1 organisation (100%) |
|----|-----------------------|

## Constitutional Court

### 1. Number of Constitutional Court Justices and Rapporteur Judges

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| Constitutional Court Justices | 9  |
| Rapporteur Judges             | 74 |
| Total                         | 83 |

#### 1-1. Number of part-time Constitutional Court Justices and Rapporteur Judges

There are no part-time Constitutional Court Justices and Rapporteur Judges.

### 2. Number of female Constitutional Court Justices and Rapporteur Judges

The percentage of female Constitutional Court Justices is 33 per cent, and female Rapporteur Judges is 59 per cent.

|                                      |    |
|--------------------------------------|----|
| Female Constitutional Court Justices | 3  |
| Female Rapporteur Judges             | 44 |
| Total                                | 47 |

### 3. Does your organisation monitor gender equality in the workforce?

Yes

4. Does your organisation report the monitoring results to the President of the Constitutional Court?

Yes

5. Does your organisation promote diversity in the workplace?

Yes

5-1. Tell us more about diversity in your workplace.

|  |
|--|
| Preferential treatments for the disabled in the recruitment of Rapporteur Judges |
|--|

6. What incentives does your firm plan to implement in future?

|  |
|--|
| Specifying the preferential treatments for the disabled in the Rapporteur Judges job summary |
|--|

## Prosecutors' Office

1. Number of prosecutors

|             |       |
|-------------|-------|
| Prosecutors | 2,171 |
|-------------|-------|

1-1. Number of part-time prosecutors in Prosecutors' Office

There are no part-time prosecutors.

2. Number of chief prosecutors in the District Prosecutors' Office, High Prosecutors' Office and Supreme Prosecutors' Office

|                             |     |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| Number of chief prosecutors | 337 |
|-----------------------------|-----|

3. Number of female prosecutors in Prosecutors' Office

The percentage of female prosecutors in the Prosecutors' Office is 35 per cent.

|                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Female prosecutors | 749 |
|--------------------|-----|

4. Number of female chief prosecutors in the District Prosecutors' Office, High Prosecutors' Office and Supreme Prosecutors' Office

The percentage of female chief prosecutors in the Prosecutors' Office is 21 per cent.

|                                    |    |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Number of female chief prosecutors | 72 |
|------------------------------------|----|

5. Does your organisation monitor gender equality in the workforce?

Yes

6. Does your organisation monitor gender equality among chief prosecutors?

No

7. Does your organisation report the monitoring results to the Prosecutor General?

No

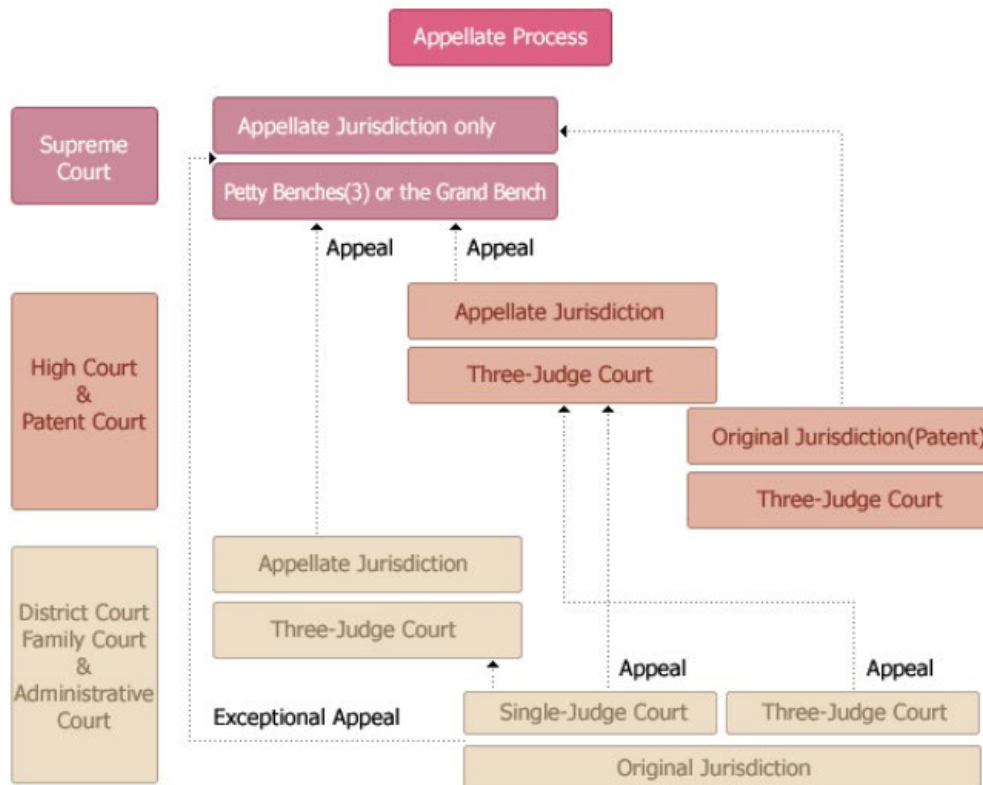
8. What kind of incentives does your organisation have for promotion of female employees? (responses may overlap)

None available

9. Does your firm promote diversity in the workplace?

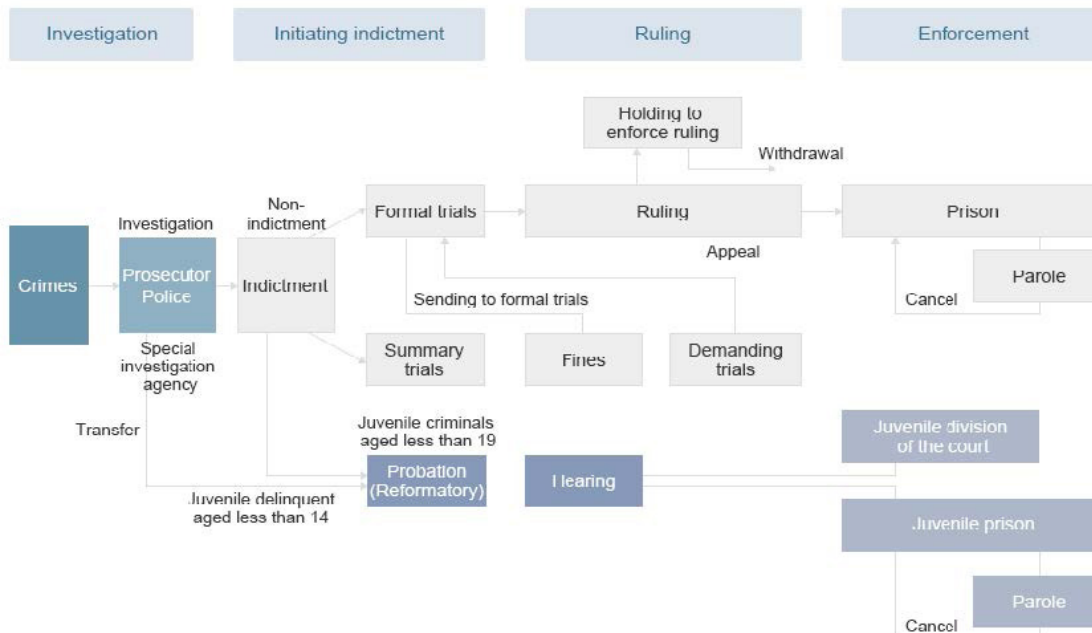
No

## Appendix 2: Korean judicial procedures diagram



Source: Supreme Court.<sup>10</sup>

### Process of Criminal Case



Source: Supreme Prosecutors' Office.<sup>11</sup>

10 Supreme Court of Korea (2019) 'The Judiciary'. Available at: <https://eng.scourt.go.kr/eng/judiciary/introduction.jsp>. Accessed 21 February 2024.

11 Supreme Prosecutors' Office, 'Process of Criminal Case'. Available at: <https://www.spo.go.kr/site/eng/01/10103020000002018120605.jsp>. Accessed 21 February 2024.

# Appendix 3: Population and legal profession trends in the Republic of Korea

## 1. Total population and change of female population in the Republic of Korea (in 1,000s)

Until 2020, the male population was higher than the female population. However, from 2021, the female population started to exceed the male population. There are now more females than males in Korea because the population is ageing and women have a longer life expectancy than men.

|                         | 2000   | 2005   | 2010   | 2015   | 2020   | 2021   | 2022   | 2023   |
|-------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>Total population</b> | 47,008 | 48,184 | 49,554 | 51,015 | 51,837 | 51,745 | 51,628 | 51,558 |
| <b>Male</b>             | 23,667 | 24,243 | 24,881 | 25,586 | 25,926 | 25,858 | 25,790 | 25,750 |
| <b>Female</b>           | 23,341 | 23,941 | 24,673 | 25,429 | 25,911 | 25,887 | 25,838 | 25,808 |

Source: e-nara index<sup>12</sup>

## 2. Total number of lawyers and change in number of female lawyers in the Republic of Korea (limited to practising lawyers)

Until 2008, the percentage of female lawyers in the Republic of Korea stood at less than ten per cent. The figure surpassed that number in 2009, surpassed 20 per cent in 2014 and 30 per cent in 2018. As of 2023, the percentage decreased slightly to 29.4 per cent. Meanwhile, the rate of women enrolling in law schools and passing the Bar exam reached 40 per cent.

|  | 2008  | 2009  | 2014   | 2018   | 2023   |
|--|-------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| <b>Total number of practising lawyers</b>  | 8,877 | 9,612 | 15,954 | 21,573 | 28,118 |
| <b>Number of female practising lawyers</b> | 622   | 1,013 | 3,457  | 7,353  | 8,269  |
| <b>Percentage of female lawyers</b>        | 7.0%  | 10.5% | 21.7%  | 34.1%  | 29.4%  |

Source: Korean Bar Association

## 3. Percentage of females working at courts

|                                    | 2000  | 2004  | 2008  | 2012  | 2016  | 2021  |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Total</b>                       | 1,409 | 1,856 | 2,378 | 2,738 | 2,907 | 2,988 |
| <b>Female judges</b>               | 96    | 169   | 499   | 733   | 808   | 964   |
| <b>Percentage of female judges</b> | 6.8%  | 9.1%  | 21%   | 26.8% | 27.8% | 32.3% |

Source: Chronology of Korean Gender Sensitivity Statistics<sup>13</sup>

12 e-nara index (2023) 'Population structure by gender and age'. Available at: [https://www.index.go.kr/unity/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx\\_cd=1010](https://www.index.go.kr/unity/potal/main/EachDtlPageDetail.do?idx_cd=1010). Accessed 21 February 2024.

13 Chronology of Korean Gender Sensitivity Statistics. Available at: <https://gsis.kwdi.re.kr/gsis/kr/dataMng/PublicationList.html>. Accessed 21 February 2024.

## 4. Percentage of females in the Prosecutors' Office

|   | 2000  | 2004  | 2008  | 2012  | 2016  | 2021  |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| <b>Total</b>                            | 1,139 | 1,412 | 1,671 | 1,865 | 2,067 | 2,217 |
| <b>Female prosecutors</b>               | 21    | 87    | 260   | 440   | 593   | 715   |
| <b>Percentage of female prosecutors</b> | 1.8%  | 6.2%  | 15.6% | 23.6% | 28.7% | 32.3% |

Source: Chronology of Korean Gender Sensitivity Statistics



the global voice of  
the legal profession®

**International Bar Association**

Chancery House  
53-64 Chancery Lane  
London WC2A 1QS  
United Kingdom  
**[www.ibanet.org](http://www.ibanet.org)**