Frontiers of Gender Equality is a timely and important book, especially as the world commemorates the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 2023. Its chapters are as imaginative and as expansive as the challenge of gender discrimination requires. While there is much to celebrate in the accomplishments to date, these authors remind us that the journeys to achieve gender equality are far from over. Significantly, the book provides maps for these journeys and suggests the kinds of research that could propel us along our way. Although the book primarily focuses on securing gender equality in international and regional human rights treaty systems, it also addresses successes and failures in national constitutional courts and underscores the need for qualitative assessments of the gender equality goals of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Agenda.

A consensus is emerging among national constitutional courts and human rights committees of the common elements of contemporary equality law. As the concluding chapter explains, these common elements include norms of gender equality and nondiscrimination that protect against both direct and indirect violations and reach beyond intentional discrimination to examine the disparate impact of unexamined practices. Protection requires different treatments for differently situated individuals, including against private as well as public acts. This consensus recognizes that some forms of differentiation can be justified, provided the reasons for those justifications are evidence-based and sufficiently persuasive to affected stakeholders.

The concluding chapter also explains that gender equality law began when the world was simply structured around binary male/female distinction and the goals of the equality project were to transform half of humanity from object to subject and to replace subordination with personhood and agency. A significant shift in modern gender equality law is the importance of recognizing how the status and citizenship of women and LGBTQ+ individuals are differentiated by laws, practices, and structures that unjustly accommodate privilege. A current goal of the equality project is to acknowledge how gender discrimination intersects with other axes of discrimination, such as indigeneity, religious affinity, and migrant or marginalized socioeconomic status, to create compounded harms that need to be specifically addressed and remedied.

Other important shifts are the moves from formal equality to substantive equality, and ultimately to transformative equality. It is no longer a matter of just understanding how
individuals are discriminated against on various grounds but also of understanding how patriarchal and hierarchical structures are designed or operated in ways that subordinate various subgroups. The subordinating effects of such structures are best viewed from the perspectives of those discriminated against in their respective contexts. Structures need to be understood expansively to include stereotypical and categorical thinking, and neocolonial and economic policies or laws. One learns that moving from individual complaint procedures to collective complaint mechanisms equips human rights committees to better understand and remedy structural forms of gender discrimination, especially in the area of economic, social, and cultural rights.

This book illustrates that a key to achieving and maintaining inclusive equality is the articulation of gender-based and intersectional harms as forms of discrimination. Indeed, chapter authors show that the evolution of gender equality law has been driven in part by the naming of such harms and articulating why they are legal wrongs that violate human rights. Addressing gendered harms needs to go beyond the stereotypical women's issues, such as gender-based violence and preventable maternal mortality, to researching the gender dimensions of insecurities relating to lack of food, water, and housing, and the gender impacts of, for example, climate crises, migrations, and pandemics.

Gender discrimination comes in many guises, depending on different political, economic, and social contexts. Understanding these contexts and their historical origins is key to devising remedies that are specifically responsive to those harms. In addition to the importance of designing and securing gender-sensitive remedies, we learn about the necessity of attending to institutional designs for achieving effective protections of gender equality. Institutional frameworks that condition how rights operate can be as important to securing gender equality as addressing the abstract rights themselves.

The chapter authors are to be congratulated for lifting our vision to the horizons of gender equality and suggesting ways of reaching those destinations. They are well aware of the obstacles to completing the journey, including gender backlash, often associated with neo-authoritarian undercurrents, gender bias in judging, and lack or misplacement of resources. While we can celebrate the existence of international gender equality norms, research about how national courts apply those norms, and how they can apply them more effectively to bolster gender equality, remains essential. We learn that analysis is also necessary to expose the strengths and weaknesses of international and regional human rights decisions, especially from the perspectives of individuals most affected, to strengthen our equality thinking and sensitivities.

*Frontiers of Gender Equality* is essential reading for anyone wishing to understand the evolution of gender equality law and what can be done to secure the democratic ideals of gender equality.

—Cecilia Medina Quiroga, former Judge, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and former member and Chair, the UN Human Rights Committee