

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
UN WOMEN CIVIL SOCIETY ADVISORY GROUP FOR
LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN
(CSAG-LAC)**

UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean launches a call for nominations for the partial renewal of its Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin America and the Caribbean:

Objective	Select four (4) new members of UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin America and the Caribbean and four (4) reserve candidates: one (1) from the Caribbean; one (1) from Mexico and Central America; and two (2) from the Andean Countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Perú and Venezuela). Members of the Civil Society Advisory Group serve on a personal capacity and participation in the Group is not remunerated.
Deadline	November 19, 2017 until 11:59 PM (Panama time)

I. Nature

The UN Women Civil Society Advisory Groups (CSAGs) are advisory bodies established by UN Women at the global, regional and national levels to facilitate effective, ongoing and structured consultations between the civil society and UN Women.

As stated in the *UN Women Preliminary Strategy for the Civil Society Advisory Groups* (developed in November 2015)¹, these constitute an institutional mechanism for regular dialogue between UN Women and women's movement leaders on priorities and key issues on gender equality at national, regional and global levels. They inform strategic policy and regulatory perspectives as well as normative and intergovernmental processes. They are a strategic and substantive network of eminently qualified people of the civil society with experience and knowledge of UN Women's priority areas. The CSAGs have a dual and complementary role - as an advisory body of UN Women and as an advocacy platform to advance the gender equality agenda.

In their advisory role, the CSAGs are a dynamic resource for UN Women, proposing innovative initiatives, ideas, strategies and political perspectives. In their advocacy role, the CSAGs play a key political role in promoting common objectives for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women.

¹Elaborated as a result of the *Global Survey on the CSAGs* (launched in April 2015) and the *Global Civil Society Dialogue with UN Women* held in New York on November 12-13, 2015. During the meeting, participants shared their experiences with regard to the functioning of the CSAGs at its three levels of action: global, regional and national.

II. Objectives

- ✓ To advise and advocate the development of policies and programs at regional, sub-regional and country level with the expertise, perspectives and knowledge of the civil society and to promote sustainable partnerships between UN Women and the civil society to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.
- ✓ To inform and participate in intergovernmental processes and platforms. The role of UN Women is to provide opportunities for dialogue in these intergovernmental spaces, and among the CSAGs and other stakeholders, including governments and the private sector.
- ✓ To contribute to the effective implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development². To act as UN Women's frontline partners and to create a civil society solidarity network to coordinate efforts with UN Women in order to accelerate action and advocacy for the achievement of equality gender by 2030.

III. Mandate

- ✓ The United Nations General Assembly, when creating the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), requested that the latter continued the existing practice of holding effective consultations with civil society organizations and urged for the civil society to make a significant contribution to the work of the Entity (RES. A /64/289).
- ✓ In her Vision and Action Plan, the Executive Director said: "In recognition of the special relationship I envisage between UN Women and women's organizations, I will be appointing an NGO Advisory Group to advise me in my functions as Executive Director of UN Women. This will be a body for NGOs to express their perspectives, expertise and knowledge from the country level and channel our ongoing collaboration" (Michelle Bachelet, 2011).
- ✓ UN Women Strategic Plan 2013 – 2017 and the Management Result Framework (Output 1.2 Target for 2013) establishes "Advisory groups exist at global, regional and country levels providing regular feedback on UN Women programming."

IV. Role

- a) *Advisory Role:*

²It was formally adopted by world leaders gathering at the United Nations *World Summit on Sustainable Development* (25-27 September 2015, New York) after three years of intensive negotiations and dialogue bringing together not only governments and the civil society but also millions of ordinary people around the world. UN Member States unanimously agreed on what the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has described as the "most inclusive development agenda the world has ever seen". The 2030 Agenda embraces the three dimensions of sustainability – economic, social and environmental. It has 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that will build on the progress achieved through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Agenda focuses on the people and the planet as its centre and gives the international community the impetus it needs to work together to tackle the formidable challenges confronting humanity, including gender equality and women's empowerment.

- ✓ To provide strategic advice to UN Women, individually or collectively -and in other instances when appropriate- on its thematic priorities and policies, including the strategic planning process.
- ✓ To provide information and guidance on political, economic, social and cultural developments and trends to UN Women regional/national programming (political screening).
- ✓ To provide analysis on the socio-economic and political environment at the country/regional levels and its impact on gender equality and the human rights of women.
- ✓ To provide inputs to UN Women's programmes and policies, including the Regional Strategic Plan.
- ✓ To provide guidance and inputs to regional advocacy strategies for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women.

b) Advocacy Role:

- ✓ To assist UN Women in strengthening its relationship and dialogue with civil society at all levels.
- ✓ To participate and inform the normative processes and intergovernmental platforms such as the CSW, the Regional Conference on Women, among others.
- ✓ To create a civil society solidarity network to coordinate efforts with UN Women in order to accelerate action and advocacy for the achievement of gender equality by 2030.
- ✓ To contribute to the effective implementation and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

V. Background

The Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin America and the Caribbean (CSAG-LAC) was formed in May 2012 as the result of a rigorous and highly competitive selection process which included nearly 120 women and men with outstanding track record and prestige. The final selection was carried out by peers of the civil society. Fifteen members and three permanent observers were selected, in addition to four reserve candidates (one per sub-region). In order to guaranteeing the continuity of the Group's work, a proportion of its members serve for a period of maximum three years. As a result, in 2014, half of the group was renewed with seven new members. In the first semester of 2016, the membership was renewed again, eight original members of the group left and 4 new members were selected through a public call for applications. As of 2016, the group is composed of 11 members in total. On this occasion, 4 members will be selected - 2 from the Andean Countries, 1 from Central America/Mexico and 1 from the English-speaking Caribbean - to maintain geographical balance.

Currently the Advisory Group has a very broad representation, with respect to organizations and fields of action, as well as geographical representation. The members represent the four sub-regions: Mexico and Central America, the Caribbean, the Andean countries, and Brazil and the Southern Cone. They have proven experience in the areas of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Among them, there are women's rights defenders, scholars specialized in gender and endorsed by institutions of recognized prestige, indigenous women leaders, champions of the rights of Afro-descendant women and well-known activists defending the political, economic and reproductive rights of Latin American and Caribbean women³.

³ To know the members and their action results please click on the following links: [Link 1](#), [Link 2](#), [Link 3](#), [Link 4](#) y [Link 5](#).

The Advisory Group meets face-to-face once per year and it holds bi-monthly virtual meetings with regular virtual meetings with UN Women Regional Director. The *first face-to-face meeting* of the CSAG-LAC was held in October 2012 in Panama with the purpose of making concrete recommendations for the work of UN Women concerning the 2014-2017 Strategic Plan. The *second meeting* was held in October 2013 in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, ahead of ECLAC's XII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean (focused on gender equality, the empowerment of women, the digital economy and information technologies and communications) and the Feminist Organizations Forum (a space to discuss, to develop and extend the voices of women to the plenary session of the Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean). The *third face-to-face meeting* was held in October 2014 in Panama and it primarily aimed at elaborating the 2015 Workplan, as well as considering the group's evaluation and future terms of action. The *fourth face-to-face meeting* was held in January 2016 in Santiago de Chile just before the Regional Consultations ahead of CSW60, jointly organized by ECLAC and UN Women. The *fifth face-to-face meeting* was held in Uruguay (October 25-28, 2016) ahead of ECLAC's XIII Regional Conference on Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. The *sixth face-to-face meeting* was held in February 2017 in Panama before the Regional Consultations ahead of CSW61. The *seventh face-to-face meeting* Will be held in February 2018 in Dominican Republic just before the Regional Consultations ahead of CSW62.

VI. Composition

The UN Women Civil Society Advisory Group for Latin American and the Caribbean will be composed by 11 individuals with experience in the field and a recognized expertise in areas related to gender equality, human rights of women and women's empowerment. They will come from gender equality networks, women's and feminist organizations, as well as other non-governmental and grassroots organizations working on youth, ethnic groups, Afro-descendant, sexualities, women's human rights, sexual diversity and different gender identities, among others, who are committed to the core values of the United Nations.

In any case, members will have to be well connected and known in the field of activism (strong connections with women's networks and organizations at national, regional or global level), have credibility, analytical capacities, knowledge of new communications technologies, career path and proven knowledge of the needs and interests of women and women's groups.

The Group's composition will be as follows:

- ✓ 8 members from gender equality networks, women's and feminist organizations (intermediary or grassroots). Geographic balance will be ensured by including at least two members for each of the four sub-regions in LAC: 1) the Caribbean; 2) Mexico and Central America; 3) Brazil and the Southern Cone; 4) the Andean Sub-Region.
- ✓ 3 experts on UN Women's impact areas and priority subareas in the Region (women's economic empowerment; women's political participation and leadership; preventing and ending violence against women and girls; peace and security; statistics; and gender-responsive budgeting): not exclusively scholars, but also members of research institutes or feminist or human rights organizations (including legal work) and other organizations/networks with proven expertise.

The Group's composition must ensure the diversity of women from the region is represented and it must include women's and feminist organizations and networks, civil society organizations, the academia and selected opinion leaders. The Group will include members with experience at grassroots level, who represent diverse perspectives of development.

Membership in the CSAG does not constitute a paid job, it is *ad honorem*.

VII. Duration of the Mandate

Members of the Advisory Group will serve on a personal capacity for a period of two years. One third of the Group will be renewed each term.

In order to ensure continuity in the Group's work, a proportion of its members could serve for a period of maximum three years in total, according to the Committee's own decision.

VIII. 2017 Criteria of Selection

In this round, four (4) members will be replaced and four (4) reserve candidates will be selected. In order to preserve a balance among current members and new ones, candidates meeting the following criteria will be given special consideration (minimum 4 criteria):

1. Be part of one of the following population groups: youth representatives (30 years of age or under), indigenous people, Afro-descendants, rural women, women living with HIV, LGBTTTI, with an active participation in the women's and/or feminist movement at regional or global level.
2. Have an attitude and disposition for active participation in groups and have enough time to follow up on activities, promote initiatives and respond to consultations. Have an availability of at least 10% of weekly working time is required. If working in an organization or institution, a letter from the employer must be attached granting the minimum % of work time to participate in the Group.
3. Thematic expertise in at least two of UN Women's priority areas in the region: Women's Economic Empowerment; Ending Violence Against Women; Women's Political Participation and Leadership; Women, Peace and Security; Humanitarian Action.
4. Experience in policy, legislation and/or human rights treaties will be an asset, particularly at the regional/international level.
5. Academic and research experience, especially in UN Women's priority themes.
6. Active and proven participation within the women's and feminist movement at the regional level.
7. Strong connection with women's or feminist networks and organizations at national or regional levels, focusing on issues within the competence of UN Women and with extensive experience in the promotion of gender equality and women's human rights at national and/or regional levels, and in policy development.
8. Proven experience and understanding of the needs and interests of the different women's groups, particularly in the Global South.
9. Knowledge of the different development models and of the differences between middle-income and least developed countries (LDCs).

10. In order to ensure neutrality and in compliance with the ethical standards of the United Nations, members must not be part of directive boards of political parties, hold or being elected for public offices. In case of being elected after the selection as member of the CSAG-LAC, they must submit a written letter of resignation or their mandate shall be terminated before designation.
11. Current members of UN Women's Global and National Civil Society Advisory Groups cannot be nominated to the Regional Civil Society Advisory Group.
12. Trust and commitment to UN Women's mandate and to the UN Charter.

The present call for nominations will be shared among and by the women's organizations and networks of the region.

XIX. Operational Framework: Main Activities

1. Meeting once a year face-to-face, preferably before the annual session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the LAC Regional Consultations ahead of CSW, or other events highly relevant for the gender equality agenda at regional and global levels.
2. Participating in bi-monthly virtual meetings (through ICTs) with a previously agreed upon agenda as well as bi-monthly virtual meeting with UN Women Regional Director and *senior staff*.
3. Maintaining complementary and permanent virtual contact (through ICTs) contributing to the Group's work. In case of temporary problem limiting or preventing your participation, the group must be informed. In addition, you might engage on your own initiative or by request of the regional group with the National and Global Civil Society Advisory Groups, reporting to the Group on the activities realized and results obtained.
4. Contributing to the implementation and monitoring of the bi-annual workplan and to the development of the new plan, as required. The plan will have to include objectives, actions and timeframes, and contribute to UN Women's priorities. Among other actions, virtual thematic dialogues will be carried out.

UN Women Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean will arrange for a Group's facilitator who Will be in charge of coordinating the virtual and face-to-face meetings, organizing and guiding the discussions and processes of the Group, and regularly liaising between the Group and UN Women Regional Office for servir de enlace regular entre el Grupo y la Oficina Regional for specific issues.

X. Outputs

1. Concrete recommendations to UN Women (results of the virtual and face-to-face meetings).
2. Workplan.
3. Reports of the virtual dialogues.
4. Reports of the bi-monthly meetings.
5. Reports and/or documents providing advice to UN Women.
6. Reports on the participation in meetings and activities on behalf of the Group.

XI. Selection Committee

The selection process will be conducted by a Selection Committee composed of four members of CSAG-LAC, one from each sub-region, and one representative from UN Women as facilitator, who will assess the candidacies. The Selection Committee will make decisions by consensus.

XII. Requirements

All interested persons must submit the following documentation:

1. Currículum vitae (CV). No more than 5 pages.
2. Professional profile (short CV or resume) outlining your professional training and work experience, including in the women's/feminist movement.
3. Motivation letter (duly signed) expressing the reasons for the application and the contributions you would bring to the Action Plan of UN Women.
4. Certified endorsement letter no more than 5 years old and duly signed by the competent authority, from a feminist or women's organization or another organization focusing on gender equality and women's rights.
5. Letter certifying time availability duly signed by the competent authority, if the applicant is employed in any civil society organization/institution.

All applications must be sent to the following e-mail address before the specified deadline: grupo.asesor.lac@unwomen.org

Otherwise, the application will not be taken into consideration and it will be disregarded.

The applications can be submitted in Spanish and/or English.